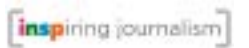


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STREETZine is a program of The Stewpot and a member of **International Network of Street Papers**



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Experiencing Homelessness Makes Voting a Challenge

By Nicole Kiser

The last time I voted, I went to the local community college and got in line. I had forgotten my voter registration card, but the poll workers accepted my driver's license as sufficient identification and gave me the card to use the ballot machine. We voted, got our stickers, and returned to our car. All and all, we were in and out in maybe 15 minutes — probably less. This year promises to pose more problems for potential voters, and, for those experiencing homelessness, the obstacles can loom even larger.

Registering

For most of us, registering to vote in Texas is a breeze. When you apply for or renew your license, you check a little box, and you get your voter registration card in the mail a few weeks later. For others, Texas's voter registration is more of a nightmare.

Texas does not have online voter registration. If you want to register to vote, you can either register in person at a County Voter Registrar's office, or you can request a ballot to be mailed from the Texas's Secretary of State's website. And here many people face their first obstacle.

Transportation

Those experiencing homelessness often do not have reliable access to transportation. While services like

the Dallas Connector have been created to try to help people reach essential services, they cannot possibly travel to every location. Reaching the County Voter Registrar's office to register in person may mean asking someone for a ride, spending needed resources on bus fair, or even spending an entire day walking.

Mail-in Registration

Mailing in a registration may seem like an easier option for those experiencing homelessness, but registering by mail poses its own challenges. Many do not have access to the internet, making even requesting a registration form difficult. And without

For most of us, registering to vote in Texas is a breeze... For others, Texas's voter registration is more of a nightmare.

a residential address, many rely on shelters, day centers or a friend's address to receive their mail. Reliable access to mail isn't always a guarantee, as some have to travel to these locations and often be available at specific times to be able to receive their mail. This may make receiving, and returning, their registration cards nearly impossible, even when the

IMPORTANT VOTER INFORMATION ON PAGE 5

registration forms are postage-paid.

While the Texas voter registration form allows people to describe where they live if they do not live in a typical residential address, registering from a nonresidential address makes one more exposed to challenges. According to Texas law, one voter can challenge the vote of another based on "personal knowledge" that they do not meet the qualifications for voting. The state then attempts to confirm the voter's registration by mail. Since those experiencing homelessness often do not have reliable access to mail, they can have their voter's registration suspended and canceled without even knowing it.

Identification

Additionally, registering to vote in Texas means submitting your Texas driver's license number, your Texas personal identification number or the last four digits of your Social Security number. With unstable housing, those experiencing homelessness have often lost essential identification paperwork to constant moving, weather, theft and police sweeps of

homeless camps.

You can register to vote by checking a box saying you don't have any of these forms of identification.

The Voting Process

Even if one manages to register, all of these problems return when one actually tries to vote. It's difficult to reach the polls for those without reliable access to transportation. For those experiencing homelessness, they may have been forced to relocate to a location or shelter that is not even near the district in which they were registered.

Unreliable mail access can make voting by mail nearly impossible as well. In Texas, most people are not

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WHAT SHOULD WE COVER NEXT? FILL OUT OUR SURVEY AT:
<https://bit.ly/2WbMRsg>

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STREET *Zine*

STREET *Zine* is a program of The Stewpot.



The STREET *Zine* is a monthly newspaper published by The Stewpot, a ministry of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas. The Stewpot provides services and resources for people experiencing homelessness or who are at risk of being homeless. The organization also offers opportunities for a new life.

As part of this ministry, the STREET *Zine* seeks to raise awareness about the issues surrounding homelessness and poverty. At the same time, the monthly publication offers financial opportunity for homeless clients who sell the paper to Dallas residents. Vendors are able to move towards economic self-sufficiency by using the money they receive from selling copies to purchase bus passes, food, and necessary living expenses. Clients also receive stipends for contributing articles to STREET *Zine*.

The content in STREET *Zine* does not necessarily reflect the views or endorsement of its publisher, editors, contributors, sponsors, or advertisers. To learn more about this publication, contact Suzanne Erickson, Director of Educational and Workforce Programs, 1835 Young Street, Dallas, Texas 75201 or SuzanneE@thestewpot.org. And to read more about STREET *Zine*, a member of the International Network of Street Papers, go to www.thestewpot.org/streetzine.

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A Letter from the Executive Director

By Brenda Snitzer

As our high school government classes taught us, the U.S. Constitution gives American citizens the right to vote. But, for most of our country's history, it has been a privilege for some and not a right for everyone.

Women were not granted the right to vote until 1920, when Congress passed the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. And men and women of color were not given that right until President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act into law in 1965 with bipartisan support.

Still, despite the protections of the 19th Amendment and the Voting Rights Act, too much disenfranchisement remains in our country's election system. Put simply, we make it hard for some people to register and vote.

Consider the policies and practices that govern voter registration — and that vary state-by-state. In Texas, you must register by certain dates to vote, and voters may not realize those deadlines.

For the November 3rd Presidential election, the deadline for registering is October 5th. A registration form must be filled out and postmarked by that deadline. Texas does not allow online registration for most people.

The good news is that The Stewpot can assist with this process. We have voter registration cards. If given to The Stewpot staff by Monday, October 5th at noon, we will take those cards to the post office. Anyone without a home address, can use The Stewpot address on the application: 1835 Young Street, Dallas, TX 75201.

The Stewpot also has a number of voter ID cards that clients previously have requested. We encourage those clients to see if their requested card is here so they can participate in early voting from October 13th thru October 30th or on Election Day, Tuesday, November 3rd. Many early voting locations exist around downtown and throughout Dallas.

ID documents also put a burden on those trying to vote, especially those experiencing homelessness. Even though you may be eligible to vote as a citizen, coming up with an ID card can be challenging for people experiencing homelessness. Here, too, The Stewpot can assist. We regularly help clients obtain documents to establish their identity.

