Election Website Best Practices

Texas Association of Election Administrators
2020 Mid-Winter Conference

January 10, 2020
College Station, Texas

CENTER FOR
TECH AND
CIVIC LIFE

Session objectives

- Better understand voters' informational needs
- Be familiar with principles of plain design and plain language
- Know immediate actions you can take to improve your election website
- Have resources to help you improve your site

Nice to meet you!

Whitney May
Director
whitney@techandciviclife.org
@whitneymaybe

Kurt Sampsel
Project Manager
kurt@techandciviclife.org
@kurt_sampsel

Center for Tech and Civic Life

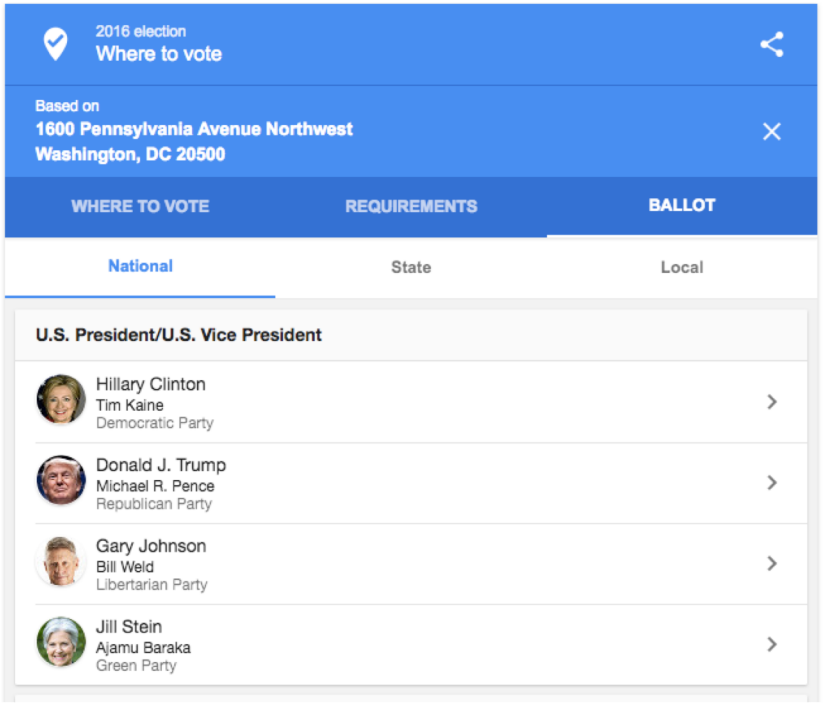
We connect Americans with the information they need to become and remain civically engaged, and ensure that our elections are more professional, inclusive, and secure.

@HelloCTCL
www.techandciviclife.org

Civic Data

We provide affordable, open-source civic data so that voters can have a more informed and engaged relationship with their government.

Google


2016 election
Where to vote
Based on
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500
WHERE TO VOTE
REQUIREMENTS
BALLOT
National
State
Local
U.S. President/U.S. Vice President
Hillary Clinton
Tim Kaine
Democratic Party
Donald J. Trump
Michael R. Pence
Republican Party
Gary Johnson
Bill Weld
Libertarian Party
Jill Stein
Ajamu Baraka
Green Party

12:00 PM
100%
Plan for Nov 8
This is not an official vote
Get Ready for Election Day
Viewing info for 1 Facebook Way, Menlo Park, California
Edit Address
PRESIDENT
President of the United States
5 Candidates Running
Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, Gloria Estela La Riva

Government Services

We support election officials with industry best practices, free tech solutions, and cutting-edge training to make elections more trustworthy and inclusive.

Best practices from the field

ELECTRICITY

PLUG IN. GET CONNECTED. STAY CURRENT.

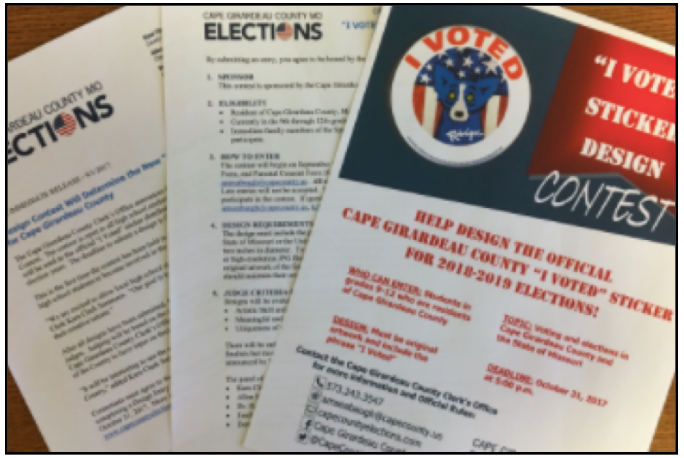
Share Tweet Forward

Spotlight on Cape Girardeau County, Missouri

Anyone who's worked the polls on Election Day can testify to the appeal of the "I Voted" sticker. It's a hot commodity among voters, who proudly wear the sticker to display their civic participation and encourage others to turn out. In recent years, research has confirmed the anecdotes, revealing the social psychology behind the sticker.

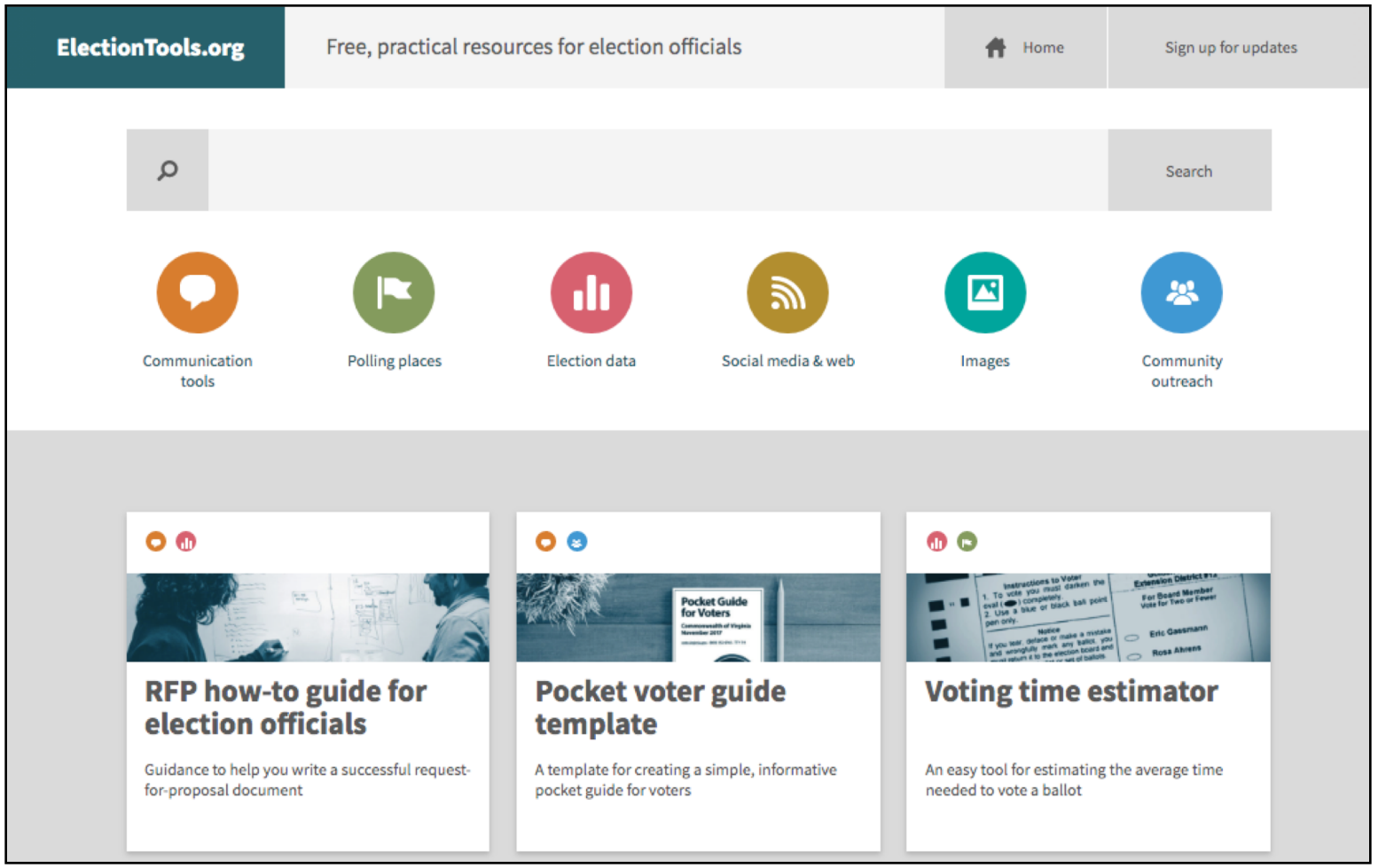
This year in Cape Girardeau County, Missouri, voters will be wearing a new, distinctive "I Voted" sticker.

