



Our Homes, Our Votes:
Voter Registration and Mobilization for Low-Income Voters

Presented with:

Sarah Jemison, Housing Advocacy Organizer, National Low
Income Housing Coalition and

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New Jersey



Our Homes, Our Votes:
Voter Registration and Mobilization for Low-Income Voters

Key Dates

- Deadline to Register to Vote in NJ Gubernatorial Election - Tuesday, October 17, 2017
- NJ Gubernatorial Election – Tuesday, November 7, 2017
- House Elections in each NJ district – November 2018



Our Homes, Our Votes: Building Housing Voters

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Our Mission

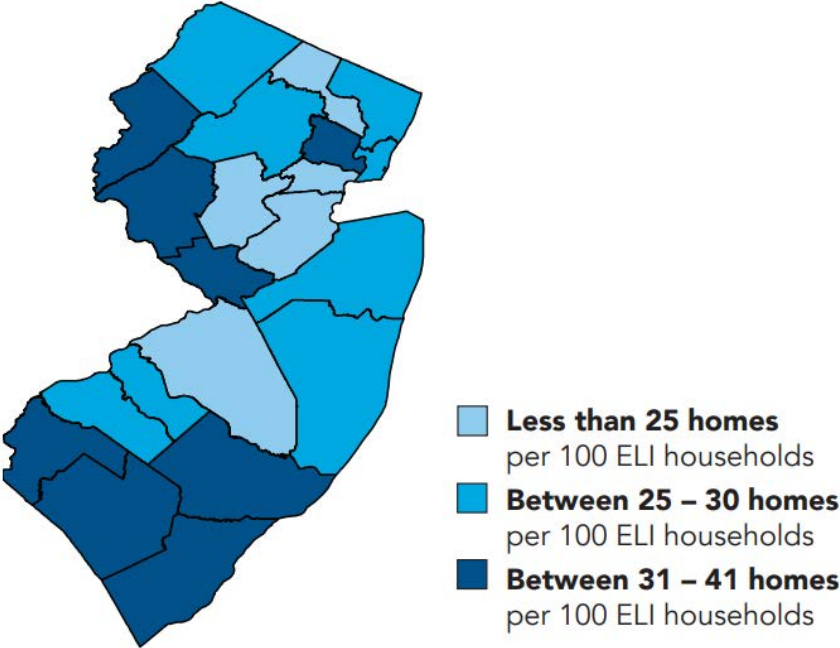


The National Low Income Housing Coalition is dedicated to achieving socially just public policy that ensures those with the lowest incomes have access to decent, affordable homes.

The Need for Affordable Homes



AFFORDABLE & AVAILABLE HOMES FOR ELI RENTER HOUSEHOLDS



Source: NLIHC tabulations of 2009-2013 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data.

Inadequate Resources



Budget Appropriations



114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3128

[Report No. 114-215]

Making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 21, 2015

Mr. CARTER, from the Committee on Appropriations, reported the following bill; which was committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

