Registering Voters in Your Organization

Know Your State’s Voter Registration Rules and Deadlines

Each state has different processes and deadlines for conducting and distributing voter registration forms. Some states allow voter registration in-person, by mail and/or online, while others have special rules and required trainings. Be sure you know your state’s voter registration laws and required deadlines. To ensure you comply with your state’s laws concerning voter registration forms, see the Fair Elections Legal Network: Voter Registration Drive Guidelines: http://fairelectionsnetwork.com/voter-registration-drive-guidelines.

Designate a Voter Engagement Coordinator at Your Organization

National Council members can appoint a staff person to oversee the organization’s voter engagement activities. Responsibilities may include:

1. Coordinating the organization’s client outreach strategy;
2. Training colleagues to ask clients if they would like to register to vote;
3. Ensuring the proper and appropriate forms (in all relevant languages) are available for clients; and
4. Forwarding completed forms to the appropriate government officials or offices.

Train Staff on Voter Registration Procedures

All the forms in the world will not ensure success unless staff are fully trained and engaged in the registration process. It is critical that staff:

• Receive training from voter registration coordinators on how and when to use the forms;
• Receive training on how to assist clients with the voter registration application;
• Understand that registering voters is part of the organization’s efforts to foster inclusion of their clients in society and the political arena.

Your organization should decide how best to engage clients in voter registration discussions. If done so during a visit, be sure all appropriate staff are trained and equipped to handle questions from clients. If you prefer a hands-off approach, keep voter registration forms available at the front desk and advertise this service across your organization. See: Appendix for sample of template Voter Registration Drive Flyers.

Offering voter registration to your clients provides several benefits:

• It ensures that staff have inquired about voter registration and offered assistance to each person, even if they have completed forms at home or in the waiting room.
• Offering voter registration at your organization will reach citizens accompanying clients but who probably do not have appointments themselves. Many of these citizens may not have been offered voter registration on prior visits.

Post Signs Informing Clients of the Opportunity to Register to Vote

Please use template signs available for download above. If using your own sign, we recommend using language like:

• “This community mental health/addiction treatment clinic registers voters — register today!”
• “Ask us to help you register to vote today.”
• “May we register you to vote today?”

Track Your Progress and Tell the National Council About Your Success

The National Council knows how hard you work providing care in your community. Registering voters to help your community stay involved in the political process is vital. Share the stories of your success with us by emailing Michael Petruzzelli at MichaelP@TheNationalCouncil.org.

Download State by State Registration Deadlines: Election Day 2020
https://www.headcount.org/deadlines-dates/?section=state