Transportation to the polling locations is an issue as well. That's why the Dallas Connector, a bus sys-

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tem for those experiencing homelessness, will add routes to its schedule on certain days during early voting and on November 3rd. The schedule will be available closer to October 13th and can be found from one of the Connector partners: Austin Street Shelter, CitySquare, North Texas Behavioral Authority, Our Calling, Salvation Army and The Stewpot.

Several shelters may also assist their guests in getting to the polls. Salvation Army, for example, will use their vans to transport clients to polling locations during early voting and on Election Day.

Of course, misinformation can create confusion for potential voters. Incorrect information regarding who can vote or where they can vote are common examples. And a misperception exists that, if you have been convicted of a crime, you cannot vote. That is true in a few states, but not in Texas — if you have completed your prison sentence, probation or parole. You can still register to vote if you have completed those.

Being a well-informed voter about candidates and races is important for our democracy. An excellent resource for obtaining candidate information is the League of Women's Voters. The nonpartisan organization provides information about all races and candidates are. You can find this at: <https://www.lwvdallas.org/>

You can also see if you are registered to vote by going to <https://www.votetexas.gov/> Be sure and check several different ways if it initially says you aren't registered. (It took me two times.)

If you cannot find your voter card when you go to the poll, you can present one of seven acceptable forms of photo ID. They include a Texas driver's license, a Texas election ID certificate, a Texas personal ID card, a Texas handgun license, a U.S. citizenship certificate with photo, a U.S. military ID card with photo, and a U.S. passport.

Most of all, register to vote — and vote. That is our civic duty as citizens, and one that our Constitution guarantees and protects.

Brenda Snitzer is executive director of The Stewpot.

The Pastor's Letter

By The Rev. Rebecca Chancellor Sicks

This essay is adapted from a sermon Rev. Sicks gave on August 9.

From Genesis to Revelation, the Bible tells of God's desire for justice and righteousness. There is no shortage of scripture calling us to follow in the way of God's justice and righteousness: caring for the orphans, the widows and the foreigners; providing for the poor, the weak and those in need of food and clothing; and seeking equity for the oppressed. In the words of the prophet Micah, God requires us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God.

One of the ways we can do justice today is through advocacy for the oppressed and marginalized. We have the power to use our voice. The Spirit of God can work in and through us to do the will of God, to enact justice.

With the right to vote, each of us can continue the work of justice and advocacy today.

In the book of Esther, we hear the story of King Ahasuerus who accepted money and granted permission for all of the Jews to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. But Queen Esther was herself a Jew, and she realized the power of her position and her voice to speak up on behalf of herself and her people. With the encouragement of Mordecai, the man who had adopted her as his own, Esther put her own life on the line to go to the king and make the request for her people to be saved.

Esther refused to be silent and stepped out in faith that she was the right person in the right time to speak up on behalf of people who were in danger. Even though it was against the law to approach the king at that time, Esther recognized she was in a unique position as the queen, and she went before the king to use her voice to advocate for others. Esther's courage and advocacy saved her people.

One of the ways we can use our voice to advocate for the lives of others is

to vote. I believe that voting is a spiritual act when we pay attention to the issues before us, consider how our vote will play out to care for the poor and the oppressed, and cast a vote in line with our deepest beliefs about God's desire for justice for all people. When we vote, we have an opportunity to do justice and love kindness and walk humbly with God.

As we approach our Election Day on November 3rd, I am humbled by and grateful for countless women who have chosen to use their voice and who have advocated for themselves and for others. This year commemorates the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in our country. A century ago, even before my own grandmothers were born, women used their voices and put their own lives on the line in order to be counted, to have a say in their own lives and to give input to our leaders in government. It was a decades-long fight, but in 1920, many women won the right to vote, paving the way for women's rights.

The path for women's suffrage opened 100 years ago, but even in that moment, there was still more work to be done. As with much of our history, making way for all women to exercise the right to vote was complicated and messy.

When the 19th amendment was ratified, many women were still not able to vote because of Jim Crow laws. Many Native Americans were not able to vote because they were not considered citizens of the United States. For decades after women's suffrage was initially

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won, racist laws, intimidation, poll taxes and literacy tests kept many women of color from voting. It wasn't until the Voting Act of 1965 that much of that was changed.

With gratitude for all of the women who have come before me and done the important work of advocacy, I recognize my place in the story today to use my position to advocate for the poor and the oppressed. With the right to vote, each of us can continue the work of justice and advocacy today. We vote because we are aware that God's realm is not yet a reality here on earth. We vote because there are people in need of leaders that care about the people they serve and in need of laws that serve all people and not just some. Voting allows us to state what we believe God wants for the world in making a choice between candidates or courses of action.

Consider this time and your place in the story. God still desires justice and righteousness. Like Esther, are you the right person in this time to speak up on behalf of people in danger? Will you use the voice God gave you in making it to the polls to vote this election season? Will you see casting a vote as a spiritual act as you advocate for God's people?

The Rev. Rebecca Chancellor Sicks is associate pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas.

Creating a System to Help People Experiencing Homelessness Vote: A Conversation with Carl Falconer

By Bill McKenzie

Carl Falconer serves as president and CEO of the Metro Dallas Homeless Alliance (MDHA), which leads the development of an effective homeless response system in Dallas and Collin Counties. He spoke with STREET-Zine editorial board members Brenda Snitzer, Suzanne Erickson, Nicole Kiser and Bill McKenzie about the challenges people experiencing homelessness face in voting, while also offering solutions to help them exercise their right to vote.

What have you seen in the past about the diffi-

culties of homeless citizens in Dallas being able to vote? What are some of the most prominent barriers?

First, information or a lack of information. They often don't know where to go vote, when they are supposed to vote or even if there is an election.

