Voting and Homelessness

People experiencing homeless or who are otherwise in transition face special challenges when registering to vote. Remember, the best source of information about these issues is your state or county election officials.

**Can someone who is homeless register and vote?**
Yes. People experiencing homelessness can register and vote in all 50 states, and DC.

**What should this person list as their home address?**
It is recommended that registrants list a shelter address as their voting address where they can receive mail. Alternatively, homeless registrants may denote a street corner or a park as their residence, in lieu of a traditional home address. The federal voter registration form and many state forms provide a space for this purpose.

**Must the registrant have lived at this location for any particular length of time?**
In Texas, you can register to vote the day you move to the state. Once you figure out a place to receive mail, register to vote.

**Do I need a mailing address to register to vote?**
Yes, but it is recommended homeless registrants list a shelter address as their voting address where they can receive mail. Alternatively, homeless registrants may denote a “general address” such as a street corner or a park as their residence, in lieu of a traditional home address. “General Delivery” is a USPS program for people who can’t afford a PO Box that allows them to pick up their mail at a post office. A “General Delivery” address and a short description of the place of residence should satisfy the address requirement.

**What ID is needed to register to vote?**
Following a Texas court order, people who face obstacles getting an ID or someone who does not qualify for any of the ID mandated by the state is still to be able to vote, the person will have to sign a Reasonable Impediment Declaration form affirming that they couldn’t get one, and an original or a copy of one of the following:

- Government document that shows the voter’s name and an address, including the voter’s voter registration certificate;
- Current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck; or
- Certified domestic birth certificate (from a U.S. state or territory) or a document confirming birth admissible in a court of law, which establishes the voter’s identity (may include a foreign birth document).

**Have any courts done anything to help protect my right to vote as a homeless person?**
In July 2016, the U.S Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit ruled Texas must accept various forms of identification from voters during the November general election. The Fifth Circuit found that Texas’ Voter ID law is discriminatory against Black and Latinx voters, who frequently do not have the IDs previously required to vote. The IDs that will now be accepted at the ballot box are: a voter registration certificate, a birth certificate, bank statement, a current utility bill, a government check or a government document that lists the voter’s name and address, or an expired driver’s license as long as it is less than four years past the expiration date. If a voter presents an alternative form of identification, they must fill out a form listing the reason why they
do not have a government-issued ID, although poll workers are not permitted to question their reasoning. Voters with a government ID are required to present it when voting.