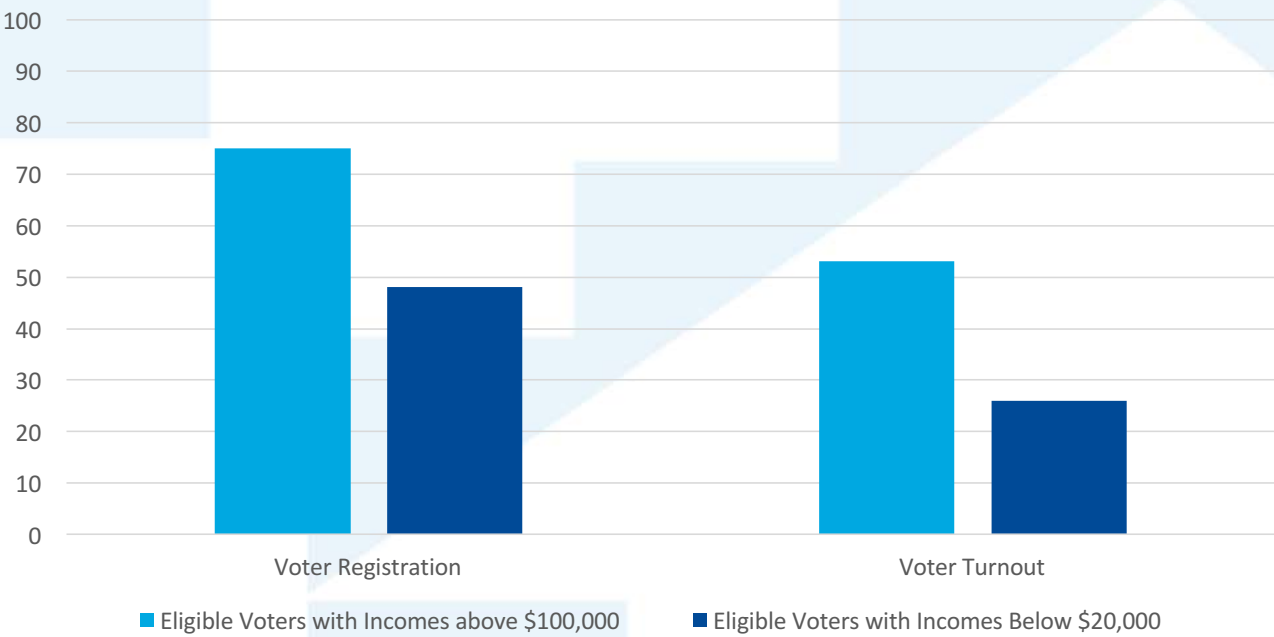
A BILL

Making appropriations for the Department of Homeland Security for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2016

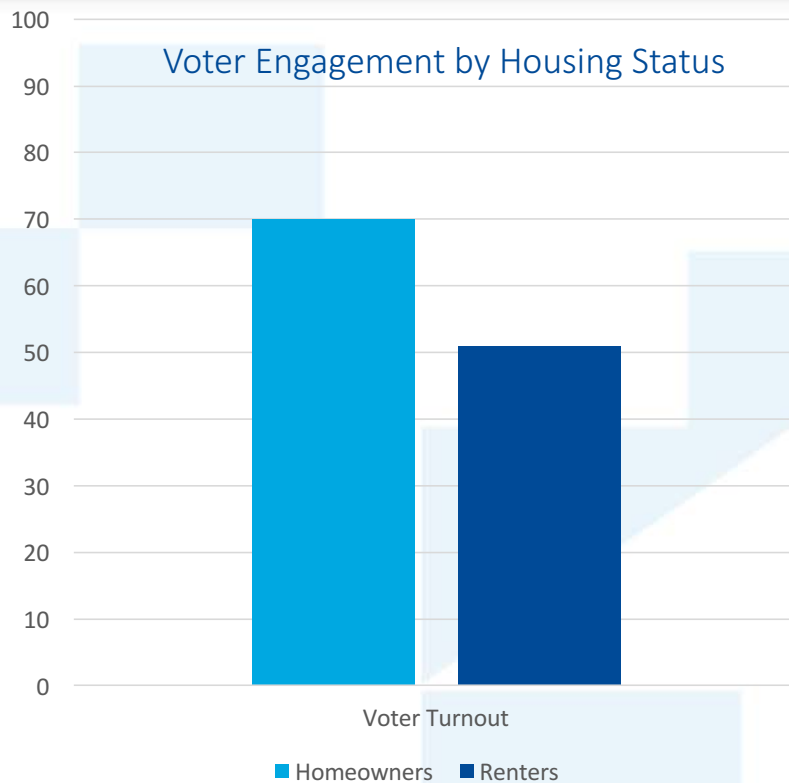
"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate."

-Thomas Jefferson, Retirement Papers

Voter Engagement by Income Level



Renters as Voters



Some causes of low voter turnout among renters:

- Intentional voter suppression
- Frequent moves
- Inflexibility of jobs
- Lack of information about voter requirements in new location
- Difficulty obtaining ID
- Transportation impediments

Role of Housing and Social Service Providers



- Voter registration and education is an on going process!
- Housing and social service providers who work closely with low income renters are in a perfect place to assist clients with registration and education
- Every change of address necessitates updated voter registration

Nonprofits: The Do's and Don'ts of Voter Registration & Outreach



Nonprofits CAN

- Conduct voter registration
- Conduct voter education and mobilizing efforts
 - Conduct candidate engagement efforts

As long as all efforts and activities remain NON-PARTISAN!

Nonprofits CANNOT

- Make endorsements for any political candidates.
- Donate money, resources, or time to any particular candidate.
- Staff engaged in partisan political activities should do so without representing the organization.

501(c)(3) organizations ARE allowed to participate in voter registration efforts!