The second is identification. Not having an ID or a valid photo ID is a big issue in general. Even if they get registered, often having an ID from day to day is precarious at best.

An Austin man experiencing homelessness told Texas Monthly earlier this year that "It's not that hard to get an ID, but it's work, it's a couple days out of your life, and there are a lot of folks who don't have the horsepower to make that trip." Is this as true in Dallas?

Absolutely, and even more so with Covid-19. A lot of state offices are only doing appointments. We have had cases where people need identification, and it takes them four weeks to get an appointment to get an ID. When it comes to voting, you could miss an entire election cycle in the amount of time it takes to get an ID.

I would argue with the gentlemen that it is not much work. It is taking two days out of your life. You ask anyone to take two days out of their life, especially when it is something as simple as getting an ID, a lot of people are not going to do that.

Many of us take getting an ID for granted. The last time I got one, it took me 15 minutes. I had a car to get to my appointment. I had other forms of identification to bring in. And I could set it up for a specific time where I could avoid the crowds.

Taking two days to get an ID is not at all unusual for people experiencing homelessness. That is too much work and too long.

"The easiest thing to do in Dallas would be to get something like the Dallas Connector that goes around to different agencies. You could use the polling station as one of the places it stops. You could tell people experiencing homelessness that you have an efficient way to get them to early voting. Even if they don't get off the first time, stopping at a voting site would reinforce that we want them to vote and that they are eligible to vote."

Are mail-in ballots more helpful for people experiencing homelessness than getting to the polls? Or are mail-in ballots less helpful for people who may lack a home or shelter?

They are more helpful, but you run into issues: How do you get them a mail-in ballot? How do you get them turned in? Some agencies have tried to make it easier to vote through a mail-in ballot.

The more effective method I have seen is getting a transportation system set up to get people to early voting. They can get in to avoid crowds, assuming they have all their documentation.

In the homeless system, time is different. Five minutes to me may mean four hours for a person experiencing homelessness and who is in survival mode. If I am 30 minutes late to lunch, that's no big deal. I can get lunch someplace else. But being 30 minutes late for lunch for someone who is homeless means not eating.

The amount of time it takes to do something really matters. And they have other issues they are working on, whether that is getting a meal or finding shelter. Voting may be a low priority because it is not a survival mechanism for them. Whether they vote or don't vote may not affect them immediately, not like whether their bellies will be full and whether they will have housing tomorrow. Voting doesn't have the immediate effect on them with the amount of time they have to spend on it.

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Registering to Vote

By Jennifer Nagorka

You must register before you can vote.

To be eligible to register you must:

- Be a resident of the county where you want to vote.
- Be a U. S. citizen.
- Be at least 17 years and 10 months old and have your 18th birthday before election day.
- Not be finally convicted of a felony, or if you are a felon, you must have finished all of your punishment, including any term of incarceration, parole, supervision, or probation, or you must have received a pardon.
- Not have been determined by a judge to be totally or partially mentally incapacitated without the right to vote.

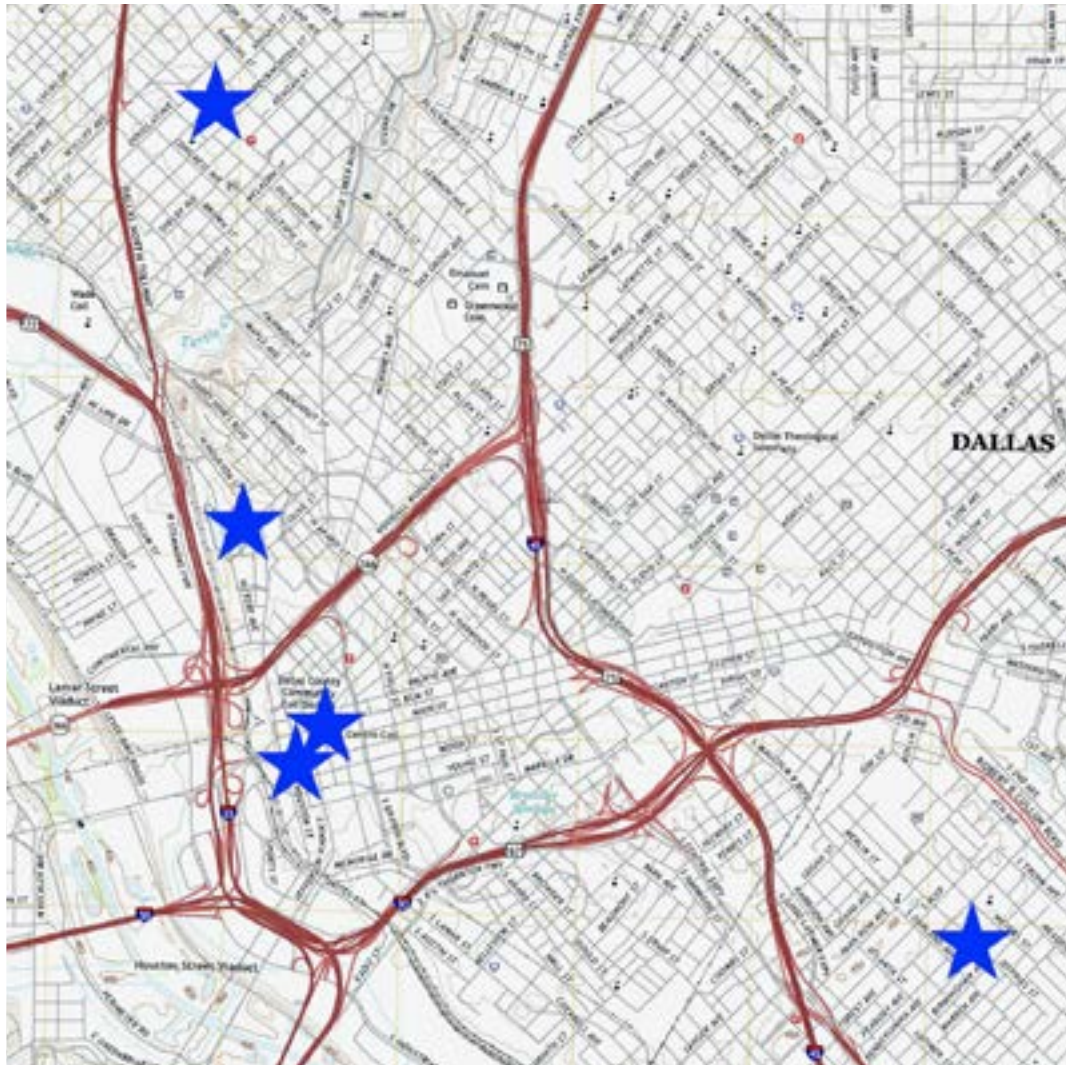
To register to vote:

Dallas County residents can download and print [this form](#). Read and complete the application carefully. Fold the form with the postage permit and address on the outside. Seal the open edge, then drop it in a mailbox. You can also find pre-printed forms at post offices, The Stewpot reception desk, and in the Dallas Connector. The preprinted forms can be completed, folded up and sealed, and dropped in the mail.

If you live in another county, you can download

[this voter registration application](#). After completing the form, place it in an envelope, stamp it, and mail it to the elections department of the county where you live. A list of county election departments is [here](#).

Your voter registration application must be post-marked by Monday, October 5 if you want to vote in the November 3 election.



- Texas Personal ID Card
- Texas Handgun Permit
- U.S. Citizenship Certificate with photo
- U. S. Military ID card with photo
- U.S. Passport (book or card)

Early voting is October 13-30.

Voters registered in Dallas County can vote at any polling place in the county. Polls are open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. The county plans to open several early voting sites within three miles of The Stewpot, including:

1. **El Centro Main Campus**, 801 Main Street
2. **George L. Allen Sr. Courts Building**, 600 Commerce Street
3. **Martin Luther King Jr. Recreation Center**, 2901 Pennsylvania Avenue
4. **American Airlines Center**, 2500 Victory Avenue
5. **Oak Lawn Branch Library**, 4100 Cedar Springs Road

Election Day is November 3

If you are registered in Dallas County, you may vote at any polling place in the county on election day. The county was still finalizing its list of voting sites as of mid-September, but most early voting sites will be open on election day. Check for the most current information at

dallascountyvotes.org.

Voting Information

You must bring one of the following forms of identification with you to the polls:

- Texas Driver License
- Texas Election ID Certificate

Jennifer Nagorka is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas. Map from USGS US Topo Maps.



Did You Know?

Clients can use The Stewpot address as their mailing address?

In addition, The Stewpot provides paper, envelopes, and covers postage to clients sending mail out.



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Stimulus Payment Requirements Due October 15

By Jake Maher

The deadline to use the IRS's tool that ensures people who do not usually submit a tax return receive their stimulus payment is coming up. Washington DC's Street Sense Media wrote this primer.

The IRS is using its Non-Filers Tool to ensure that people who do not usually submit a tax return receive their stimulus payment, with deadlines approaching on Sept. 30 and Oct. 15. The Non-Filers Tool is an option for people with incomes typically below \$24,400 for married couples, and \$12,200 for singles, including couples and individuals who are experiencing homelessness.

Many received their stimulus payment earlier in the year, but for people who do not usually file tax returns, the IRS may not have enough information to determine if they're eligible.

Non-filers with children who did not receive a payment of \$500 per qualifying child have until Sept. 30 to provide the necessary information via the Non-Filers Tool, [found online here](#). The pay-



ments will be made by mid-October, the IRS estimates.

Non-filers who did not receive their baseline stimulus payment of \$1200 have until Oct. 15 to submit their information at the same web address, according to a [news release](#) from the agency.

Many received their stimulus payment earlier in the year, but for people who do not usually file tax returns, the IRS may not have enough information to determine if they're eligible. Around Sept. 24, the IRS will start mailing letters to the last known address of roughly 9 million non-filers who may be eligible for a stimulus payment. To address fraud concerns, a [copy of the letter](#) can be found on their website.

Eligible people to use this tool include anyone with qualifying children who receive Social Security retirement, survivor or disability benefits,

Supplemental Security Income, Railroad Retirement benefits, or Veterans Affairs Compensation and Pension (C&P) benefits who did not file a tax return in 2018 or 2019.

If eligible non-filers miss these deadlines, they will not be able to receive these payments until they file a tax return in 2021. The "economic impact payments" are tax credits that have been made available in advance.

Families and individuals who are eligible to receive special tax benefits, such as the Earned Income Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit, cannot use the Non-Filers Tool and will instead need to file a regular return by using [IRS Free File](#) or by another method within the same Sept. 30 and Oct. 15 deadlines.

Courtesy of Street Sense Media / INSP.ngo

View from the Street: Vicki on Voting

By Sarah Disasa

The year 2020 has been a long one thus far, and we still have another three months before we are out of it. It has felt overwhelming with a devastating virus, a significant economic downturn, a national reckoning on race, untamable wildfires, brewing hurricanes and, still on the horizon, the presidential election on November 3rd. No matter who you are voting for, it will likely seem like a long month of October simply because of all the campaign ads, the fact-checking and the uncertainty about when the election results will be declared.

The right to vote is a defining part of our democracy, and it has evolved over the course of our nation's history with various amendments. However, actually voting on Election Day — being registered to vote, having transportation to the polls and possessing the necessary documentation to vote — is a privilege.

As a new resident of Texas myself, I registered to vote when I got my Texas driver's license. It was a simple process for me. I drove to the Texas Department of Public Safety at the specified time of my appointment that I scheduled in advance online. I showed up with all of my documentation including my driver's license application, proof of citizenship, proof of residency, proof of identity, proof of insurance, my vehicle registration and my Social Security card. With all that proof, I was able to get a Texas driver's license and register to vote all in one visit. So, I was set for Election Day.