That's because instead of buying generic stickers, county election officials held a sticker design contest for high school students. The competition, which officials hope to repeat in the future, encourages the area's young adults to reflect on the democratic process while helping voters feel stronger community identification and civic pride.



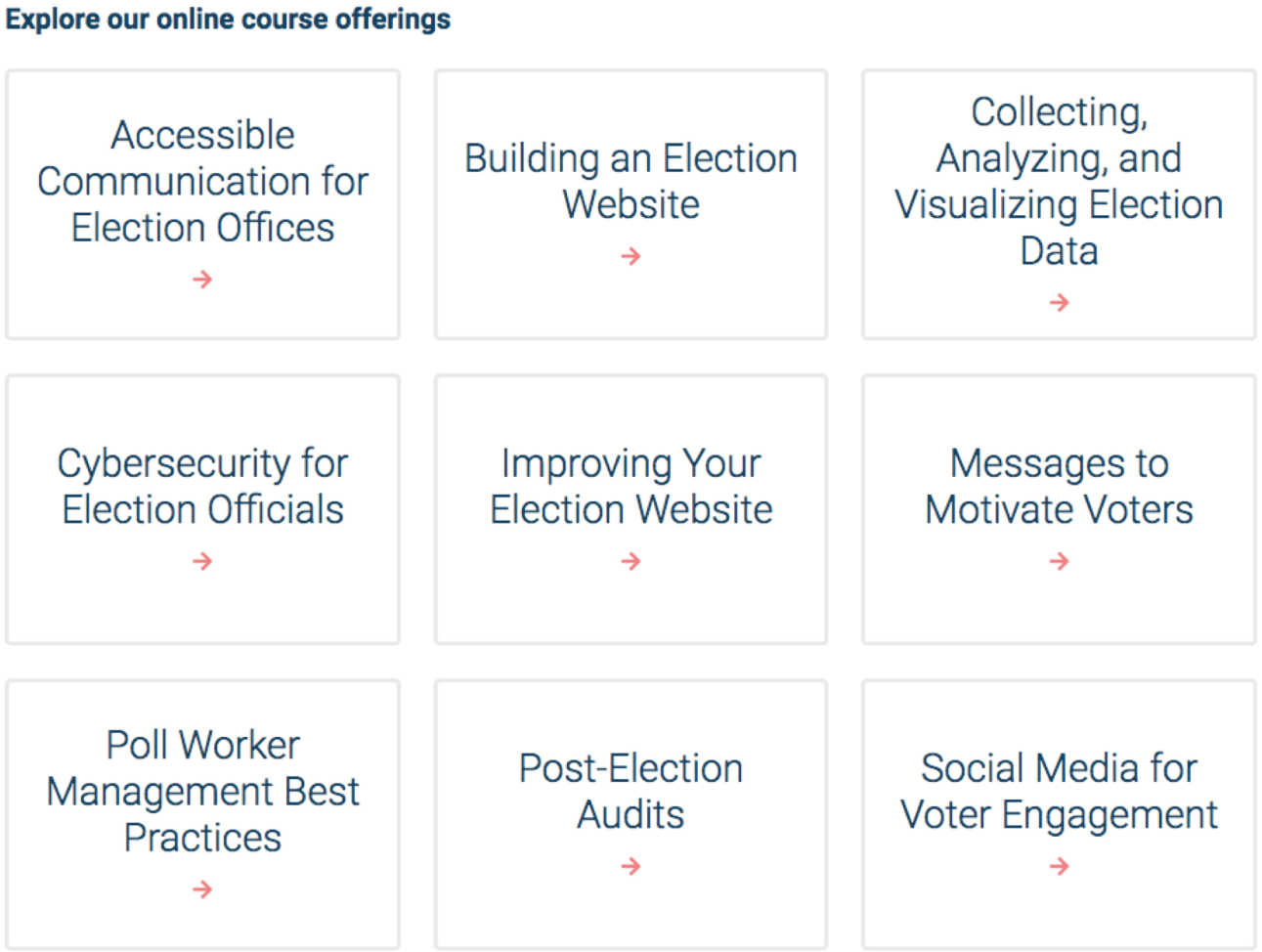
www.techandciviclife.org/news-and-events

Free tools



www.electiontools.org

Professional development courses



www.techandciviclife.org/courses

How can you address your community's needs?

PROVIDING KEY ELECTION INFORMATION

CENTER FOR
TECH AND
CIVIC LIFE

Top questions for voters

1. What is on the ballot?
2. How do I get an absentee ballot, and when is it due?
3. Where do I vote?
4. Who is in office now?
5. How do I register to vote?

Top question for non-voters

1. How do I participate in an election?

Let’s experiment

What’s it like to search for information on a county election website?

#1 What is on the ballot?

