

Election Website Best Practices

Texas Association of Election Administrators
2020 Mid-Winter Conference

January 10, 2020
College Station, Texas

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

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Center for Tech and Civic Life



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.techandcivicle.org

Civic Data

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



2016 election
Where to vote

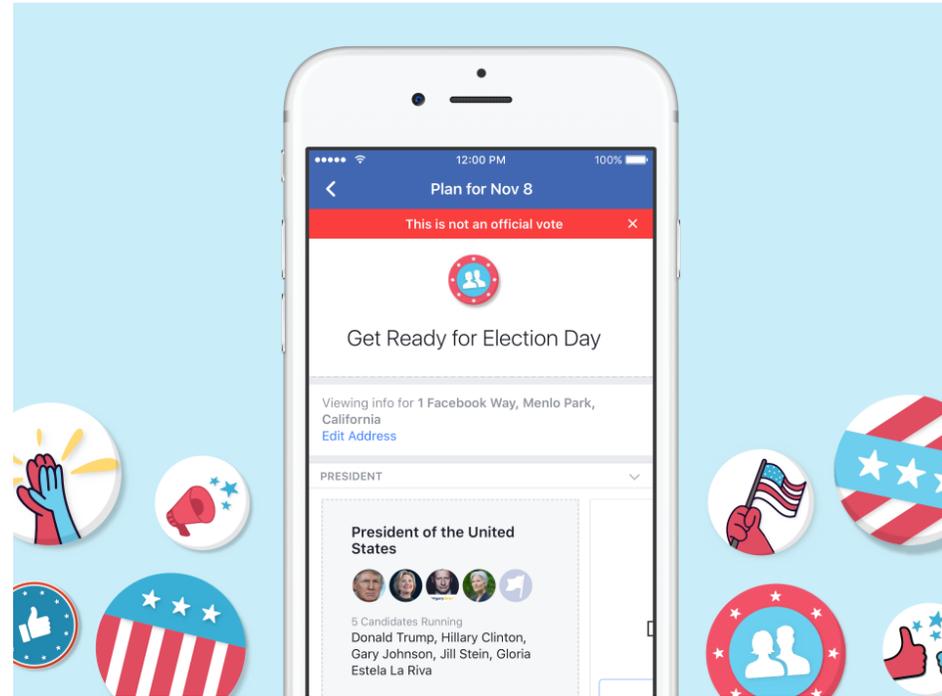
Based on
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Northwest
Washington, DC 20500

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 | > |



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

The image shows a smartphone displaying a Facebook app interface. The screen is titled "Plan for Nov 8" and includes a red warning banner that says "This is not an official vote". Below the banner, there is a section titled "Get Ready for Election Day" with a location pin for "1 Facebook Way, Menlo Park, California". A dropdown menu is open for "PRESIDENT", showing a list of candidates: "President of the United States" and "5 Candidates Running: Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, Gloria Estela La Riva". The background of the phone screen is decorated with various election-related icons like a hand clapping, a megaphone, an American flag, and a thumbs up.

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.

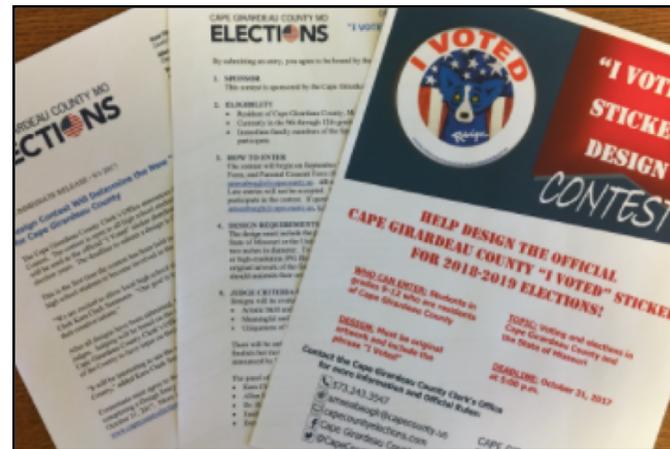
Share Tweet Forward

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.



Free tools

The screenshot displays the ElectionTools.org website interface. At the top left is the logo "ElectionTools.org" and the tagline "Free, practical resources for election officials". To the right are links for "Home" and "Sign up for updates". Below this is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and the word "Search". A row of six circular icons represents different tool categories: Communication tools (orange), Polling places (green), Election data (red), Social media & web (yellow), Images (teal), and Community outreach (blue). The bottom section features three featured tool cards: "RFP how-to guide for election officials" with a whiteboard image, "Pocket voter guide template" with a pocket guide image, and "Voting time estimator" with a ballot image.

