

Facts:

Why Low-income people don't vote

Contrary to what some may think, declining voter participation by people of lower incomes has nothing to do with laziness or apathy. The truth is that people with lower incomes are a population that experience unique barriers to voter participation. In 2004, The Statewide Poverty Action Network conducted a series of focus groups to talk with people of lower incomes about the factors that keep them from voting. These were the most common barriers:

⇒ Not being registered to vote

There are several reasons why people are not registered voters:

- 1- Never being asked to register
- 2- Moving frequently and not keeping up with registration updates
- 3- Being a convicted felon and not being able to pay off restitution in order to regain voting rights

⇒ Unable to make informed voting decisions

The desire to vote diminishes when people don't know what they are voting on. Decisions are clouded by the doubt around knowing which candidates reflect their views and how the topics being voted on affect them personally. There is a strong need for user-friendly, concise information on candidates and the basics of voting.

⇒ More pressing needs

Voting often falls low on the list of priorities for people with lower-incomes who have too many immediate needs to take care of. Those who work multiple jobs, odd hours, have health care needs, or children to take care of often struggle to find the time to stay educated on the issues and taking time out of their day to vote.

⇒ Logistical barriers

- 1- Getting to the polls is difficult for those who lack means of transportation
- 2- A change in a person's polling location can prevent them from getting to the correct place to vote
- 3- Not receiving a voter card in the mail can prevent people from having the proper information to go vote



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