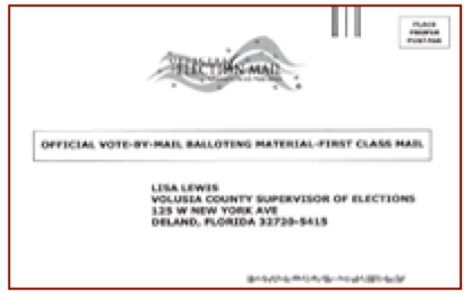
Volusia County Department of Elections

Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections

Registered Voters as of 08/20/2018 (Includes Active and Inactive Voters)				
Democrats	Republicans	NPA	Other	Total
135,535	137,696	117,812	2,956	393,999

Register to Vote	Vote by Mail Request	Precinct Locator	Contact Us
Voter Status	Vote by Mail Status	Provisional Status	Translate

Avoid the Rush...



Order a Vote-by-Mail Ballot Today!

What is a Closed Primary Election?

Be Election Ready!

RegistertoVoteFlorida.gov

Sample Ballot

Primary Election
August 28, 2018 - Sample Ballot
Elección Primaria
28 de agosto 2018 - Papeleta de Muestra

2018 Proposed Constitutional Amendments & Information

News & Updates

2018 Canvassing Board Information

Volusia County Department of Elections

Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections

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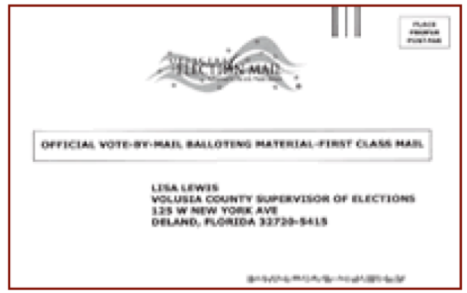

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2018 Proposed Constitutional Amendments & Information

News & Updates

2018 Canvassing Board Information

#2 How do I get an absentee ballot, and when is it due?

Election Information

VOTE AND THE CHOICE IS
YOURS

Don't vote ... and the choice is theirs. Register ... or you have no choice.

CLICK HERE

VIEW ELECTION RESULTS

FIND OUT THE
ELECTION DAY RESULTS

AVAILABLE AFTER POLLS CLOSE ON ELECTION DAY

CLICK HERE

FIND MY
POLLING PLACE

CLICK HERE

CLICK HERE TO VIEW
ELECTION DAY REQUIREMENTS

CLICK HERE FOR
VOTER REGISTRATION

CLICK HERE FOR
EARLY VOTING INFORMATION

Connect With Us (435) 477-8300

IRON COUNTY

Departments Jobs Commission News Contact Us

Election Information

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ELECTION DAY REQUIREMENTS

CLICK HERE FOR
VOTER REGISTRATION

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Early Voting

Click the Locations Below to see the Dates and Times of Operation

Locations	Dates
Iron County Courthouse 68 S 100 E, Parowan Utah	view
Cedar City Council Chambers 10 N Main St, Cedar City Utah	view
Enoch City Offices 900 E Midvalley Rd, Enoch Utah	view

#3 How do I register to vote?

Brown County Kansas

DMS Online Parcel Search

Home | Elected Officials | County Departments | Employees | General Information

Elected Officials > County Clerk

Search...

CLERK'S OFFICE

Phone: 785-742-2581 Fax: 785-742-7705

Melissa Gormley
County Clerk

Deputy: Dawn Boyles
Clerk: Barb Grabhorn

Duties of the Office:

- Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners

- Minutes
  - 2003 Minutes
  - 2004 Minutes
  - 2005 Minutes
  - 2006 Minutes
  - 2007 Minutes
  - 2008 Minutes
  - 2009 Minutes
  - 2010 Minutes
  - 2011 Minutes
  - 2012 Minutes
  - 2013 Minutes
  - 2014 Minutes
  - 2015 Minutes
  - 2016 Minutes
  - 2017 Minutes
  - 2018 Minutes
- Election Info
  - Voting Locations
  - Early Voting
  - Sample Ballots
  - Forms
    - Advance Ballot Application
    - Federal Post Card Application
    - Voter Registration
  - Provisional Ballot Counting
  - Notices
- Election Results

Brown County Kansas

DMS Online Parcel Search

Home | Elected Officials | County Departments | Employees | General Information

Elected Officials > County Clerk

Search...

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  - Provisional Ballot Counting
  - Notices
- Election Results

Recap

- Was it easy to find what you needed?
- Did the sites remind you of your own website?
- What suggestions do you have to improve the sites?

How design and language are related to usability

MAKING ELECTION INFORMATION USABLE

CENTER FOR
TECH AND
CIVIC LIFE

Design → usability

Site Navigation

- + Home
- + Leisure and Entertainment
- + City Calendars
  Emergency Center
- + e-Services
- + Mayor and Aldermen
- + Transportation
- + Departmental Expenditures
- − Departments
  - + Airport
  - + Assessors
  - + Cemeteries
  - + Central Fleet Management
  - − City Clerk
    - Departmental Expenditures
    - City Clerk Announcements
    - City Clerk Calendar
    - City Clerk FAQ
    - Contact City Clerk
    - About Our Government
    - Access to Governmental Records
    - Street Discontinuances
    - Meeting Minutes and Agendas
    - Boards and Commissions
  - + City Charter
  - + Code of Ordinances

City Clerk Home | Marriage Licenses | Access to Governmental Records | Voter Registration & Elections | Vital Records & Genealogy | Licenses & Permits | Dog Licensing | Municipal Archives & Records | Contact City Clerk

Voter Registration and Elections

The Office of the City Clerk conducts and preserves the integrity of all local, state and national elections held in Manchester, New Hampshire. The next scheduled local elections will feature the **State Primary Election** on **September 11, 2018** follwed by the **State General Election** on **November 6, 2018**. The elections will be held between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. across all twelve city wards.

To view all upcoming ballots view our Sample Ballot page to see your choices as the ballots become available.

If you are unsure of the correct location for you to vote on Election Day, select the "Where do I vote?" option below.

