

Recommendations for Implementing Jail Voting: Identifying Common Themes

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This guide is intended for advocates and organizers working across America to facilitate the voting process for eligible voters in jails. Presently, about 427,000 individuals held in local jails nationwide have **not** been convicted of a crime.¹ As such, they are eligible to vote — but they often encounter a range of barriers.

As more and more legal scholars, policymakers, election officials, and advocates look to expand access to voting for jail-based populations, several of them have issued reports with recommendations and best practices. By synthesizing their various insights and proposals, we aim to provide an annotated list of all the recommendations from the reports and identify the most common ones. Organizations and advocates can use this guide as a centralized resource to view current best practices for jail-based voting as identified by their colleagues. While not exhaustive, this document offers a starting point for practitioners eager to engage in this work.

Did we miss a recommendation? Let us know! Email christinethan@hks.harvard.edu.

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¹ Wendy Sawyer and Peter Wagner, “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2023,” Prison Policy Initiative, March 14, 2023, <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2023.html>.

Top 10 Recommendations for Improving Jail Voting Rights

Here are the primary recommendations being promoted to expand voting access in jails. Click on a recommendation to jump to the relevant section:

1. [Establish jail-based polling locations.](#)
2. [Expand state election laws to make it easier for people in jail to vote, such as allowing absentee voting, implementing same-day voter registration, or instituting a “special status” provision for incarcerated individuals.](#)
3. [Mandate that county officials develop jail voter registration and voting plans.](#)
4. [Designate jail and local elections staff as voting coordinators.](#)
5. [Provide voter registration opportunities for incarcerated voters.](#)
6. [Provide technical guidance and solutions to address logistical requirements in registration and voting, such as language barriers, filling out and mailing forms, and state-identification requirements.](#)
7. [Safeguard ballot secrecy while maintaining necessary security protocols.](#)
8. [Establish data tracking mechanisms to monitor progress and successes of voting initiatives.](#)
9. [Enhance civic engagement within jails by implementing voter education initiatives to empower individuals with knowledge about elections, candidates, and voting procedures.](#)
10. [Engage key players in training initiatives to ensure understanding of voting procedures and foster cultural competence when working with incarcerated individuals.](#)

Access to Voting and Registration in Jails

A. Recommendation: Establish jail-based polling locations.

A number of organizations have embraced in-person voting at a real polling place as the gold standard for making access to the ballot both convenient and meaningful for voters.

- [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#)
Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2024
“Require by law that the jail be designated a polling place.”
- [Confined Voter Program: 2023 Municipal Elections Report](#)
Denver Election Division, 2023
“In-person, jail-based voting ensures that the right to vote is accessible to eligible voters confined to jail facilities ...”
- [Democracy Detained: Fulfilling the Promise of the Right to Vote from Jail](#)
Legal Defense Fund: Thurgood Marshall Institute, 2023
“Jail-based polling sites, where detained voters can cast their ballots in person, realize the promise of the right to vote while detained.”

- [Jail-Based Polling Locations: A Way to Fight Voter Disenfranchisement](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2022
 - “Allow all eligible voters detained at the jail — regardless of when they were first detained — to cast a ballot at the polling location.”
 - “Provide in-person voting at the jail on Election Day, not merely during the early voting period.”
- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“To address this problem, the Wisconsin Elections Commission, county clerks, and municipal clerks should look at what it would take to establish election day polling places within county jails.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
“Work with sheriffs [and have sheriffs work with election officials] to [make jails polling stations](#) (ideally voting machines/ballot boxes will be present and available at the jail on Election Day ...).”
- [Voting in Jails](#)
The Sentencing Project, 2020
“One means of improving voter access is establishing a polling location at the jail.”
- [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#)
League of Women Voters of New York, 2023
“Enact legislation authorizing local Boards of Election to establish early polling sites within county jails ...”

B. Recommendation: Ensure people can request an absentee ballot.

If in-person voting is not available, jails can promote access to voting by facilitating absentee ballot requests and submissions. Jails must focus on finding solutions for individuals who are jailed after the deadlines for absentee ballot requests.

- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“People who want to vote from jail must be given an opportunity to request their absentee ballot.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
 - “Empower jailed people to ... access absentee ballots where in-person voting is not available ...”
 - “Permit jailed voters to request and submit absentee ballots up through Election Day.”

- “Work with sheriffs to coordinate registration and voting via absentee ballots from jails ...”
- “Work with election offices to coordinate registration and voting via absentee ballots from the jail ...”
- [Jail Voting Advocacy Manual](#)
Campaign Legal Center, 2019
“Some jurisdictions have solved this problem [the difficulty of voting from jail after absentee ballot deadlines have passed] by providing emergency absentee ballot access to jailed voters who were incarcerated after the deadline.”

C. Recommendation: Provide voter registration opportunities for incarcerated voters.
Jails need to make voter registration accessible for voters, and nonprofit organizations also need to provide voter registration services in the jails. This is not only an essential first step to voting but often the entry point for voters to learn about an election.

- [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#)
League of Women Voters of New York, 2023
 - “At arrival, screen detained people for eligibility to vote and provide registration materials.”
 - “... encourage local [League of Women Voters] LWV chapters to coordinate ... voter registration drives with other local organizations in the county jails.”
 - “At release, screen for eligibility to vote and provide registration materials, just as jails and prisons do for released convicted felons.”
- [Denver Confined Voter Survey](#)
Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, 2023
 - “Increase the frequency of voter registration drives inside [Denver County Jail] DJC and [Denver Detention Center] DDC in partnership with non-partisan community organizations.”
 - “Provide voter registration forms to all pretrial detainees at the time of admission.”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“Every jail needs to provide direct opportunities for voters to register to vote or to check their voter registration status at least 30 days ahead of every election.”
- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“Every jail needs to provide direct opportunities for eligible voters in their care to register to vote.”

- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
“[Evidence shows](#) that where people directly assist incarcerated voters with registration and voting, voter turnout far exceeds instances in which ballots are merely dropped off at a jail ...”

Legislative and Institutional Changes

A. Recommendation: Designate jail and local elections staff as voting coordinators.

Jail voting works best when there is a designated staff person overseeing operations both at the jail and at the office of election administration.

- [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#)
Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2024
“Designate a staff person at the jail to be responsible for voting.”
- [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#)
League of Women Voters of New York, 2023
“Have sheriffs’ offices designate a specific staff member, unaffiliated with the county jail and independent from the jail’s leadership ...”
- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
“Designating specific jail staff and local elections staff as coordinators will streamline communication and accountability.”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“Every jail needs to designate a community relations officer or social worker to facilitate jail voting processes.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
“[Require coordination](#) between jail and election officials to ensure that eligible jailed voters have an opportunity to register and vote (as [Colorado](#) has done).”
- [Voting in Jail](#)
The Sentencing Project, 2020
“Designated staff can coordinate voter education materials and absentee voter efforts, and serve as a community liaison to partner with civic organizations.”

B. Recommendation: Designate jails to be formal voter registration agencies under the National Voter Registration Act.

The National Voter Registration Act requires certain government agencies to provide voter registration services as part of their transaction services. Jails could be included in this set of agencies.

- [Democracy Detained: Fulfilling the Promise of the Right to Vote from Jail](#)
Legal Defense Fund: Thurgood Marshall Institute, 2023
“... states can and should designate jails as formal voter registration agencies, as Rhode Island has done with its Department of Corrections and Washington, D.C. has done with its jails.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
“Designate jails to be under Section 7 of the National Voter Registration Act (NVRA), as [Rhode Island](#) has done with its Department of Corrections and [Washington, D.C.](#) has done with its jails.”
- [Jail Voting Advocacy Manual](#)
Campaign Legal Center, 2019
“Advocates may also lobby to designate jails as Voter Registration Agencies under the National Voter Registration Act, which means they are required to provide registration assistance to voters in jails.”

C. Recommendation: Expand state election laws to make it easier for people in jail to vote, such as allowing absentee voting, implementing same-day voter registration, or instituting a “special status”² provision for incarcerated individuals.

There are a number of different ways voters can register and vote; they should be made accessible to voters in jail.

- [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#)
Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2024
“Enhance the efficacy of jail-based voting with same-day registration.”
- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
 - “Enabling same-day voter registration can provide similar benefits to individuals in jail ...”
 - “States without same-day voter registration can designate a ‘special status’ for individuals in jail.”
 - “... [allow] jail identification to be a valid form of ID at the polls.”