But what about those without a valid form of identification? What about those without access to online information? What about those without necessary communication skills, whether that be a language barrier or a literacy barrier? What about those without a home address? Their votes count just as much as mine and everyone else's.

Vicki, a client of The Stewpot, shared some of her thoughts on the upcoming election. When asked if she were planning to vote on November 3rd, her response was an emphatic, "Oh yeah!" Vicki has been a registered voter since 2004. At that time, registering to vote was an easy process for her because she was not experiencing homelessness, and she had a Texas ID card.

For people on the margins of society, obstacles that differentiate the right to vote from the privilege to vote stand in the way. In Vicki's opinion, the biggest obstacles to voting are lack of communication and transportation.

Had Vicki not registered to vote at a time when she had a stable living situation, planning to vote in November would still be her right; but having a voter registration card, having transportation to the polls to vote and having the necessary form of identification would be a privilege that she may not have.



Vicki Gies distributing papers to other STREETZine vendors.

At least not easily. For people on the margins of society, obstacles that differentiate the right to vote from the privilege to vote stand in the way. In Vicki's opinion, the biggest obstacles to voting are lack of communication and transportation.

How will Vicki prepare for the upcoming election? "Even though my phone is old, I still have a phone," she said. Vicki gets her political news from the internet on her phone, "When it keeps a charge," she added. She doesn't spend her money on newspapers, but she said that she will glance at the headlines when she goes to a convenience store. On November 3rd, Vicki plans to take DART to her precinct, present her ID and voter registration card, and cast her ballot.

Sarah Disasa is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and the STREETZine Editorial Advisory Board.

Masks Needed

Ship directly to:
The Stewpot
Attn: Courtney Ray-Riddle
1835 Young Street
Dallas TX 75201



Vision Health Care Day
Friday, October 16, 2020
9am-3pm
Outdoor Parking Lot at FPC Dallas
(1835 Young Street, Dallas)

Monica Chavez: A new voter heads to the polls

By Poppy Sundeen

Turning 18 is a milestone. It brings new freedoms, adventures and opportunities. For Monica Chavez, it was all that — plus the thrill of receiving a birthday gift she knew she'd cherish for the rest of her life: the right to vote.

She was registered and ready, thanks to a program at her school, Adamson High in Oak Cliff. "People came to the school and talked to the kids who were near voting age," she explains. "They helped us register." Monica was pleasantly surprised by the process. "I didn't think it would be that easy."

Her yellow voter registration card arrived promptly, but the process didn't go as smoothly for one of her close friends. "He registered in school like I did but didn't get his card in the mail, so he went online and found out that he wasn't registered after all. He's working it out, because he really wants to vote."

Her friend's experience reinforced the importance of double-checking registration, poll locations and hours.

Her first vote, with many more to come

A few months later, Monica exercised her newfound right by voting in a primary election. "The polling place was nearby, at my old elementary school. I went right after class and before work. It all went pretty fast."

She went home that evening wearing her "I voted" sticker. "My older sister hadn't gone to the polls yet. She admired my sticker, and I was so proud."



Chavez, center, with the other Venturing Crew officers her senior year of high school. She was vice president.

"It's about putting in the effort to make positive changes in society. If we don't vote, we don't have a say."

Now that Monica knows the ropes, she's eager to vote in her first presidential election.

A family tradition of voting

Monica's sister, brother and parents are all seasoned voters. "My parents came here in their teens from Guanajuato, Mexico. They started voting soon after they became U.S. citizens."

Over the years, family members have helped one another get to the polls. "My mom doesn't drive, so if Dad can't take her, my sister does. If somebody isn't able to get around, someone else will take them."

The Chavez family makes voting a priority. "It's about putting in the effort to make positive changes in society. If we don't vote, we don't have a say."

Speaking out on the issues

Having a say is important to Monica, especially when it comes to the issue of immigration. "It's hard to watch people being treated like criminals when they come here to try and make a better life for themselves and get an education for their children."

Her own family serves as an example of achieving those goals. Monica's older sister graduated from the University of North Texas in Denton. Her brother is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin, and Monica is currently attending Mountain View Community College with plans to transfer to Texas State University in San Marcos.

"I'm majoring in math and minoring in education and sign language." Her plan is to teach and pass along the value of education to future generations.

Monica is already giving back through her work as a Stewpot staff member. She helps distribute much-needed food to Dallas area families and individuals. "I've been involved with The Stewpot since I was 10 or 11," she explains,

"starting with the Kids' Program."

Getting out the vote

Despite the demands of work and studies, Monica finds time to keep up with election news. She uses online resources to learn about candidates. "Social media is good for sharing information and for encouraging people to vote, especially young people."

She credits social media with motivating new voters to exercise their right to choose tomorrow's leaders. "Even before I was voting age I saw lots of posts about it. I was excited about turning 18 and being able to vote."



Chavez, second from the right, on a Venturing Crew trip to NASA.

Monica hopes that candidate information and voting messages also reach those who don't follow social media. "Not everyone has access to the internet," she points out. Her hope is to expand voter participation as much as possible. "Maybe there could be more polling places or ways to help people get to the polls."

The privilege and responsibility of voting

To Monica, voting is a duty. "Every citizen should put their opinion out there. If we don't vote, nothing will get better."

She also sees voting as a privilege to cherish. "There are people who can't vote and want change but can't do anything about it."

Monica looks forward to many years of using her vote to help shape the future of our city, our state and our nation.

Poppy Sundeen, a Dallas writer, is a member of the STREETZine Editorial Advisory Board.

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Please check TheStewpot.org for virtual volunteer opportunities. There are no in-person volunteer openings at this time.

