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Health Care for the Homeless Action Bulletin

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Assist with Voter Registration

It's Not Just Empowering: It's the Law



HCH projects provide many critical services. Assistance registering to vote should be one of them. Non-partisan voter registration assistance is allowable at Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) under the National Voter Registration Act and is in fact required for those FQHCs who have state, city, or



Make voter registration assistance and integrated part of the services you provide. The November Election is only six weeks away!

Educate yourself on state voter registration policy. Our partners at [Community Health Vote](#) have compiled state-by-state information for health centers and [Vote411](#) has even more state and local information.

Identify a voter registration coordinator. As with most efforts, it is essential to have a lead person who can organize efforts, obtain materials, and provide training and support.

Offer assistance at your

county eligibility workers providing Medicaid enrollment assistance at their sites. Beyond any requirements, **HCH projects play an important role in empowering HCH consumers (and staff!) to be civically engaged. Make voter registration an integrated part of the services you provide this fall and all year round!**

Voter Registration Strategies

As with other services HCH provides, there are a number of different strategies for assisting consumers in registering to vote. Decide which approaches work for your project and implement them now. **The November Election is only six weeks away!**

- **Educate yourself on state voter registration policy.** Our partners at [Community Health Vote](#) have compiled state-by-state information for health centers and [Vote411](#) has even more state and local information.
- **Identify a voter registration coordinator.** As with most efforts, it is essential to have a lead person who can organize efforts, obtain materials, and provide training and support.
- **Offer assistance at your clinic.** Post signs advertising voter registration. Have staff or volunteers offer assistance to those in the waiting room. Offer voter registration assistance during intake or during enrollment assistance. Check out this [health center tool kit](#) for more ideas.
- **Plan a voter registration drive.** Engage staff, consumers, and volunteers on a specific day to focus on voter registration. You can plan this in concert with other events you might have planned.
- **Engage your Consumer Advisory Board.** Voter registration can be a fantastic project for CAB members.
- **Keep track of those you register and help get out the vote!** HCH consumers have a lot on their minds and might need assistance making it to the polls. Check out this [health center tool kit](#) for follow-up forms.
- **ALWAYS REMAIN NON-PARTISAN.** This is the only limitation on HCH voter registration activities. As long as you make sure you do not encourage those you assist to support a specific candidate or party you have nothing to worry about.

Voter registration integrated into your daily work is most effective, but remember that even small efforts can go a long way. Contact [Dan Rabbitt](#) for further

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assistance or to learn more about partnering with [Community Health Vote](#).

Background

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 included many provisions to make voter registration more accessible. One such provision designates “public assistance” offices as voter registration agencies. Public assistance offices include any site where an individual may apply or receive an application for Medicaid, such as FQHCs. [HRSA PAL 2000-18](#) outlines this provision in more detail.

Enrollment assisters funded either through HRSA outreach and enrollment grants or through Navigator grants are also able to provide voter registration assistance.

Individuals experiencing homelessness are absolutely eligible to vote even if they do not have a permanent address. The National Coalition for the Homeless has put together a resource outlining the process of registering to vote when one is unstably housed called [You Don't Need a Home to Vote](#). Please use this resource if you have any questions. Also keep in mind that voter registration and engagement is particularly important for low-income and homeless individuals, as they are less likely to vote than other groups.

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