² Special status, as exemplified by Massachusetts law, allows eligible voters in jail to vote via absentee ballot without having to register to vote. See the Office of the Attorney General’s “Voting While Incarcerated” flyer for more information: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/voting-while-incarcerated/download>.

- [Jail-Based Polling Locations: A Way to Fight Voter Disenfranchisement](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2022
“Take advantage of same-day registration if it is available.”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
 - “State legislators must extend Pennsylvania statutes which allow disabled voters to vote by agent to include jail voters.”
 - “Expand the list of acceptable photo IDs to include jail IDs.”
 - “Such voter services must also be coupled to additional state funding.”
- [Voting in Jail](#)
The Sentencing Project, 2020
“Authorize special status for incarcerated voters: Massachusetts grants special voter protections status to incarcerated residents.”
- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“Extend the right to vote via an agent.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
 - “... states can change their laws to match [those in 19 states and D.C.](#) that currently allow same-day registration on Election Day.”
 - “In the [16 states](#) that require a specific reason to vote absentee, states can change their laws to permit ‘any reason’ absentee voting or add incarceration as an accepted reason.”
 - “... permit anyone released from jail prior to receiving their ballot to submit a ‘registration affidavit’ at their local polling station and vote there.”
 - “... states can abolish such ID requirements or add IDs provided by federal, state or local correctional facilities to the list of valid forms of identification.”
- [Voting Advocacy Manual](#)
Campaign Legal Center, 2019
“In one recent example, Georgia amended its laws to allow absentee ballots to be sent directly to jails.”

D. Recommendation: Mandate that county officials develop jail voter registration and voting plans.

Requiring the jails to provide the specifics of how they will implement the jail voting process ensures that they have a shared plan that others can help support and for which they can be held accountable.

- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
“The Secretary of State may require county-level plans that detail registration and voting access for individuals in jails (see Arizona and Colorado for examples).”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“Every jail must have a written policy for informing persons in the jail about voter eligibility rules and for verifying whether an individual is eligible to vote.”
- [Voting in Jail](#)
The Sentencing Project, 2020
“... some states require county officials to submit plans ensuring voter registration efforts and ballot access for incarcerated residents.”
- [Jail Voting Advocacy Manual](#)
Campaign Legal Center, 2019
“Other advocates, though, have gone a step further and asked sheriffs and election officials to create jail voting plans.”
- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“Every jail must have a written policy for informing individuals in the jail about voter eligibility rules, and for verifying whether an individual is eligible to register and vote.”

Stakeholder Collaboration for Planning and Executing Voting Initiatives

A. Recommendation: Create cross-sector partnerships for collaborative decision-making.

Many groups, agencies, and individuals play a role in making jail voting successful. When all of them communicate and collaborate, it facilitates implementation.

- [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#)
Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2024
 - “Establish a clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of organizers, the [Board of Elections] BOE, and the [Department of Corrections] DOC to avoid tensions going forward.”

- “Policymakers should include organizers and advocates, especially those who have already been involved in voter registration and distribution of mail ballots, from the beginning.”
- “Have a champion(s) in the legislative body.”
- [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#)
League of Women Voters of New York, 2023
“Encourage sheriffs’ offices to work with outside non-partisan organizations to provide civics education and neutral information about voting, candidates, and issues.”
- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
“Jail staff, registrars of voters, community members, legal experts, poll workers, and nonpartisan poll-watching volunteers should be included in the planning process.”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“Every jail must ensure ongoing communication between jail administrators and the local election officials in the county.”

B. Recommendation: Engage key players in training initiatives to ensure understanding of voting procedures and foster cultural competence when working with incarcerated individuals.

Jail staff, election administrators, and voter organizations all have different capacities when it comes to voting. Anyone who will be involved in the jail voting process needs to receive proper training.

- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
“Invest in training for jail staff, poll workers, and non-partisan poll-watchers, so they have a plan for dealing with common issues like address complications, eligibility questions, and identification issues.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2023
 - “Provide training for any election workers or volunteers that will visit the jail to ensure compliance with jail rules and cultural competency in interacting with incarcerated people.”
 - “Ensure all state and local election staff know the law so that they do not incorrectly discourage jailed individuals from voting by spreading misinformation.”
 - “In places where anyone registering voters must be trained, sheriffs can ensure that their staff members are [also] trained.”

- [Jail Voting Advocacy Manual](#)
Campaign Legal Center, 2019
“Educating these officials is itself a worthwhile project, and some advocates engage in this kind of direct outreach and education, doing training and outreach to sheriffs and election officials about their responsibility to provide ballot access to incarcerated voters.”

Operational Logistics of Voting Initiatives in Jails

A. Recommendation: Ensure physical accessibility of polling sites in jails.

There are many logistical details that need to be addressed ahead of voting in jails.

- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
 - “... work with jail staff to determine ideal polling locations within the facility that balance security concerns, the logistical movement of individuals, and room and staffing capacity.”
 - “... develop a clear estimate of how many eligible voters are in the jail and accommodate the time it will take per voter to complete the voting process ...”
- [Confined Voter Program: 2023 Municipal Elections Report](#)
Denver Election Division, 2023
“Mobility of voting site: Inmates are located in multiple buildings and floors and cannot always be moved from one location to another.”

B. Recommendation: Allow for limited internet access.

Online voter registration is available in most states and has proven to be particularly accurate, efficient, and popular with voters. Allowing voters in jail to register online will simplify the process for all stakeholders.

- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2023
“Where internet access is not available in jails or where online registration is not available generally, allow registration forms or requests for absentee ballots to be submitted via scanned email or fax ...”
- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“In jails where individuals are not typically permitted free access to the internet, exceptions should be made for checking voter registration status, [registering to vote, requesting an absentee ballot, and verifying that their ballot was counted].”³

C. Recommendation: Take into account security and staffing needs.

³Additional points about Internet access throughout the report have been summarized within the quoted text.

When planning voting in jail, there are a number of considerations around staffing the process and maintaining security.

- [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#)
Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2024
 - “Hire someone with experience with the corrections system to work at the [Board of Elections] BOE or, potentially, someone who is a returning citizen themselves.”
 - “Hire detainees as poll workers and train and pay them like any other poll worker.”
- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
 - “Different models of polling places require different levels of staffing, such as for escorting voters to a designated location or going cell-to-cell to collect provisional ballots.”
 - “Provide custody staff with opt-in opportunities to have their shift occur during the elections to ensure staff is motivated to support and implement the process.”
- [Confined Voter Program: 2023 Municipal Elections Report](#)
Denver Election Division, 2023
“For the security of both election judges and voters, a member of [Denver Sheriff’s Department] DSD staff must escort election judges when inside the facilities.”

D. Recommendation: Provide technical guidance and solutions to address logistical requirements in registration and voting, such as language barriers, filling out and mailing forms, and state-identification requirements.

There are many rules and procedures one must follow when registering and voting. Determining how voters in jail will navigate them is important.

- [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#)
Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2024
“Post the [Board of Election’s] BOE’s contact information in the jails and allow calls to the BOE free of charge.”
- [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#)
League of Women Voters of New York, 2023
“Based on the demographics of each county, voter registration, applications, postage, informational resources, etc. ... should be published in the commonly used local languages ...”
- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)

Possibility Lab, 2023

- “Registration forms are not designed for people in jail, and many need guidance when asked for a permanent address and mailing address on registration forms.”
 - “Some county elections staff both deliver and pick up ballots and can also designate times to be available for questions about voting procedures or eligibility.
 - “... consider language and accessibility measures (hearing, reading) ...”
- [Jail-Based Polling Locations: A Way to Fight Voter Disenfranchisement](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2022
“Work to ensure that any ID requirements are able to be satisfied by eligible voters who are attempting to register or cast a ballot in jail.”
 - [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“... every voter should be provided with an opportunity to retrieve documents, including a PennDOT or Social Security card, that they may need to register to vote.”
 - [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
 - “... decisionmakers should look at ways to expand the list of acceptable proof of residence and proof of identity documents to include those that can be easily procured from within a jail (e.g., jail IDs).”
 - “Because jails hold personal property after booking, every voter should be provided with an opportunity to retrieve documents they need to register (proof of residence), and documents they need to request an absentee ballot (accepted photo ID).”
 - [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
 - “Monitor/provide outside support (e.g. hotlines) for jail-voting processes, as community groups have done in several states ...”
 - “Permit unhoused people to use the jail or a prior shelter as their registration address.”