Getting Started – Goals and Roles



REGISTERING VOTERS

Setting Goals for Registering Voters

- A. How many residents/clients does your agency serve _____
- B. What percentage of your clients will you register? What number? _____
- C. Will your agency also register other low income members of the community, beyond your clients? If so, how many? _____
- D. What is your agency's total goal for new registrants (B+C)? _____
- E. How many weeks do you have until the deadline to register voters? _____
- F. How many people must you register on average per week to meet your goal? _____

Assigning Responsibilities

- A. What staff person will ultimately be responsible for meeting registration goals? _____
- B. What resident leaders will have responsibility for meeting registration goals? _____

First – Know the Law!



Preparing To Register Voters

Your local Board of Elections can be a valuable source of information as you plan to register clients to vote. You will want to check in with them to:

- Learn the registration deadline for the general election in your state.
- Ask whether anyone can register voters in your state, or whether a person must first become deputized or meet other requirements.
- Request the voter rolls for your locality. There may be a small charge for this, but it's important; you will use this list to determine which of your residents and clients are already registered, and which need to change their official voting address.
- Request enough voter registration forms to meet your registration goals.

Are there special requirements someone must meet before registering voters? _____

Who will obtain the county voter list and pick up the voter registration forms? _____

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Who will obtain the county voter list and pick up the voter registration forms? _____

Register Voters!



REGISTRATION CHECKLIST

For each section, check those ways in which your agency will register voters. In the space after the activity, list the staff or resident(s) who will carry out the activity, and the timeframe for carrying it out.

Fitting Voter Registration Into Your Agency's Regular Contact With Residents

- Add voter registration to the client intake process. Specifically, ask people to register and assist them in completing the form; don't just provide the form.
- Register clients when they come in to receive your services.
- Train all staff and volunteers who work directly with clients to be able to answer questions and assist with registration forms.
- Add a voter registration component to all job training, computer, or other classes offered by your agency.
- Other: _____

Planning Specific Voter Registration Activities

- Hold a social or other event at which voter registration is an activity.
- Host an event for National Voter Registration Day (September 27, 2016), <http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/>
- Other: _____

Organizing A Door-To-Door Campaign

- Train residents, staff, and other volunteers who are already registered to go door-to-door to register low income renters. Use the county voter list to determine who needs to be registered and whose registration needs to be updated.
- Appoint residents as building captains, floor captains, etc. Ensure they are trained on the rules in your state, and make them responsible for registration (and turnout) where they live.
- For locked buildings where you have not recruited a resident captain, approach landlords to ask if they will allow door-to-door registration or a registration table in the lobby.
- Consider offering public recognition to those who register the most new voters or the highest percentage of their area.

Reaching Out To the Community

- Have your registrars reach out into the community to register other low income, homeless or underrepresented people.
- Provide a voter registration and information table at neighborhood events.
- Make sure everyone on the staff and board is registered!

Register Voters!



KEEPING RECORDS

Keeping records of the people you register to vote helps both with determining whether you have met your registration goals and with planning Get Out The Vote activities. NLIHC has a sample database that you can use for recordkeeping at the end of this document.

Where allowable by law, one easy way to gather the information for your list is to collect voter registration forms from new registrants, then photocopy the forms or portions of forms before mailing them in. You can also have new registrants fill out a two-part pledge card. They will keep the half of the card that reminds them of their pledge to vote; you will keep the half with their contact information.

Who will be responsible for keeping records of who becomes registered to vote? _____

- Keeping a voter list on hand can help with updating addresses for people who have moved, and can be used to verify who is already registered.
- Developing a list of new registrants is essential. This list can be used for Get Out the Vote efforts and follow up for voter education activities.

Tips for a Successful Registration Drive



Get to Know Local Election Officials

- Registration forms, processes, and timelines will be coordinated by local authorities.
- Local authorities will give the best information on required training voter registration volunteers.

Build a Coalition

- Seek help and collaboration from a state or local partner with expertise and experience in conducting voter engagement activities.
 - This will help prevent overlapping registration efforts.
- Participate in organized events like National Voter Registration Day, September 27, 2016
 - More information on National Voter Registration Day:
<http://nationalvoterregistrationday.org>

More Helpful Tips for a Successful Registration Drive



It's never too EARLY to start planning!

- A study conducted by Nonprofit VOTE showed that organizations who were most successful in their registration drives began planning in June or earlier with implementation beginning in the July before the election.

Recruit Volunteers and Staff

- A huge component to having a successful registration drive is to make sure your staff are knowledgeable and dedicated to the voter outreach efforts. Make sure everyone on your staff is registered to vote as well.
- Volunteers are a great way to get the community involved with your organization and it's efforts. It's also a good way to recruit volunteers and interns for your organization as a whole.
- Make registration materials available at ALL meetings, events, and facilities.

