



Protecting Vulnerable Voters

The Toolkit in 5 Simple Steps

A quick guide to understanding the five major parts of the Protecting Vulnerable Voters Toolkit.

THE GOAL

Identify vulnerabilities, understand the safeguards that should be in place, and know where concerns should go.

1 UNDERSTAND THE PROTECTIONS

Know the basic CMS resident-rights protections. CMS Memo QSSAM-26-04-NH

- Residents have the right to vote - and the equal right to decline.
- Facilities must protect residents from interference, coercion, improper influence, and unauthorized voting activity.
- Federal protections come first; state law provides the procedures for voting and assistance.

2 CHECK FACILITY PREPAREDNESS

Look at whether the facility has a clear, organized voting process.

- Is there a designated voting coordinator and backup?
- Are staff trained and is there a written process for resident voting questions?
- Are grievance and referral procedures in place?

3 REVIEW VOTING SAFEGUARDS

Understand how the facility protects resident choice and voting materials.

- How are registration, voting assistance, ballots, and other election materials handled?
- Does the facility follow state rules for assistance, witnessing, possession, transport, and return?
- Does it coordinate with election officials when appropriate?

4 IDENTIFY & DOCUMENT VULNERABILITIES

Look for gaps in the process and record objective information.

- Examples include but are not limited to is the resident receiving a ballot at the facility still, does the resident want a ballot or know they have one requested, lack of staff awareness or training, or unclear ballot-handling procedures.
- Record facts and facility responses - not assumptions or accusations.
- Protect resident privacy.

5 REFER & FOLLOW UP

Make sure identified concerns reach the appropriate channel.

- Facility or CMS compliance concerns may go through the facility grievance process and/or State Survey Agency.
- Resident advocacy concerns may be referred to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman; election-procedure questions go to election officials.
- Coalition leaders can track follow-up and help ensure concerns are directed appropriately.

SIMPLE TAKEAWAY: Know the protections → Check the process → Find the gaps → Document the facts → Refer concerns

Based on CMS QSSAM-26-04-NH and the EIN Protecting Vulnerable Voters Toolkit.