

HOW TO EXERCISE YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE

WHEN REGISTERING TO VOTE:

- **TRADITIONAL DWELLING REQUIREMENT:** Remember that you don't need a traditional residence to register and vote. A temporary dwelling or even a street location will usually suffice.
- **ID REQUIREMENTS:** If you have a driver's license you must provide your driver's license number on the registration form. If you do not have a license, you must provide the last 4 digits of your Social Security number. Individuals without either of these numbers will be provided a unique identifying number by the state. Check with your state to see if there are any further requirements.
- **ADDRESS REQUIREMENT:** Mailing addresses are frequently required in order to register. You may use the address of a church, temple, shelter, agency, employer, relative, or friend. Make sure you will be able to check your mail on a regular basis at that location.
- **ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENT:** Most states require you to register 30 days before an election. Check with your local election board to find out your state's registration deadline.
- **CONVICTIONS:** In most states you can still vote if you have a criminal record for misdemeanors. Check your state to see what criminal convictions affect your right to vote.
- **IF YOU HAVE TROUBLE REGISTERING:** Contact NLCHP, your state board of elections, a voting rights advocacy group in your area, or ask any agency, shelter or service provider you know. Remember, you have the right to vote.

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WHEN AT THE POLL:

- **ID REQUIREMENTS:** State identification requirements at the polls differ from state to state, so check to find out if identification is required when voting in your state. Under federal law, all states must require individuals who register for the first time in a jurisdiction by mail to provide some sort of identifying documents at the polls if they are assigned a unique identifying number by the state (due to lack of a driver's license or Social Security number), or if the state is unable to verify their identity through a driver's license number or Social Security number. So beware of possible additional identification requirements if you are a first time voter registering by mail.
- **WHERE YOU CAN VOTE:** If you move to another location within the same voting district, you should still be able to vote in that district, and you do not need to provide advance notice of your move.
- **PROVISIONAL BALLOTS:** If a poll-worker demands to see ID or challenges your eligibility to vote and you are unable to provide sufficient proof of your identity or eligibility, you are entitled to cast a provisional ballot, which will be counted once your identity is confirmed.
- **IF YOU ARE PREVENTED FROM VOTING:** Federal law requires state-based complaint procedures for people who feel they have been wronged in the voting process. Contact your state board of elections to find out how to file a complaint. If you encounter trouble filing a complaint, contact your local legal services agency.

NATIONAL LAW CENTER
ON HOMELESSNESS & POVERTY

Phone: 202.638.2535
Website: www.nlchp.org

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