Common Obstacles



Homeless Voters

- Various court decisions have affirmed that homeless people cannot be denied voting rights simply for not having an address.
- Unlike in other states, in New Jersey, an address is not required to vote.

Voter Apathy

- Non-voters are often concerned that nothing will change because they vote. Registration staff and volunteers should be trained to connect housing and neighborhood policy issues to the lives of the voters. Nonprofits have a unique position in the community because they garner more trust from members of the communities they serve.
- Point out that registering to vote does not require a person to vote, but just provides the option.

Formerly Incarcerated Voters

- In New Jersey, voters with prior felony convictions can legally register as long as the parole or probation periods of the sentence have been completed. These returning citizens should reregister once their parole or probation is completed.

Questions?



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Join the Housing Movement!



MEMBERSHIP MONTH SEPTEMBER 2017

YOU ARE NLIHC

www.nlihc.org/membership-month

The graphic features a corkboard background with several Polaroid-style photos of diverse individuals pinned to it. The text "MEMBERSHIP MONTH" is in black, "SEPTEMBER 2017" is in blue, "YOU" is in large red letters, and "ARE NLIHC" is in white and blue. The website URL is at the bottom left, and the NLIHC logo is at the bottom right.

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF NEW JERSEY EDUCATION FUND



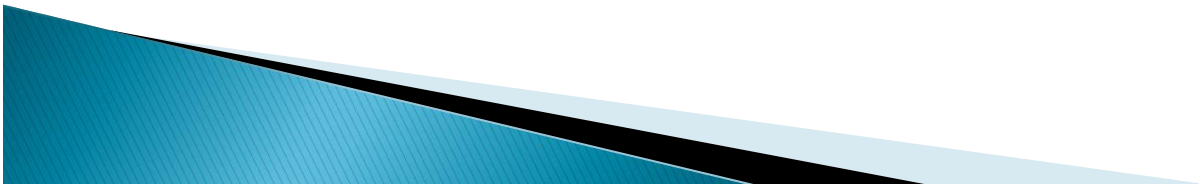
LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
OF NEW JERSEY

www.lwvnj.org

Voting in New Jersey

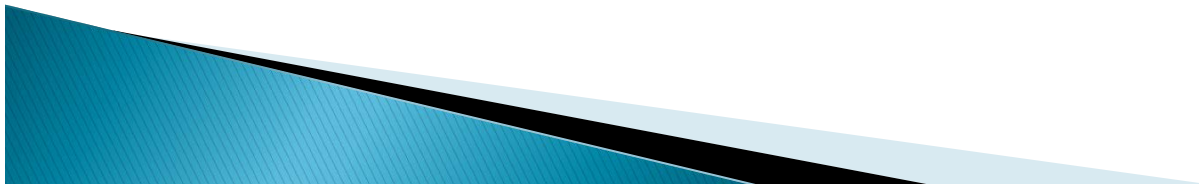
Who Can Register To Vote?

- ▶ To register in New Jersey you must be:
 - A United States citizen
 - At least 17 years old, and understand that you may not vote until reaching the age of 18
 - Reside at your present address for at least 30 days
 - You are NOT currently serving a sentence, probation or parole because of a felony conviction



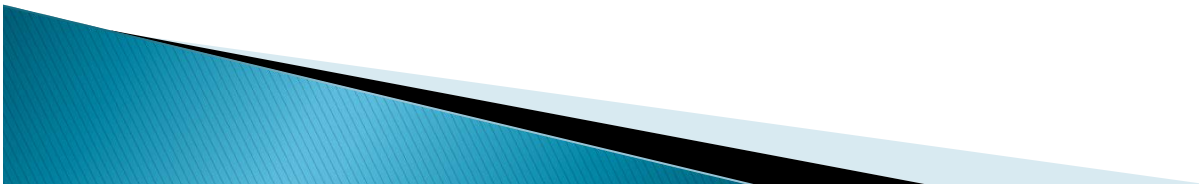
When/How/Where to Register

- ▶ When to Register
 - At least 21 days before the election
- ▶ How and Where to Register
 - You may register in person or by mail
 - In person – Register with your Municipal Clerk or county Commissioner of Registration/Superintendent of Elections.
 - By mail – Registrations forms are available on the League of Women Voters of New Jersey website, www.lwvnj.org and the NJ Division of Elections website, www.elections.nj.gov. They are also available at motor vehicle agencies, public assistance offices, most libraries, Municipal Clerk, and county Commissioner of Registration offices.