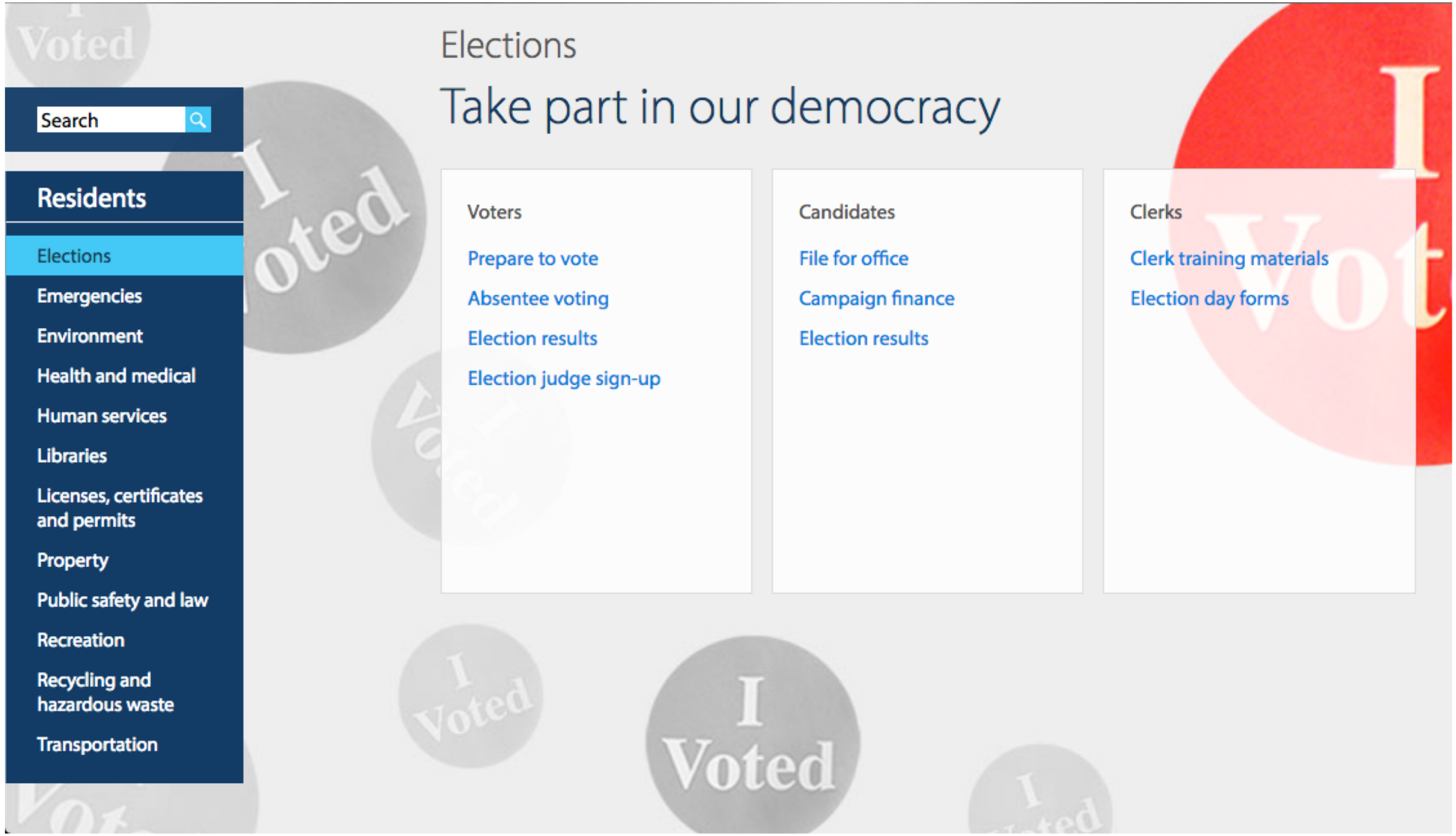
Absentee Ballot applications for the upcoming elections can be printed using the link below and completed in the convenience of your home. As a registered Manchester voter, you may mail, e-mail (cityclerk@manchesternh.gov), fax, or hand deliver your completed application to the Office of the City Clerk, One City Hall Plaza, Manchester, NH 03101

- Absentee Ballot Application - State Primary and/or General Elections (9/11/18 & 11/6/18)

Related Links

- Election Schedules
- How to Register
- How to File for Office
- Political Campaign Reporting
- Political Committees
- Other Election Sites
- Ward Lines
- Political Calendar
- Sample Ballots
- Election Results
- Polling Locations
- Where do I Vote?

Get ADOBE READER


Search
Residents
Elections
Emergencies
Environment
Health and medical
Human services
Libraries
Licenses, certificates and permits
Property
Public safety and law
Recreation
Recycling and hazardous waste
Transportation
Elections
Take part in our democracy
Voters
Prepare to vote
Absentee voting
Election results
Election judge sign-up
Candidates
File for office
Campaign finance
Election results
Clerks
Clerk training materials
Election day forms

Where History and Progress Meet

Prepare to Vote

Oklahoma Voter Registration Form

Facts about Proof of Identity for Voting in Oklahoma

Voter Registration Locations in Tulsa County

Request to Cancel Voter Registration

Request to Cancel Registration of Deceased Voter

Sample Ballots and Filings

Sample Ballots:

February 13, 2018 – Sample Ballots

Filings: *(Updates will be posted after 5:00 p.m.)*

Annual School Filings (December 4-6, 2017)

City of Sand Springs and the City of Skiatook Filings (December 4-6, 2017)

State Candidate Filing Information

Precinct Information

Where Do I Vote?

Precinct List - February 13 Election

Precinct Locator/Online Voter Tool

Precinct Maps

Employment Application for Precinct Officials

Absentee Voting

To request an absentee ballot, please select one of the following links:

Oklahoma State Election Board Absentee Voting *(for voters whose ballots are to be mailed to an address within the contiguous United States)*

Federal Voting Assistance Program *(MILITARY AND OVERSEAS VOTERS ONLY)*

Election Results

2017 Unofficial Election Results

2016 Election Results

Archived Election Results

Elected Officials

Elected Officials List

Tulsa County Elected Officials

Important Dates and News

2017 Election Schedule

2018 Election Schedule

Press Releases

Helpful Links

Oklahoma State Election Board website

Oklahoma State Election Board FAQ's

Inyo County Elections

Kammi Foote, Registrar of Voters

Your Representatives | Clerk-Recorder | Voter registration | Candidates/Voter File | Military/Overseas voting | What's new

- Election results
- Next election: March 3, 2020
- What's on the ballot
- Register to vote
- Update your voter registration
- Where to vote

What is plain design?

When you publish content using plain design, readers can quickly and easily find the information they need.

Plain design guidelines

- Include white space to make content manageable
- Use menus and headings effectively
- Use lists where appropriate
- Align content to the left of the page
- Use a sans serif font that is at least 12 point size
- Use strong contrast between text color and background color

~~Beautiful & interesting~~

Plain & usable

What is plain language?

Plain language is writing designed to ensure the reader understands as quickly, easily, and completely as possible.

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plain_language

Before:

If you are unable to locate your voter registration information but think you are registered to vote and you have not moved outside of your county of prior registration, you may be eligible to cast a provisional ballot during in person absentee voting period at an appropriate early voting location or the county board of elections, or on Election Day at the correct polling place for your current address that may be counted.

After:

If election workers can't verify your voter registration, you can vote using a provisional ballot. Learn more about provisional ballots on our website.

Why is plain language important?

- Reaches people with low literacy
- Increases accessibility
- Avoids misunderstandings
- Creates transparency
- Builds trust between you and the public

Plain language guidelines

- Write in the positive
- Use active rather than passive voice
- Address the reader directly
- Use short words, short sentences, and short sections
- Use the words voters will be looking for, and avoid jargon

Where do you go from here?

STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR WEBSITE

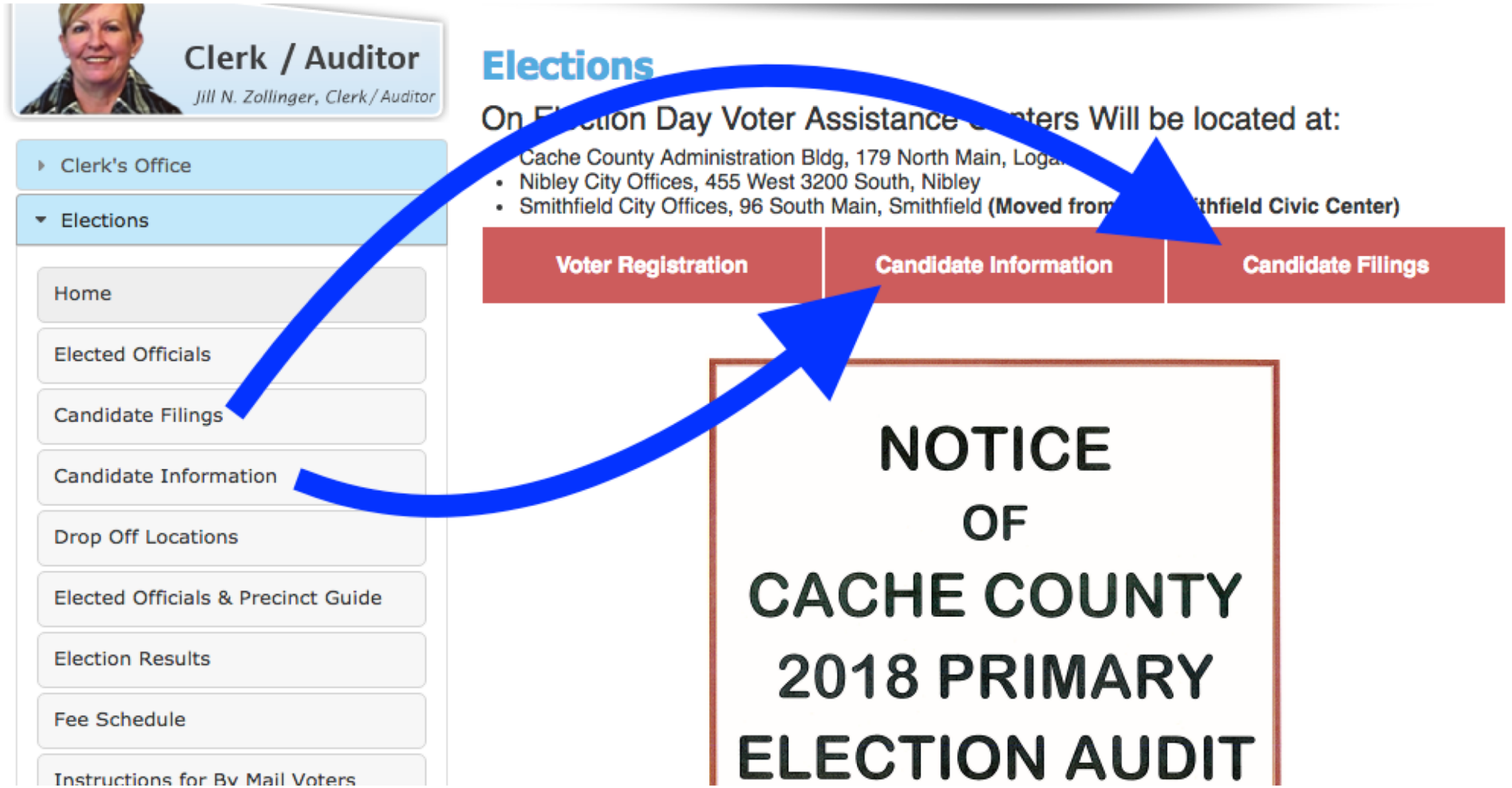
CENTER FOR
TECH AND
CIVIC LIFE

Simplify

Town of Bethlehem, Connecticut
1787
Town of Bethlehem Connecticut
OTHER TOWN OFFICES/SERVICES
AGENDAS & MINUTES
BIDS
JOB OPENINGS
SENIOR CITIZENS
BETHLEHEM POST OFFICE
BUSINESSES OF BETHLEHEM
COMMUNITY LINKS
GENERAL INFORMATION
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Household Hazardous Waste & Paint Collection - 04/27/2019
Woodbury Middle School
2017-2018 Annual Report for Bethlehem (Search for Bethlehem in the "Entity" Search Field)
2019 - 2020 Agreement between Region 14 Board of Education & Nonnewaug Education Association
Free Electronics Recycling for Bethlehem Residents
Mill Rate for Fiscal Year: 07/01/17 - 06/30/18
Town Offices and Boards
Click for 2019 Schedule of Meetings
MAIL-A-MAP
Application for Employment
Municipal Housing Rehabilitation Program
Board of Selectmen
Leonard Assard - First Selectman
ljassard@bethlehemct.org
David Deakin - Selectman
ddeakin@bethlehemct.org
David Butkus Jr. - Selectman
dbutkus@bethlehemct.org
Meetings:
First Tuesday - 7:00 PM - Library
Third Tuesday - 7:00 PM - Town Hall
The Town of Bethlehem operates under the Selectman-Board of Finance-Town Meeting form of government. The Selectmen have limited legislative powers: They convene the town meeting and assist in drafting ordinances which the town meeting adopts; they are the principal administrative officials of the town; they are responsible for the building and maintenance of roads; they keep the town's financial records; they are responsible for the administration of the town welfare services; and they appoint people to administrative boards and commissions. The duties and responsibilities of the Selectmen are varied and wide-ranging. While most of the day-to-day work is done through managers who report to the First Selectman, policy and procedural matters are handled by the board, sitting in public meetings (generally held the first and third Tuesday evenings of each month). The meetings start at 7:00 PM, and always include time during which concerns of the public may be voiced.
Selectman's Office

