



*"To Build and Sustain Strong Communities Where All People Can Thrive"*

### **Voter Engagement Member Spotlight: The Community Builders**

As a mission-driven housing provider, increasing civic engagement and ballot access among our residents is an important goal for The Community Builders (TCB). We believe that engaged voters are essential to a healthy, equitable community. The Community Builders' Community Life team works in partnership with resident leaders and other stakeholders to ensure 90% of eligible residents are registered to vote. Community Life (CL) staff reported 91% of eligible residents were registered to vote by June 2021.

An important strategy for boosting civic engagement, that allows many other strategies to be successful, is building trusting relationships with residents. Of course, this involves a separate set of strategies not to be discussed here. However, providing information and support to residents, such as voting, is a key activity.

Effective voter registration strategies vary depending on the community and local laws. **At TCB, the Property Management (PM) and Community Life teams work collaboratively to ensure that multilingual voter registrations forms are available at new resident move-ins, and annual recertifications, as well as in management offices, and in community spaces. CL staff send out birthday cards to residents turning 18 that include a voter registration form. Moreover, CL team members call residents to offer assistance with postage. CL professionals are charged with the responsibility of helping residents navigate the barriers to registration and voting.**

Virtual voter registration is an option in 42 states and that helps address the traditional challenges of transportation and postage. It's easy to put the link in your email signature. Do you have a computer lab at your property? Post the link or make it the home page. Ask residents as they come in if they are ready to vote in the fall, and help them register electronically, if needed.

**Involve youth, those not yet able to vote.** Incorporate civic engagement activities to after school programs. Organize a tour of City/Town Hall and meet some elected officials. Have the youth make posters and set up voter registration tables in warmer weather. It is amazing to see their excitement in registering someone to vote.

We have found that some residents are intimidated by registration barriers or distrust public institutions that haven't addressed their concerns. They are discouraged by the political atmosphere or believe their vote doesn't make an impact. Talk to them about local elections. How do they feel about the local questions that will be on the next ballot? Do they want a casino in their city/town, for example? Should marijuana be legalized? Remind them of other

