

# USER GUIDE TO *OUR HOMES, OUR VOTES* TURBOVOTE PLATFORM

## Introduction

TurboVote is a one-stop-shop where voters in all 50 states and DC can register to vote, check their registration, sign up for election reminders, and find nonpartisan election information for their community. TurboVote makes the democratic process more accessible and empowers low-income renters to participate in elections at every level. The portal is available in both English and Spanish.



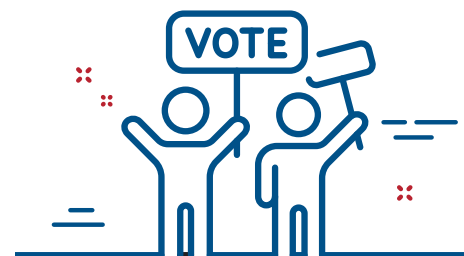
To provide a seamless voter registration experience and empower renters to vote in every election, the *Our Homes, Our Votes* campaign's nonpartisan TurboVote platform ([ourhomes.turbovote.org](https://ourhomes.turbovote.org)) is available to all housing advocates, tenant leaders, Public Housing Agencies and subsidized housing providers, direct services organizations, and anyone else who shares the mission of increasing voter turnout among low-income renters and people experiencing homelessness. You do not need a login to use TurboVote.

This guide will walk through the key features of TurboVote and offer best practices for incorporating TurboVote into your organization's nonpartisan voter engagement strategy. Please email Courtney Cooperman, project manager of *Our Homes, Our Votes*, at [ccooperman@nlihc.org](mailto:ccooperman@nlihc.org), with questions about TurboVote or to receive a custom referral code.

## Voter Registration Using TurboVote

The first step to prepare your community for election season is to make sure everyone is registered to vote at their current address. Click the "Register to Vote" button on the TurboVote homepage to walk through the voter registration process.

Eligible voters can use TurboVote to register in one of two ways: 1) online using their state's online voter registration system, or 2) using a paper registration form. Only seven states do not offer online voter registration: AR, NH, MS, MT, SD, TX, and WY. In all other states, voters will be prompted to choose between online voter registration or paper voter registration after filling out basic information to confirm their voter eligibility.



If a voter chooses online voter registration, they will be directed to their state's online voter registration platform in a separate tab. Once they complete the registration process, they should return to the TurboVote tab to confirm that they successfully completed the form and to receive guidance on next steps.

If a voter chooses paper voter registration, TurboVote will create a pre-populated PDF. **Voters must still fill out the remaining fields in this form, print it out, sign it, and mail it to their election office to complete their voter registration.**

## Check Voter Registration Status

TurboVote also allows people to check their voter registration status. This feature is especially helpful for voters who know they have registered at some point in the past but aren't sure if they've updated their registration since changing their address or name.

The "Check Your Registration" button will cross-check a voter's registration with a national database called TargetSmart. Because states do not submit real-time data to TargetSmart, voters who have registered since their state last submitted information to the database may not show up in the system. If TurboVote cannot confirm a voter's registration status, it will direct the voter to check their registration status on their state's election website, which will cross-check with the most updated records.

If the state's election office cannot confirm that a voter is registered with their current name or address, they should return to the TurboVote homepage, click "Register to Vote," and complete the process.

## Preregister To Vote

TurboVote also enables young people between the ages of 15 and 17 to sign up for reminders about preregistration. TurboVote will send them information about preregistration options in their state and remind them to register when they are eligible.

## Make a Plan to Vote Using TurboVote

After someone registers to vote or inputs their address on the homepage, TurboVote will display a personalized Voting Hub. The Voting Hub lists all upcoming elections for the voter's address, information about voting options in their state (early voting, vote-by-mail, and Election Day voting), where to vote, key deadlines, and other FAQs.

TurboVote's information about state-specific voting options can help organizers who are conducting voter registration or get-out-the-vote (GOTV) campaigns. Refer to the state-specific information about voting options and voting locations when helping voters talk through their plan to vote or addressing their questions about the logistics of voting.

## Voter Education Using TurboVote

In addition to voter registration, advocates can use TurboVote to educate their communities about the candidates and issues that will appear on the ballot. After a voter enters their address, they will find nonpartisan information about their candidates for federal, state, and local office, statewide ballot measures, and select local ballot measures. (TurboVote uses data from [Ballotpedia](#), which tracks all statewide ballot measures and local ballot measures in the nation's 100 largest cities, state capitals, and in all California localities.) Voters can also find information about statewide contests by selecting their state from a dropdown menu on the homepage.

## Election Reminders

When voters register, check their registration status, or access their personalized Voting Hub, they will be prompted to sign up for text or email election reminders. TurboVote will only text or email voters with key information about upcoming elections—for example, upcoming voter registration deadlines. Voters can always opt out of email and text election reminders.