E. Recommendation: Safeguard ballot secrecy while maintaining necessary security protocols.

Voters in jail may be particularly concerned with the secrecy of their ballot. Addressing these concerns is essential, while also ensuring that all necessary security protocols are followed.

- [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#)
League of Women Voters of New York, 2023

“Provide a safe and private space to complete registration and ballot materials, especially the absentee ballot itself.”

- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)

Possibility Lab, 2023

- “Ensure ballots are completely private, while at the same time ensuring jail staff do not feel like they are compromising security.”
- “... train jail staff specifically to refrain from commentary during the voting process and to position themselves so they are unable to see voters’ ballots.”

- [Democracy Detained: Fulfilling the Promise of the Right to Vote from Jail](#)

Legal Defense Fund: Thurgood Marshall Institute, 2023

“Some detained individuals fear compromised ballot secrecy since many jails reserve the right for staff to read outgoing mail, whereas ballot secrecy is assured at a jail-based polling site.”

F. Recommendation: Make it easy for voters in jail to vote by mail.

In jail, coordinating the submission of voting materials, such as registration forms and ballots, by mail can be a complex, slow process. Legislators and sheriffs’ offices should address these barriers by streamlining procedures and providing adequate resources.

- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)

All Voting is Local, 2021

- “Jails must ensure that individuals wanting to vote from jail receive the time and space to request that a mail-in ballot be mailed to them.”

- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)

Prison Policy Initiative, 2020

- “... jails can also give election-related mail expedited treatment to ensure compliance with election deadlines.”
- “Appropriate funds for postage, so that registration forms, ballot applications, and ballots submitted by mail (either from jails or from any address) may be mailed without a stamp.”

G. Recommendation: Allow accessible ballot verification and curing mechanisms.

People often make simple errors on their ballots that can disqualify them from counting. Therefore, voters in jail must have the ability to track their ballots and be notified of any errors. This gives them the opportunity to correct, or “cure,” their ballots.

- [Confined Voter Program: 2023 Municipal Elections Report](#)

Denver Election Division, 2023

“... it is possible for [Denver Election Division] DED to communicate to [Denver Sheriff’s Department] DSD which voters are eligible to cure their ballot and provide

instructions that ensure curing is accessible to the confined population.”

- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
 - “... accommodations must be made to address [the lack of process for incarcerated voters to cure ballot defects] so that voters can cure ballot defects while incarcerated.”
 - “... counties should coordinate with the Registrar of Voters to implement a jail-accessible system that can provide updated tracking information to incarcerated voters.”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“Every individual who voted via mail-in ballot from jail must have an opportunity to verify their vote was counted.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
“... this should include providing opportunities for jailed voters to be notified of and to cure any deficiencies on their registration forms, ballot applications, ballot envelopes, etc.”
- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“Every person who votes from jail must have an opportunity to verify their vote was counted.”

Civic Education

A. Recommendation: Enhance civic engagement within jails by implementing voter education initiatives to empower individuals with knowledge about elections, candidates, and voting procedures.

Like many voters, voters in jail would benefit greatly from civic education about the voting process and what is at stake in a given election.

- [Democracy Detained: Fulfilling the Promise of the Right to Vote from Jail](#)
Legal Defense Fund: Thurgood Marshall Institute, 2023
“A jail-based polling site could provide voter education materials produced by each campaign and nonpartisan sources to inform voters about particular candidates and policies ...”
- [Denver Confined Voter Survey](#)
Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, 2023