Continued from page 4

So, the easier you can make voting, the better. Mail-in ballots are definitely valid and helpful. But you have to be careful. You don't want to be accused of filling out ballots for people or deciding how they vote — even if it is only perception.

I recommend a structured process for places that help homeless people in voting so you can clarify for anyone from the outside that you didn't influence their vote. After all, it is their vote. All we are trying to do as a homeless response system is to make it easier for them to vote.

What transportation options exist to get people experiencing homelessness to the polls in Dallas – or, for that matter, in other cities? Any interesting examples?

I do not know of anything in Dallas. But you would need to set up a process. The easiest thing to do in Dallas would be to get something like the Dallas Connector bus that goes around to different agencies. You could use the polling station as one of the places it stops. You could tell people experiencing homelessness that you have an efficient way to get them to early voting. Then, it becomes a matter of promoting this cycle at different agencies.

That's a great idea. Anything else you know about in other cities?

The most I have seen is agencies setting up a vehicle to take clients to polling sites. Again, you would need a regular cycle.

Beyond transportation, I have seen some offer a sample ballot so people could see who is on the

ballot. But you shouldn't offer any descriptors other than this is who is on the ballot.

How much of a factor is isolation? Do people living on the streets feel too disconnected from a campaign or an election to get involved?

It's a combination of factors. Being in survival mode is one reason they don't vote.

But when you talk to people, they often don't see the connection between voting and their circumstances. It is hard to get them to see how voting might affect their situation. They think providers can help them with services.

We need to convince them that voting helps us as providers. The policies and legislation affect us as providers, so those policies and laws could help them in return. But it's hard to make the connection. It's just three levels down before it gets to them.

How might they get information about candidates? What are organizations doing to distribute information?

The best I have heard of is the League of Women Voters. But for our population, it has to be the providers. If homeless individuals are not getting voting information from providers, they are not going to get it. The information has to come from MDHA, the Stewpots, Our Callings, the Bridges. And it has to be done like you do by putting up information about dialing 411. You would need to put up posters in multiple locations.

Putting a voting stop on the Dallas Connector route would call their attention to voting. Even if they don't get off the first time, stopping at a

voting site would reinforce that we want them to vote and that they are eligible to vote.

Since so much information and debate has moved online, how is this affecting how those experiencing homelessness receive and discuss information?

Being online makes it a lot harder. Our providers have to supply the education, and it's harder for them to do so with information being online. It's easier to hand out something or turn on the TV set, which most of our providers have.

What issues do you hear about from people experiencing homelessness? What public problems do they want solved?

Housing is the biggest thing. Immigration is a big one, too. Another is criminal justice reform. Making sure the police have enough resources to keep crime down and how the police interact with people experiencing homelessness is a big topic.

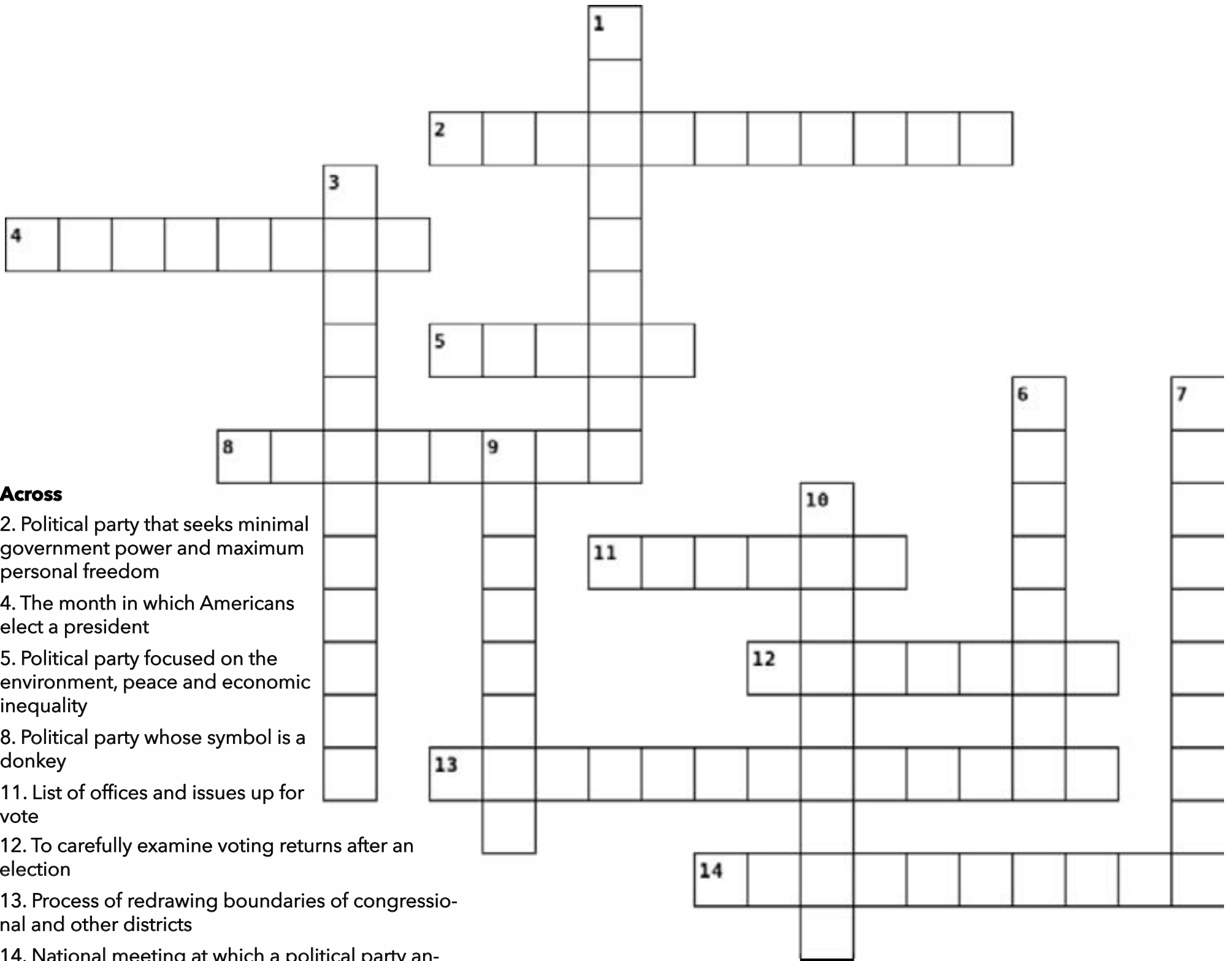
Are those experiencing homelessness more commonly interested in local, state or national elections?