ElectionTools.org Free, practical resources for election officials [Home](#) [Sign up for updates](#)

Search

Communication tools Polling places Election data Social media & web Images Community outreach

RFP how-to guide for election officials
Guidance to help you write a successful request-for-proposal document

Pocket voter guide template
A template for creating a simple, informative pocket guide for voters

Voting time estimator
An easy tool for estimating the average time needed to vote a ballot

www.electiontools.org

Professional development courses

Explore our online course offerings

Accessible
Communication for
Election Offices



Building an Election
Website



Collecting,
Analyzing, and
Visualizing Election
Data



Cybersecurity for
Election Officials



Improving Your
Election Website



Messages to
Motivate Voters



Poll Worker
Management Best
Practices



Post-Election
Audits



Social Media for
Voter Engagement



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

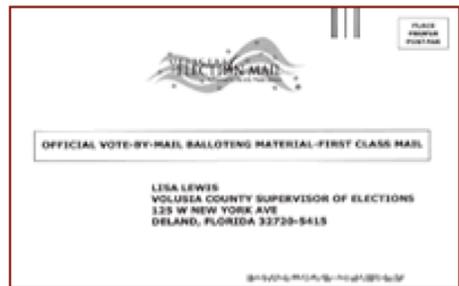
Lisa Lewis, Supervisor of Elections



| 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...](#)



[What is a Closed Primary Election?](#)



[Be Election Ready!](#)



[Sample Ballot](#)

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

[Order a Vote-by-Mail Ballot Today!](#)

[**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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[2018 Proposed Constitutional Amendments & Information](#)

[News & Updates](#)

[2018 Canvassing Board Information](#)

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



Connect With Us



(435) 477-8300

[Departments](#) [Jobs](#) [Commission](#) [News](#) [Contact Us](#)

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



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**FIND MY
POLLING PLACE**

[CLICK HERE](#)



CLICK HERE TO VIEW
**ELECTION DAY
REQUIREMENTS**



CLICK HERE FOR
**VOTER
REGISTRATION**



CLICK HERE FOR
**EARLY VOTING
INFORMATION**



Early Voting

Connect With Us



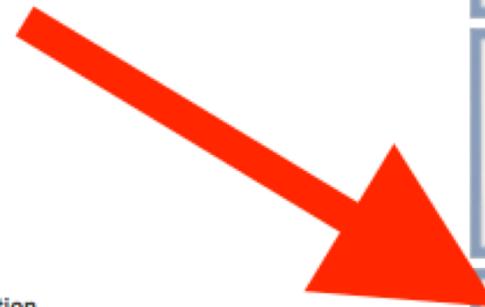
(435) 477-8300

[Departments](#) [Jobs](#) [Commission](#) [News](#) [Contact Us](#)

CLICK HERE TO VIEW
ELECTION DAY REQUIREMENTS

CLICK HERE FOR
VOTER REGISTRATION

CLICK HERE FOR
ABSENTEE VOTING INFO



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

Locations

Iron County Courthouse

68 S 100 E, Parowan Utah

Cedar City Council Chambers

10 N Main St, Cedar City Utah

Enoch City Offices

900 E Midvalley Rd, Enoch Utah

Dates

[view](#)

[view](#)

[view](#)

#3 How do I register to vote?

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

CLERK'S OFFICE

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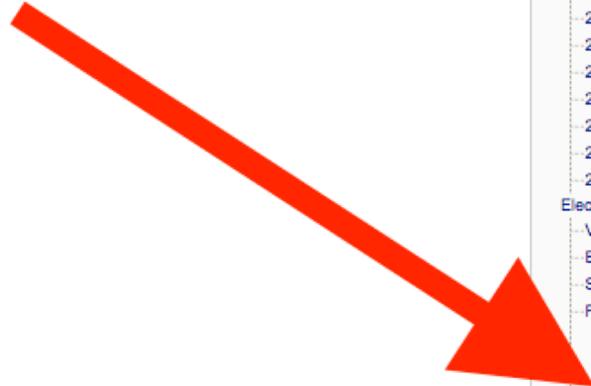
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Election Results



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- 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





MANCHESTER, NH
New Hampshire's Business Capital

[Home](#) | [Recreation](#) | [Business](#) | [Pay Online](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Meeting Agendas](#) | [City Calendars](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Search](#)

[Home](#) » [Departments](#) » [City Clerk](#) » [Voter Registration and Elections](#)

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** followed 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.