Let your menu do the work

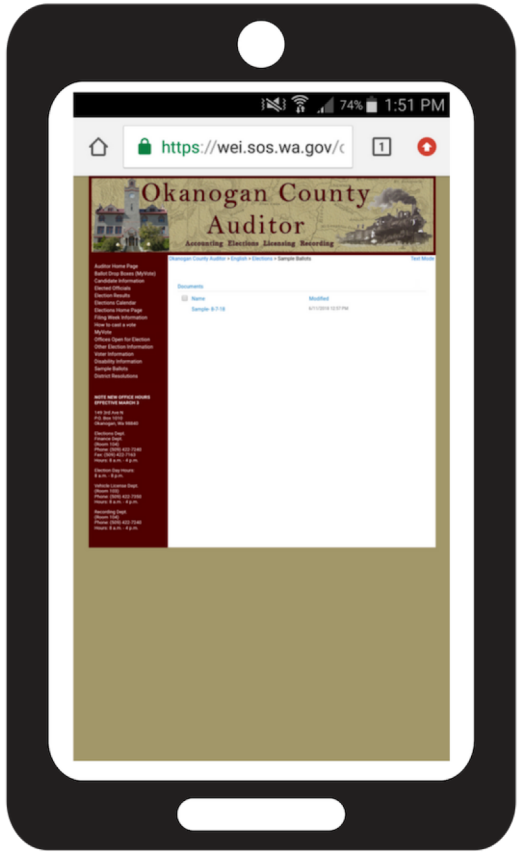
Cut redundant content



Use clear terminology

Answer voters' top questions

Test mobile friendliness



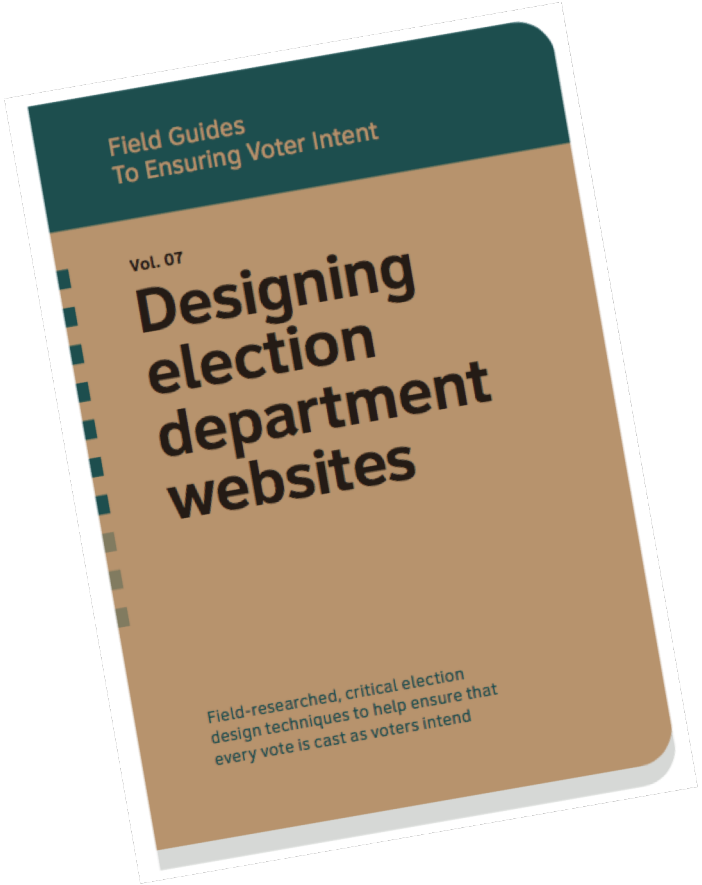
https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly

Looking for additional support to improve your election website?