I have never heard them talk about Congress or the state, except for a governor. I do hear them talk about the president. And, locally, they may mention a mayor or a City Council person. So, they more likely would address local issues, especially when they hear politicians talking about issues like panhandling or loitering in a park. They know that affects them.

Bill McKenzie is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas and the STREETZine Editorial Advisory Board.

Election Day

By Jennifer Nagorka



Across

- 2. Political party that seeks minimal government power and maximum personal freedom
- 4. The month in which Americans elect a president
- 5. Political party focused on the environment, peace and economic inequality
- 8. Political party whose symbol is a donkey
- 11. List of offices and issues up for vote
- 12. To carefully examine voting returns after an election
- 13. Process of redrawing boundaries of congressional and other districts
- 14. National meeting at which a political party announces its candidate for president

Down

- 1. Top office on the ballot in November
- 3. State that holds the first primary in presidential election years
- 6. Elections in which candidates run as members of a party
- 7. Political party whose symbol is an elephant
- 9. Eligible citizens must do this before they can vote
- 10. How most candidates fund a run for office

Key to August Crossword: Back-to-School Days			
Across	13. Smart Board	Down	10. Cafeteria
2. Dismissal	15. Recess	1. Library	12. Homework
3. Backpacks	16. Principal	4. Classroom	14. Attendance
7. Grades	18. Pencil	5. Whiteboard	16. Phonics
8. Fountain	19. Teacher	6. Finals	17. Lockers
11. Physical Education		9. Uniform	

Continued from page 1

even eligible to vote by mail. Registered voters can ask for a mail-in ballot if: (1) they are 65 or older; (2) cite a disability or illness; (3) are in jail but still eligible to vote; or (4) will not be in the county for early voting or Election Day. While Texas's definition of disability is notably broad for elections, lack of immunity to COVID-19 does not qualify.

The difficulties the United States Postal Service is experiencing might affect the ability of people to vote by mail as well. People are going days without mail delivery, and mail is sometimes taking weeks to be delivered. USPS is responsible for the delivery of mail-in ballots. If someone does not receive their ballot, they have to vote at an in-person voting location, and, if their ballot is not delivered to the elections office in time, then their vote may not be counted.

Voting Identification

While you can register to vote in Texas by checking a box saying you don't have a Texas driver license, Texas personal identification number or a Social Security number, poll workers will ask you to show one of the acceptable forms of identification at the ballot box: (1) a Texas driver license, (2) a Texas Election Identification Certificate, (3) a Texas personal identification card, (4) a Texas concealed handgun license, (5) United States military identification card containing your photo, (6) United States citizenship certificate containing your photo or (7) a United States passport.

Obtaining these forms of identification can be a long, arduous, and expensive process. Because obtaining most forms of identification requires

verifying your identity in some way, even applying for a Texas Election Identification Certificate, which is free, can be difficult and costly. Finding birth certificates or other identification documents may require traveling to different county clerks' offices, paying for documents and sometimes paying for name changes to fix clerical errors. This is often time and money that those experiencing homelessness find difficult to spare.

The voting process has become such an expensive, time-consuming process that our most vulnerable citizens are just being squeezed out of the process.

What is lesser known in Texas is that voters that do not possess one of the acceptable forms of identification and cannot reasonably obtain one may present a supporting form of identification and sign a Reasonable Impediment Declaration stating their reason for not being able to obtain the identification, that the declaration is true and that the voter is who is appearing to sign the declaration. Texas allows these reasonable impediments: (1) lack of transportation, (2) disability or illness, (3) lack of birth certificate or other documents needed to obtain acceptable photo ID, (4) work schedule, (5) family responsibilities, (6) lost or stolen ID or (7) acceptable form of photo ID applied for but not received.

Supporting forms of identification include a copy

or original of: (1) a government document that shows the voter's name and an address, including the voter's voter registration certificate; (2) a current utility bill; (3) a bank statement; (4) a government check; (5) a paycheck; (6) a certified domestic birth certificate; (7) a document confirming birth admissible in a court of law which establishes the voter's identity (which may include a foreign birth document). While poll workers are supposed to offer the Reasonable Impediment Declaration form to those without a proper form of identification, poorly trained poll workers may not know about the form and may turn prospective voters away.

Voter Engagement

For those experiencing homelessness, voting can be a stack of obstacles that just does not seem worth it. As the digital age takes over, lack of access to the internet and other technology increasingly infringes on the ability of many to easily get information on candidates and policies, while lack of access to transportation, reliable mail and identification can impede the voting process.

These problems do not just affect those experiencing homelessness either. As the pandemic further affects families' finances and eviction moratoriums begin to expire, many are losing access to the resources and flexibility that made it possible for them to vote. The voting process has become such an expensive, time-consuming process that our most vulnerable citizens are just being squeezed out of the process.

Nicole Kiser is managing editor of STREETZine.



100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE 19TH AMENDMENT



A New York City parade staged in the fall of 1917 to gain support for woman suffrage. Photo courtesy of the League of Women Voters.

