

BEST PRACTICES FOR REGISTERING LOW-INCOME RENTERS |

There are numerous legitimate reasons that low-income renters are registered to vote at lower rates than higher-income households. Here are some tips for overcoming common challenges in registration drives.

- **VOTER APATHY** – Messaging matters. There have been numerous studies that indicate low-income people are more likely to register to vote and turn out on Election Day if they are engaged with a positive message. Always rely on an individual's personal experience and connect that to the process for social change and do so in a hopeful way. Never provide a message reminding voters of their tremendous daily challenges because this will bolster feelings of despair from already having seen the repeated failures of weak social safety net and other institutions. Instead, remind low-income renters that their vote is about a new future for their neighborhood, community, or family. Discuss opportunities for change. Be prepared to share reminders of recent very close elections where a small number of votes determined the difference.
- **TURN FRUSTRATION INTO A PURPOSE** – Use an issue voters are frustrated with as a reason to continue to vote. Pivot to solutions to the problems, and remind the voter that their opponents are standing up and being counted when working in the opposite direction. If they are frustrated that all politicians are the same, that their candidates always lose, etc., you might tell them that you share the same concern and that is why you are registering voters to elect new leaders.
- **REMIND SUBSIDIZED RENTERS THEY HAVE SOMETHING AT STAKE** – If you are organizing in public housing or registering low-income renters in specific properties, you should encourage them to protect their housing program by voting. There can be three important aspects of this message:
 - I. Housing programs are always being threatened with budget cuts, and the voter's affordable home needs to be supported at the ballot.
 - II. Improvements to repair subsidized properties require better budget support, and elected leaders know who votes in high numbers. When residents of subsidized properties turn out to vote, elected officials will pay more attention to their concerns.
 - III. Discuss the number of people in a voter's family or community who aren't fortunate enough to have subsidized housing and experience hardship while on the waiting list. Remind the voter that housing programs need to be protected AND expanded, which requires strong political leaders who represent the interests of low-income renters.