ELECTION WEBSITE RESOURCES

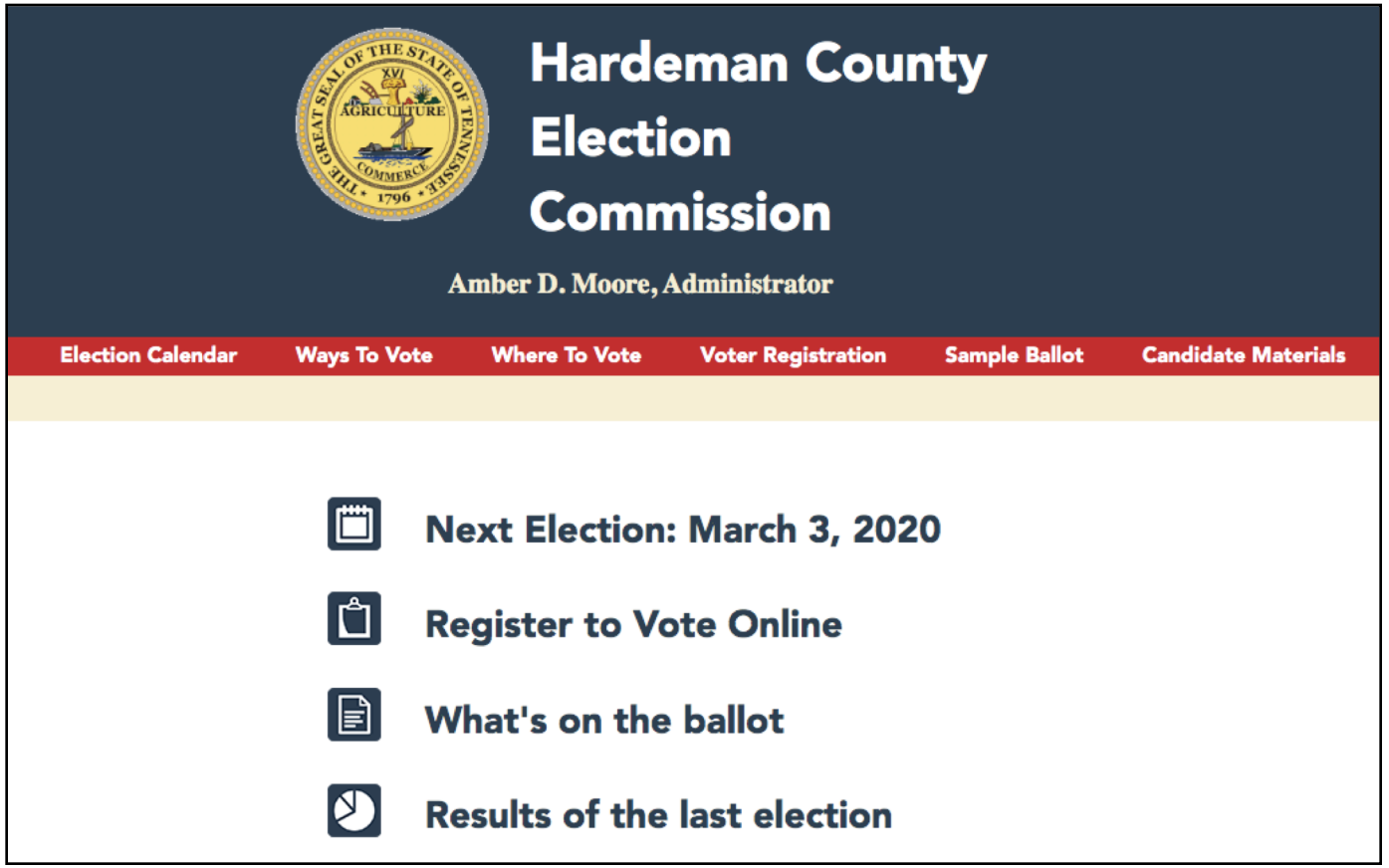
CENTER FOR TECH AND CIVIC LIFE

Center for Civic Design field guide



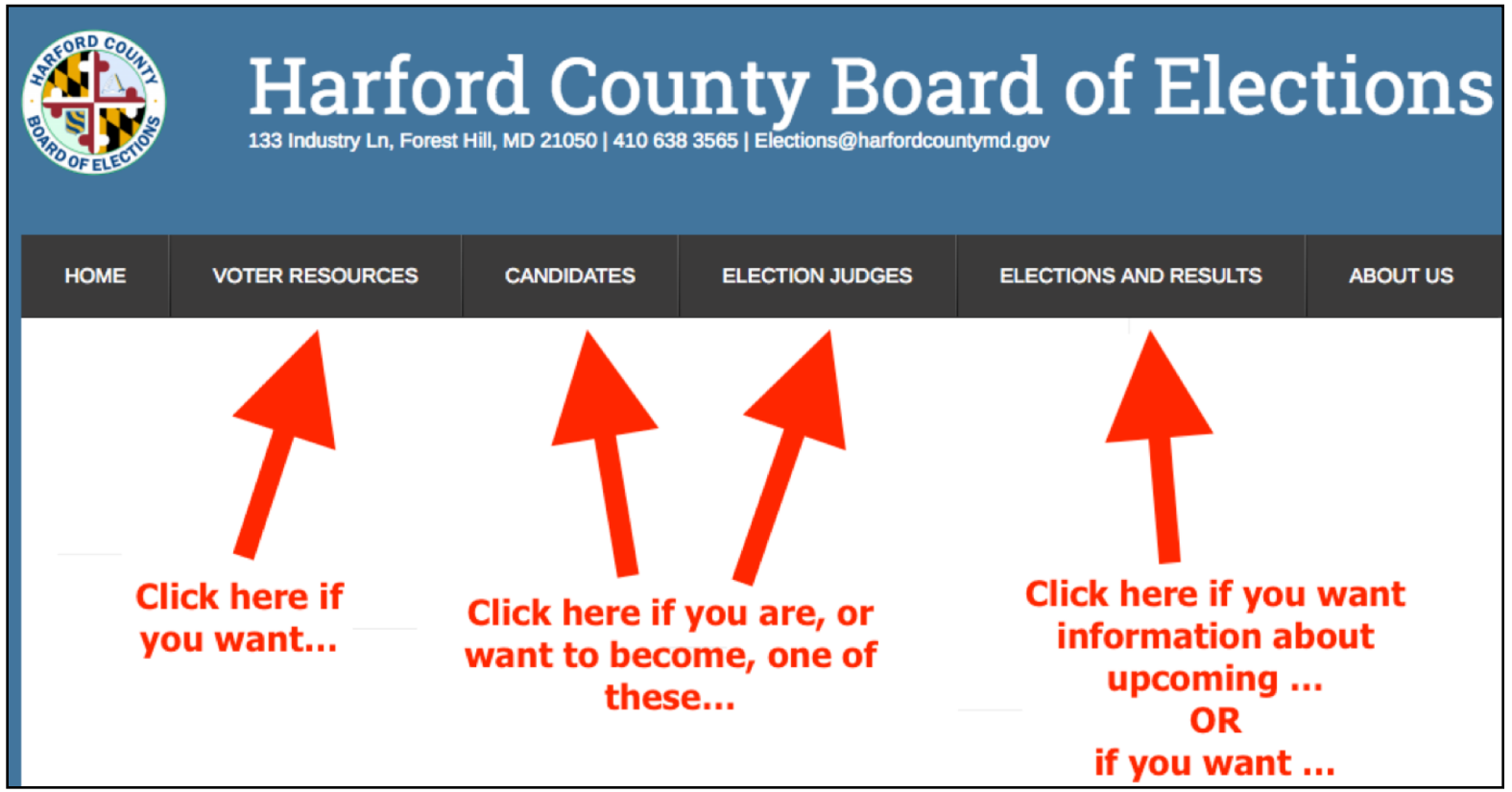
www.civicdesign.org/fieldguides/

Course: Building a New Election Website



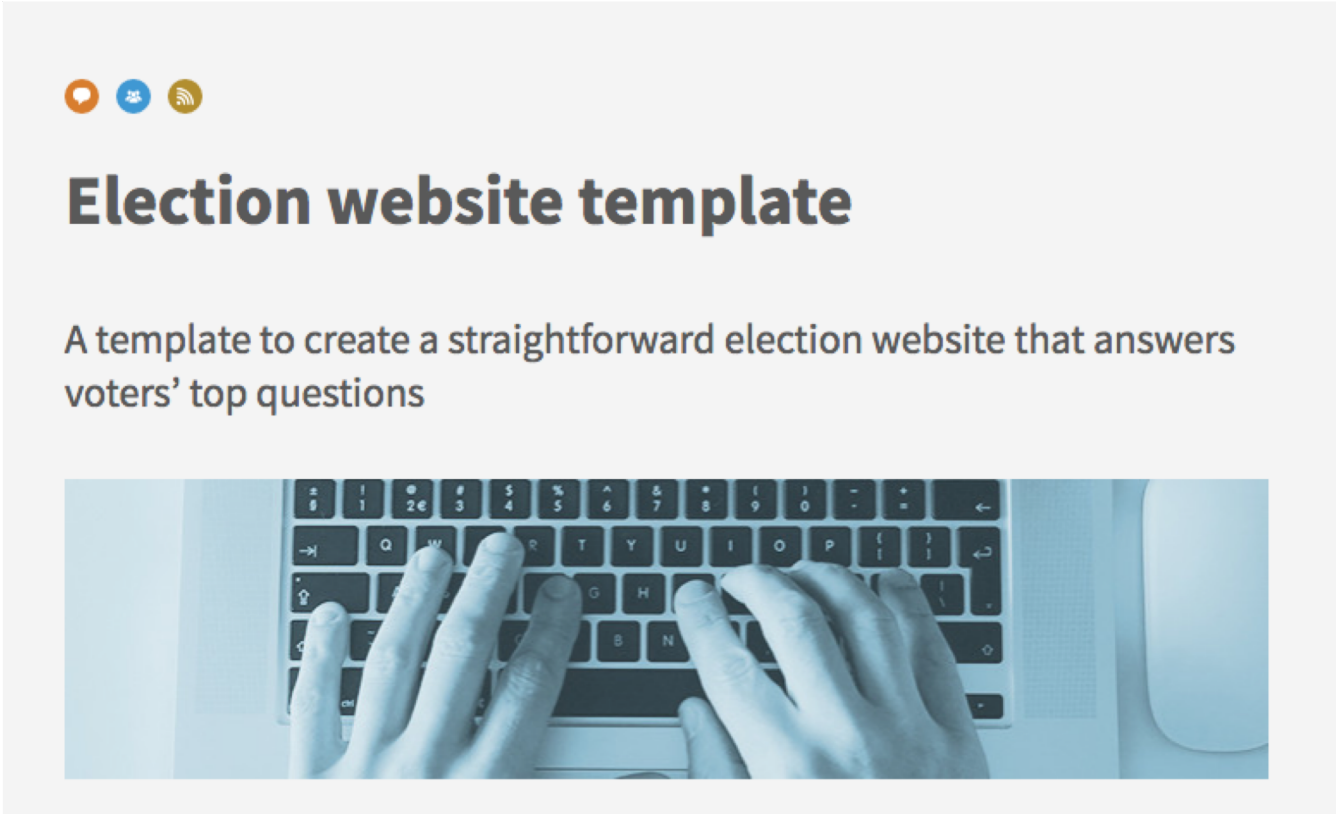
www.techandciviclife.org/courses

Course: Improving Your Election Website



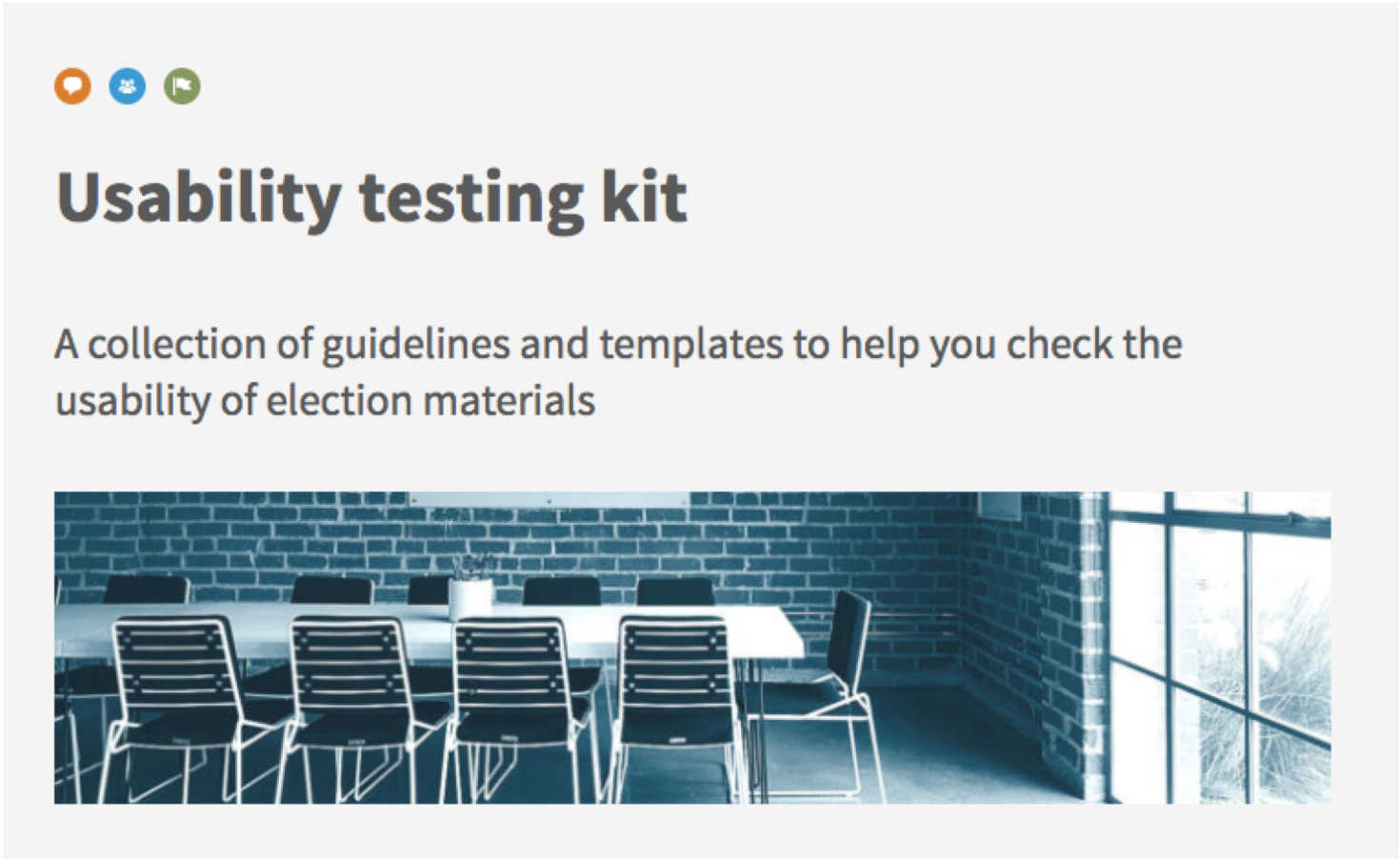
www.techandciviclife.org/courses

Build your own site using our template



www.electiontools.org/tool/election-website-template

Usability Testing Kit



www.electiontools.org/tool/usability-testing-kit

Reviewing our objectives

- Better understand voters' informational needs
- Be familiar with principles of plain design and plain language