- “Offer an in-person voting and civic education class that people in jail can be awarded earned time for completing.”
- “Have current non-partisan voter information guides on candidates and issues available in [Denver County Jail] DCJ and [Denver Detention Center] DDC pods during all elections.”
- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
 - “Load information about the election onto jail tablets and provide hard copies.”
 - “Partner with trusted messengers, such as jail residents and educational or workforce organizations, in conducting candidate forums and disseminating public education materials.”
- [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#)
League of Women Voters of New York, 2023
 - “Fund the [New York State] NYS Board of Elections to develop an informational voting program with posters, updated annual informational pamphlets in paper and digital form, a video and/or PowerPoint presentation on voting to be distributed to all county jails ...”
 - “The [League of Women Voters of New York] LWV-NYS should immediately design an accurate and timely jail voting guide and distribute the guide in paper and digital form to every sheriff’s office in New York State.”
 - “... encourage local LWV chapters to coordinate civics classes ... with other local organizations in the county jails.”
 - “Include information about eligibility to vote, registration applications and deadlines, application for absentee ballot, and election dates in all handbooks, electronic tablets, and electronic kiosks with signage posted in common areas throughout the jail, and in the intake and release areas.”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“... jail administrators must develop a process for providing candidate information to interested voters.”
- [Jail-Based Polling Locations: A Way to Fight Voter Disenfranchisement](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2022
“Do more to raise awareness of the availability of the polling location and any voting eligibility requirements.”
- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020

“Jail administrators must provide every eligible voter in their care with relevant election dates and deadlines, as well as opportunities to learn what issues and candidates are on their ballot.”

- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
 - “... local jails can provide voter registration materials within the jail and at various points during the admission and/or release process.”
 - “If a government agency produces a voter guide, ensure distribution to jailed voters.”
- [Jail Voting Advocacy Manual](#)
Campaign Legal Center, 2019
“Any program to enfranchise jailed voters should ensure not only that information on eligibility and voting is available, but also that there are robust systems in place for outreach and voter assistance.”

Data Collection and Analysis

A. Recommendation: Establish data tracking mechanisms to monitor progress and successes of voting initiatives.

All stakeholders should be able to track and understand the effectiveness of registration and voting in jails. Then, the necessary changes and enhancements can be instituted as needed.

- [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#)
Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation, 2024
“Other jurisdictions should replicate the [Election Modernization Amendment Act] EMA requirement that jails must collect address information from incarcerated persons.”
- [Denver Confined Voter Survey](#)
Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, 2023
“Jail administrators provide a list of eligible voters to allow for better outreach when it comes to voter registration, voter engagement, and education.”
- [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#)
Possibility Lab, 2023
“Work with election authorities to collect and analyze data on turnout relative to the eligible voting population within the jail.”
- [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#)
All Voting is Local, 2021
“Every county jail must have a written process for tracking ballot registrations, requests, and ballots returned.”

- [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#)
ACLU of Wisconsin, 2020
“Every county jail should have a written process for tracking voter registrations, ballot requests, and ballots returned.”
- [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#)
Prison Policy Initiative, 2020
“Utilize [public records requests](#) to collect information about existing jail-voting policies and procedures, as well as about the number of ballots being requested and cast by people voting from jail.”

Alphabetical Listing of Reports by Author(s):

- ACLU of Wisconsin: [Ballots for All: Ensuring Eligible Wisconsin Voters in Jail Have Equal Access to Voting](#) (2020)
- All Voting is Local: [Ballots for All: Holding Pennsylvania County Jails Accountable for Providing Ballot Access](#) (2021)
- Campaign Legal Center: [Jail Voting Advocacy Manual](#) (2019)
- Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition: [Denver Confined Voter Survey](#) (2023)
- Denver Election Division: [Confined Voter Program: 2023 Municipal Elections Report](#) (2023)
- Harvard Kennedy School Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation: [Jail-Based Voting in the District of Columbia: A Case Study](#) (2024)
- Legal Defense Fund Thurgood Marshall Institute: [Democracy Detained: Fulfilling the Promise of the Right to Vote from Jail](#) (2023)
- League of Women Voters of New York: Voting in New York State Jails: [Voting in New York State Jails: A Qualitative Analysis of Access](#) (2023)
- Possibility Lab: [Key Considerations for Jail-Based Polling Places](#) (2023)
- Prison Policy Initiative:
 - [Eligible, but Excluded: A Guide to Removing the Barriers to Jail Voting](#) (2020)
 - [Jail-Based Polling Locations: A Way to Fight Voter Disenfranchisement](#) (2022)
- Sentencing Project: (2020)