When to Re-Register

- ▶ You must re-register to vote if you:
 - Change your name – You are entitled to vote only in the next election by signing your registration sheet at the polls with both your previous and new name. After that, you must re-register in your new name.
 - Change your address – You must re-register and check off “address change” on the form.
- ▶ Note: When you move or change your name you already fill out various forms alerting agencies (credit cards, the post office, the DMV etc). Don't forget to ALSO fill out a voter registration form!



Election Dates 2017

- ▶ General Election Day – Tuesday, November 7
 - Voter registration deadline – October 17

Polls are open 6 am – 8 pm

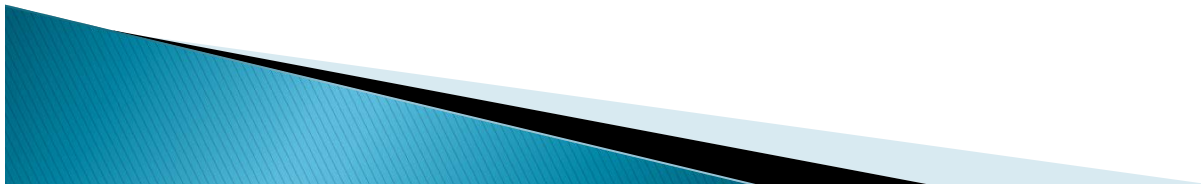


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www.lwvnj.org

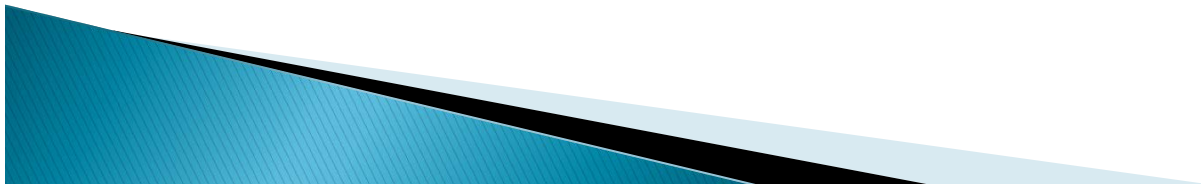
Vote By Mail

- ▶ In New Jersey, any registered voter can now vote by mail in any election. You do not need a reason to Vote by Mail, but you must apply for a vote by mail ballot. Now there is no excuse not to vote!



How to Vote by Mail

- ▶ Registered voters must apply for a vote by mail ballot. Applications are available online at www.lwvnj.org and www.elections.nj.gov or at your County Clerk's office.
- ▶ Your mailed application must be received by your County Clerk at least 7 days prior to the election. However, you may apply in person for a Vote by Mail ballot at your County Clerk's office until 3:00 pm the day before the election.



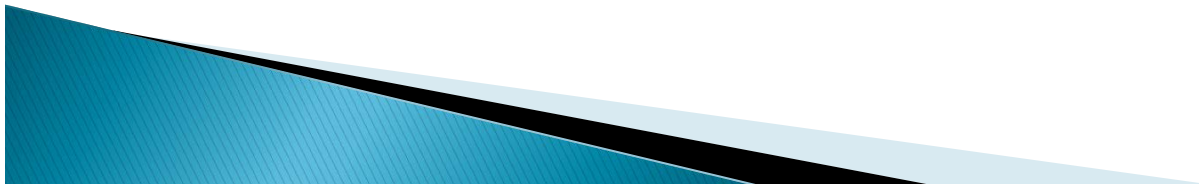
Your Vote by Mail Options

When you apply for Vote by Mail you will have the following options to automatically receive ballots in future elections.

Voter Options to Automatically Receive Ballots In Future Elections

You may choose either option, both options, or none of the options. YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO CHOOSE AN OPTION. If you do not choose any option, you will only be sent the ballot for the election you choose in Section 1 on the form.

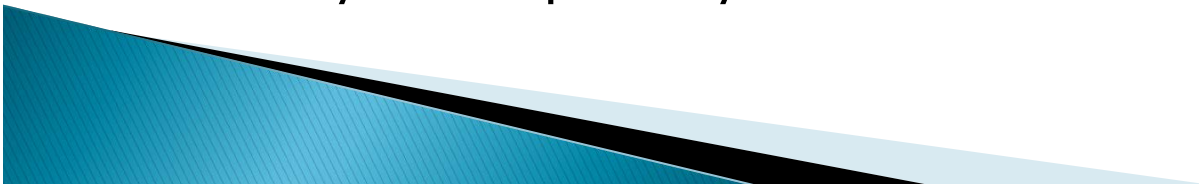
- I wish to receive a Mail-In Ballot for all elections to be held during the **REMAINDER OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR.**
- I wish to receive a Mail-In Ballot in **ALL FUTURE NOVEMBER GENERAL ELECTIONS,** until I request otherwise.