- Know immediate actions you can take to improve your election website
- Have resources to help you improve your site

Vote at Home training for election officials

Free, 60-minute webinars covering best practices in local **Vote at Home** administration

Envelope design
Thursday, February 13th | 2pm EST

Supplementary materials
Tuesday, February 18th | 2pm EST

Tools for tracking
Tuesday, February 20th | 2pm EST

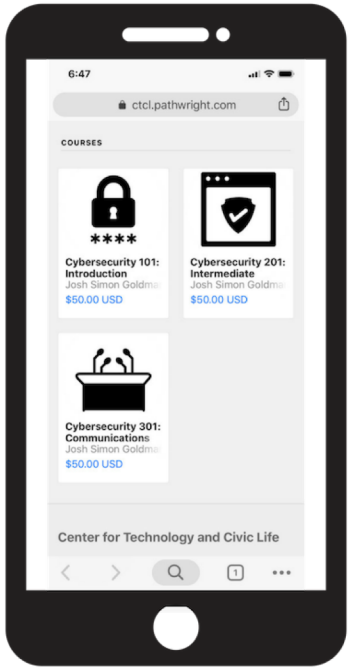
CENTER FOR TECH AND CIVIC LIFE

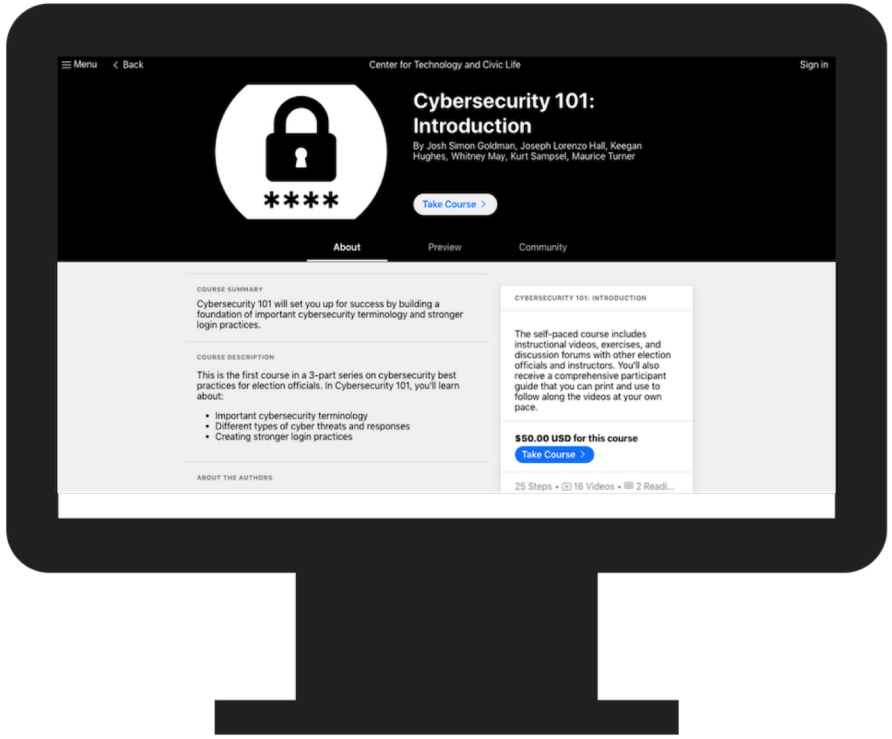
Center for Civic Design

VOTE at HOME

www.techandciviclife.org/vote-at-home

Self-paced election cybersecurity courses





ctcl.pathwright.com

Questions?

Website: www.techandciviclife.org
Email: hello@techandciviclife.org
Twitter: @HelloCTCL

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