Voters' Round up in Edinburg, TX in 1950. Photo courtesy of the League of Women Voters.



Suffrage parade on October 23, 1915. Photo courtesy of the League of Women Voters.

Around The Stewpot: Identification Assistance Services

By Nicole Kiser

For this month's Around The Stewpot, STREETZine emailed with Lacy Schuiteman, a caseworker at The Stewpot, to ask for her insight into The Stewpot's Identification Assistance services.

The need for identification is a pressing issue for those experiencing homelessness. Essentials such as housing, employment, voting and applying for government assistance require a government-issued ID. "This was a more prevalent issue when the stimulus check was issued this year," said Lacy Schuiteman, a caseworker at The Stewpot, because even cashing a check requires showing identification.

Identification is, for many, the first step toward overcoming the barrier of homelessness, which is why The Stewpot offers Identification Assistance services. These services help those experiencing homelessness or recently released from jail or prison acquire identification so that they can obtain stable employment and housing.

Every morning at 8:00 am, The Stewpot begins intake services for Identification Assistance. The services are popular, so "clients are encouraged to arrive at The Stewpot before 7:00 am to make the

list," says Schuiteman, which is limited to eight clients with two standby slots.

The caseworkers see clients in the order they were put on the list, but the process varies by the individual. "We encourage individuals to bring any documents they have that prove who they are," says Schuiteman. Many don't have anything at all, but Schuiteman says that's okay. "We have multiple avenues to assist the individual."

Identification is, for many, the first step toward overcoming the barrier of homelessness.

And getting an ID can be really difficult for some clients. "Some may be able to get their ID replaced or renewed online the same day," says Schuiteman, but others may take 30 days or more, especially if other documentation is needed.

Other obstacles can make the process even more difficult. Multiple name changes can be hard to prove, and individuals that were never issued birth certificates must go through a difficult and lengthy process to obtain a Delayed Birth Certificate.

The REAL ID act also presents another obstacle. The REAL ID requires that an individual prove their lawful presence in the United States in order to apply for or renew an ID. For those with certified birth certificates, this process can be relatively

easy.

Those born outside the United States have to present a document such as a Permanent Resident Card. While 15 agencies rely on The Stewpot to help individuals establish legal identity, The Stewpot does not assist with immigration documents and must refer clients born outside the United States to Catholic Charities of Dallas for assistance.

This year has been especially difficult for clients trying to obtain identification. The Social Security Office is closed and the Department of Public Safety is by appointment only, limiting clients' avenues for obtaining identification.

But obtaining an ID is far from impossible. "I always encourage individuals to start with a Voter Registration Application," says Schuiteman, "It is free to register and does not require an ID. It's a common misconception that an individual cannot register to vote if they have been convicted of a felony. As long as the person has completed all of their punishment, including any term of parole or probation, they can register to vote. The Voter Registration card is a supporting document that the Department of Public Safety will accept for ID purposes. Starting with a Voter Registration application would be a great start for someone who wanted to help an individual with getting an ID. Linking the person with The Stewpot for ID assistance would be the next thing to do."

Nicole Kiser is managing editor of STREETZine.

HOW TO HELP



Meal Service
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StreetZine
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Street Newspapers - A Voice for the Homeless & Impoverished

What is STREETZine?

STREETZine is a nonprofit newspaper published by The Stewpot of First Presbyterian Church for the benefit of people living in poverty. It includes news, particularly about issues important to those experiencing homelessness. STREETZine creates direct economic opportunity. New vendors receive ten free papers. After the first ten, vendors pay twenty-five cents for a paper to be distributed for a one-dollar or more donation. Vendors typically profit seventy-five cents from each paper. Vendors are self-employed and set their own hours. Distributing STREETZine is protected by the First Amendment.

Advertise in STREETZine

Support STREETZine and its vendors with your business or personal advertisements and announcements.

\$25.00 - Business Card
(3.5 x 2)

\$50.00 - Box
(3.5 x 4)

\$100.00 - Jumbo
(6.5 x 5)

\$200.00 - Half Page
(6.5 x 10)

\$400.00 - Full Page
(12 x 10)

Email:
streetzine@thestewpot.org

STREETZine

Self-Help For People Living In Poverty

Distributing STREETZine is protected by the First Amendment.

STREETZine Vendors are self employed and set their own hours.

They are required to wear a vendor badge at all times when distributing the paper. In order to distribute STREETZine vendors agree to comply with Dallas City Ordinances.

If at any time you feel a vendor is in violation of any Dallas City Ordinance please contact us immediately with the vendor name or number at streetzine@thestewpot.org

CHAPTER 31, SECTION 31-35 of the Dallas City Code PANHANDLING OFFENSES

Solicitation by coercion; solicitation near designated locations and facilities; solicitation anywhere in the city after sunset and before sunrise any day of the week. Exception can be made on private property with advance written permission of the owner, manager, or other person in control of the property.

A person commits an offense if he conducts a solicitation to any person placing or preparing to place money in a parking meter.

The ordinance specifically applies to solicitations at anytime within 25 feet of:

- Automatic teller machines;
- Exterior public pay phones;
- Public transportation stops;
- Self service car washes;
- Self service gas pumps;
- An entrance or exit of a bank, credit union or similar financial institution;
- Outdoor dining areas of fixed food establishments.

What should we cover next? Fill out our survey at:
<https://bit.ly/2WbMRsg>

Sponsor a vendor for \$15.00*

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Please include the vendor's name and badge number on this form.

Vendor Name

Vendor #

Make checks or money orders payable to

The Stewpot and send them to:

STREETZine 1835 Young Street, Dallas, TX 75201

*If your vendor is no longer distributing papers your donation will be applied towards papers that are shared among active vendors.

[] Check here if you prefer that your check be returned if your vendor is no longer active.

Only badged vendors are authorized to distribute STREETZine. VENDOR #