Party Affiliation

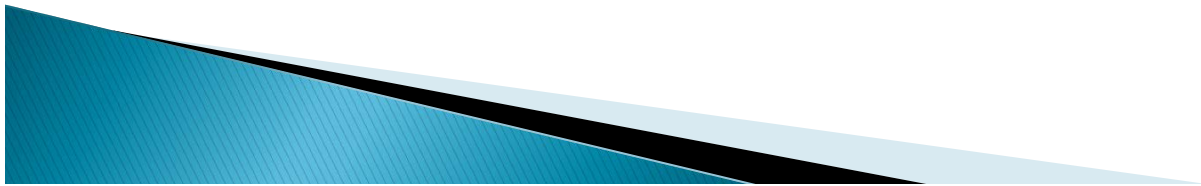
In New Jersey, you may declare a party affiliation when registering to vote, but you are not required to do so.

However, in a primary, you may vote for only one party's candidates (and only the Democratic and Republican parties qualify for primary elections). To vote in a primary you must be a declared member of one of those parties OR if you are an unaffiliated voter, you may declare at the polls the day of the primary election.




Changing your Party Affiliation

- If you do declare a party at the polls on primary election day, you retain this party affiliation.
- If you wish to change your party affiliation you must file a party affiliation declaration form (online at www.lwvnj.org or www.elections.nj.gov). You do have the option of changing your party to “unaffiliated”.



Do I need to bring ID to the polls?

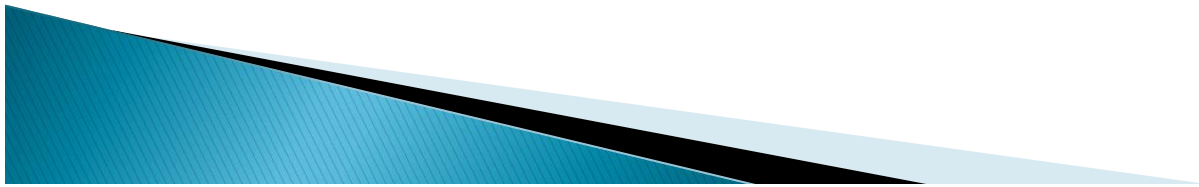
You need to provide ID ONLY if you are a first-time voter who registered by mail and did not provide the requested information or the information you provided could not be verified.

- ▶ If you can provide ID, you are allowed to vote at the polls on the machine.
 - ▶ If you do not show identification, you will vote by provisional ballot and have until the close of business on the second day after the election to provide identification to the applicable county election office. You will be given a hand-out at the polling place that will tell you which county election office to contact.
- 

We are here to assist you!

On the League of Women Voters of New Jersey website, www.lwvnj.org, you will find:

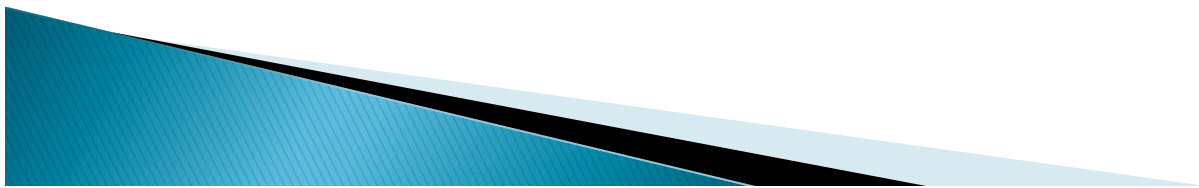
- Voter registration forms, vote by mail applications, and party affiliation declaration forms
- Answers to frequently asked voting questions
- Your voting rights
- Information about upcoming elections



1-800-792-VOTE (8683)

The League of Women Voters of New Jersey also staffs a toll-free voter assistance hotline to answer your questions. The hotline is staffed year-long during business hours with extended hours on General Election Day.

THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF NEW JERSEY EDUCATION FUND



Questions



- Questions with Next Steps in Planning your NJ Voter Registration and Mobilization Effort
- Contact Kate Kelly at Monarch Housing @ kkelly@monarchhousing.org or 908-272-5363 x224