TurboVote provides information on nine election types: statewide, presidential primary, state house, state senate, congressional, county, municipal, sub-municipal, and school district elections. Once a voter is signed up for email or text election reminders, they will receive notifications about elections at every level in their community. TurboVote reminders are a powerful tool to increase turnout among voters who might otherwise only turn out for a presidential or congressional election.

## Employing TurboVote in Voter Outreach

Incorporating TurboVote into your organization's voter outreach strategy will increase access to voter registration and information in your community. Here are some effective ways to engage voters using TurboVote:

- **Embed TurboVote into existing processes**
  - TurboVote can be integrated into existing digital platforms. For example, subsidized housing providers can add a banner, button, or logo that links to TurboVote in their resident services portal.
  - If your organization has a program application, you can add a question that asks voters if they would like to register to vote or receive election information, and link to TurboVote if the user selects "yes."
  - [See here](#) for more detailed information.
- **Add TurboVote to an organizational website**
  - TurboVote can be added to high-traffic pages, like your organization's home page. Embedding TurboVote in a prominent location on your website demonstrates your organization's dedication to civic engagement and encourages people in your network to get ready for upcoming elections.
  - [See here](#) for more detailed information.

- **Emails, texts, and resident portal communications**

- A mass email, text blast, or reminder through a resident services portal is an easy way to reach a large audience. Consider sending an email from your CEO or executive director, or from a tenant leader who can speak to the importance of civic engagement in their own life.
- To make an email as effective as possible, put the TurboVote link towards the top of your message and include large, clickable graphics that direct readers to TurboVote.
- [See here](#) for sample language from TurboVote that you can adapt to best engage those in your community
- To build enthusiasm about voting, consider sending your message on one of the nonpartisan [Civic Holidays](#): National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, or Election Hero Day. Each Civic Holiday will also offer sample text and graphics that you can incorporate in your message.

- **Social media**

- TurboVote can be promoted on all social media sites. [See here](#) for guidance and sample social media messages from TurboVote, and [here](#) for sample graphics and a media toolkit from *Our Homes, Our Votes*.
- To connect with your audience, organize social media “takeover days” where tenant leaders and advocates share about their experience using TurboVote and how it has helped them prepare for upcoming elections.
- Remember to tag @TurboVote and @OurHomesVotes in your posts so we can amplify your message to a broader audience!

- **Posters and flyers**

- Posting posters and flyers in the common space of an apartment building, the lobby of an organization’s office, or another space that receives significant foot traffic is an easy way to make elections visible in your community and encourage voter turnout.
- *Our Homes, Our Votes* has downloadable “Get Ready to Vote” posters [here](#) with a QR code to TurboVote. Hang these posters to direct your community members to TurboVote, remind them about upcoming elections, and encourage them to turn out to vote!

- **Swag**

- Distribute stickers, buttons, magnets, or other swag that includes the QR code to TurboVote. Swag is great to have on hand when canvassing or hosting a voter registration drive, and will leave community members with a reminder of the importance of voting.
- [TurboVote magnets](#) are available for purchase in both English and Spanish on NLIHC’s Shopify page.

- **Tabling**

- Hosting weekly, biweekly, or monthly voter registration tables in high-traffic areas weaves civic engagement into the fabric of everyday life, and reminds community members that there are always people available to answer any questions they have.
- Be sure to choose a location with reliable internet connection. You may choose to have a printed QR code that directs visitors to TurboVote on their own phones, or use shared laptops or tablets that visitors can use to register.
- If using shared laptops or tablets, refresh your browser window after each user signs up for TurboVote. Avoid clicking the back button through each page, which might override the previous person's information. Save your TurboVote URL in your favorites bar to make this easy!
- See [here](#) for more best practices on using QR codes and tabling.

- **Canvassing**

- In addition to tabling, incorporate TurboVote into door-to-door voter registration canvassing. Bring tablets for online voter registration, as well as flyers with TurboVote QR codes so that residents can register on their own phones with volunteer guidance.

### **Project onscreen at a conference**

- If your organization is hosting a conference and projecting slides, such as sponsor ads, consider adding a TurboVote QR code to the slideshow. Displaying information about voter registration will demonstrate your organization's commitment to nonpartisan civic engagement and remind your attendees to get ready for upcoming elections!

Do you have a creative idea for TurboVote promotion that isn't included on this document? Reach out to [ourhomes@nlihc.org](mailto:ourhomes@nlihc.org) to tell us about it!

## **Measuring Engagement**

[Our Homes, Our Votes Affiliates](#) and members of the [Housing Providers Council](#) can receive custom TurboVote referral codes. These referral codes will enable *Our Homes, Our Votes* to report metrics on how many people registered to vote and/or signed up for election reminders through your organization's outreach. By requesting a referral code, you can track how many individuals are signing up for TurboVote, which demonstrates the impact of encouraging civic engagement and makes the case for long-term investments.

Please email Courtney Cooperman, project manager of *Our Homes, Our Votes*, at [ccooperman@nlihc.org](mailto:ccooperman@nlihc.org) for more information about receiving a custom referral code.