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SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

The fact that someone is homeless does not prohibit that individual from registering to vote. However, being homeless does not exempt the individual from any legal or administrative requirement. Please be mindful that this information is for general purposes. For specific concerns or questions please contact the Office of the Secretary of the State.

Am I eligible to register to vote?

Connecticut law requires that in order to become an elector, an individual must be 18 years of age, a U.S. citizen, and a *bona fide resident of some town in Connecticut*.

How does a homeless person demonstrate bona fide residence?

This can become somewhat difficult for the homeless. However, courts have construed that the residency requirement is met when an individual has some nexus to a particular town and an intention to return when absent from the town. For the homeless, this could be some town that they have spent time in, slept in, and intend to go back to even if they are not presently there. The homeless individual will need to indicate some physical address as their residence and a mailing address. The mailing address is most often a local shelter, although the physical address could be a particular place such as a park bench.

When giving a mailing address, the individual must understand that they will have a responsibility to check for mail at that address. Immediately after registering a voter, the registrar will send a confirmation letter to the given mail address. **If the letter is returned as non-deliverable, the registrar will remove the voter from the registry list.** Similarly, the registrar will be doing a yearly canvas whereby a response may be required from the voter that they continue to reside in the district and remain an elector.

Can a P.O. Box be used as an address?

No. All voters are required to identify a physical address or location of residence. This identifies what polling location they are to appear at.

What identification is required to register to vote?

If an individual is registered in person, by an official such as a registrar of voters or a town clerk before an election, he or she shall present their birth certificate, drivers' license, or Social Security card to them for inspection. If the individual does not present one of these items, he or she may request and the official shall require the individual to prove their identity, place of birth, age and bona fide residency by the testimony under oath of at least one registered elector or by presenting to the official sufficient evidence so that the official finds that they have satisfactorily proved these issues to the official.

What is required of a homeless voter using Election Day Registration?

The same identification requirements outlined above are required for Election Day Registration (see "What identification is required to register to vote?") However, the voter must also sign a statement that they have not previously voted in this election. Because the law gives discretion to local officials in determining that satisfactory identification has been fulfilled, it may be best to register in advance of Election Day. Individuals should also come prepared with their birth certificate, Social Security card or an elector able and willing to testify on their behalf. Also, please note that Election Day Registration is only available for general elections, not primaries or referendum.

What can service organizations do for homeless voters?

When seeking to perform a voter registration drive involving the homeless, it would be helpful, though by no means required, that the group performing the drive consult with local shelters and other groups that provide services for the homeless to see if any of them are able to accept and receive mail for the individuals involved. In this manner, you can help the homeless to acquire a mailing address if they do not already have one. A mailing address may prove helpful in a multitude of ways beyond voter registration.

What are the voter registration deadlines?

There are multiple registration deadlines throughout the year. For a general election a voter may enroll by mail-in registration or online registration up to two weeks before Election Day. If the voter enrolls in-person they have up until one week before Election Day. And, a voter may also enroll on Election Day using the Election Day Registration system which allows them to register and cast a ballot in a location designated by the Registrar of Voters.

For Primary elections, voters have up until 1 week before Primary Day if using the mail-in form or online voter registration system. In person registration for a Primary will be accepted up until the day before the Primary.

What do I need to know about conducting a voter registration drive that includes homeless people?

Any voter registration drive conducted by the Registrar of voters is considered "in-person" registration. Any voter registration drive conducted by anyone else is considered a "mail-in" registration. This is important to understand because it is how elections officials determine if the voter has enrolled by the required deadline. It's also important in fulfilling the underlying documentation required to be a registered voter.

I'm a new voter. What ID do I need on Election Day?

Newly registered voters who register using mail-in forms (or online voter registration) will need to present identification when they enter the polls, *unless they have provided their driver's license number or the last 4 digits of their Social Security number on their voter registration application*. Otherwise, *the first time* that they enter the polls to vote, they will need to show either a current and valid photo identification that shows the elector's name and address or a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck or other government document that shows the name and address of the elector.

I'm already registered. What ID do I need on Election Day?

Connected law requires voters to present ID every time they vote. Voters may present a Social Security card, or any other preprinted form of identification which shows the elector's name and either the elector's address, signature, or photograph. For example, a credit card would have your pre-printed name and your signature. A utility bill will have your preprinted name and street address. If the voter presents none of those items, s/he may sign a form, under the penalty of false statement, that they are the person on the registry list. While this form may be helpful to the homeless voter, it is important to remember that it will not ordinarily be available for such first time voters.

Do you have questions? Contact Secretary of the State Elections Division at 860.509.6100