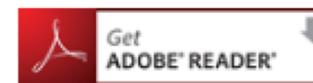
If you are unsure of the correct location for you to vote on Election Day, select the "Where do I vote?" option below.

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?](#)



I Voted

Elections

Take part in our democracy

- 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

Voters

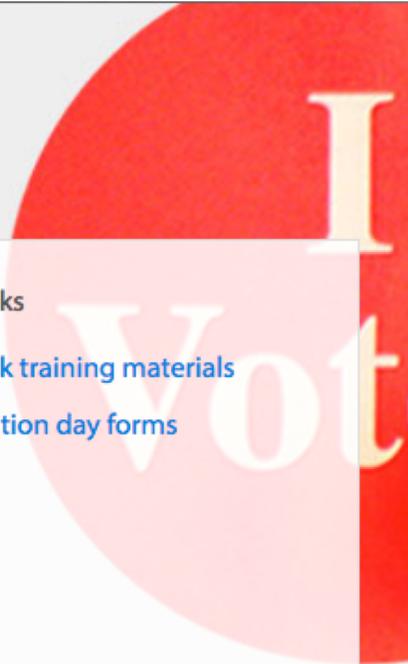
- [Prepare to vote](#)
- [Absentee voting](#)
- [Election results](#)
- [Election judge sign-up](#)

Candidates

- [File for office](#)
- [Campaign finance](#)
- [Election results](#)

Clerks

- [Clerk training materials](#)
- [Election day forms](#)



I Voted

I Voted

I Voted



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

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  |  | |
| OTHER TOWN OFFICES/SERVICES | Household Hazardous Waste & Paint Collection - 04/27/2019 Woodbury Middle School | |
| AGENDAS & MINUTES | 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 | |
| BIDS | Free Electronics Recycling for Bethlehem Residents | Mill Rate for Fiscal Year: 07/01/17 - 06/30/18 |
| JOB OPENINGS | Town Offices and Boards Click for 2019 Schedule of Meetings |  Application for Employment Municipal Housing Rehabilitation Program |
| SENIOR CITIZENS | 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 |
| BETHLEHEM POST OFFICE | <p>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.</p> | |
| BUSINESSES OF BETHLEHEM | Selectman's Office | |
| COMMUNITY LINKS | | |
| GENERAL INFORMATION | | |
| CONSERVATION COMMISSION | | |

Let your menu do the work



Election Office

Ronnie Metsker, Election Commissioner

Search

2101 East Kansas City Road
Olathe, Kansas 66061

Phone: (913) 715-6800

Fax: (913) 791-1753

election@jocoelection.org

- Home
- Elected Officials
- Voter Information
- Become a Candidate
- Election Workers
- Election Info
- Election History

Cut redundant content

Clerk / Auditor
Jill N. Zollinger, Clerk / Auditor

▶ Clerk's Office

▼ Elections

Home

Elected Officials

Candidate Filings

Candidate Information

Drop Off Locations

Elected Officials & Precinct Guide

Election Results

Fee Schedule

Instructions for By Mail Voters

Elections

On Election Day Voter Assistance Centers Will be located at:

- Cache County Administration Bldg, 179 North Main, Logan
- Nibley City Offices, 455 West 3200 South, Nibley
- Smithfield City Offices, 96 South Main, Smithfield (Moved from Smithfield Civic Center)

Voter Registration

Candidate Information

Candidate Filings

**NOTICE
OF
CACHE COUNTY
2018 PRIMARY
ELECTION AUDIT**

Use clear terminology

Election Information for

Home **General Elections** **Consolidated Elections** **Election Night Returns** Contact

Welcome

 **Johnson County Clerk/Recorder**
1 week ago

Election Judges, Workers and Polling Places your check will be mailed out Wednesday (tomorrow) unless you call that you are picking up. Student Election Judges I have money for you!!!
Please Share this post!! call 658-3611.

County

Robin Ha
Johnson
Election A
Illinois Co
2009

Answer voters' top questions

MINNEAPOLIS
YourCity. YourVote. Next City-

Voters Candidates Election Judges Outreach & Education Results Data & Resources Ranke

- Voter Registration
- Register on Election Day
- Tenant Notification of Voter Registration
- Where to Vote
- Vote Early (Absentee)
- Vote by Mail
- VOTERS**
- Voter Assistance and Resources
- Voter Registration
- Pledge to Vote
- Register on Election Day
- What's on the Ballot?
- Where to Vote
- Voting Equipment
- Registration

Home > Voters

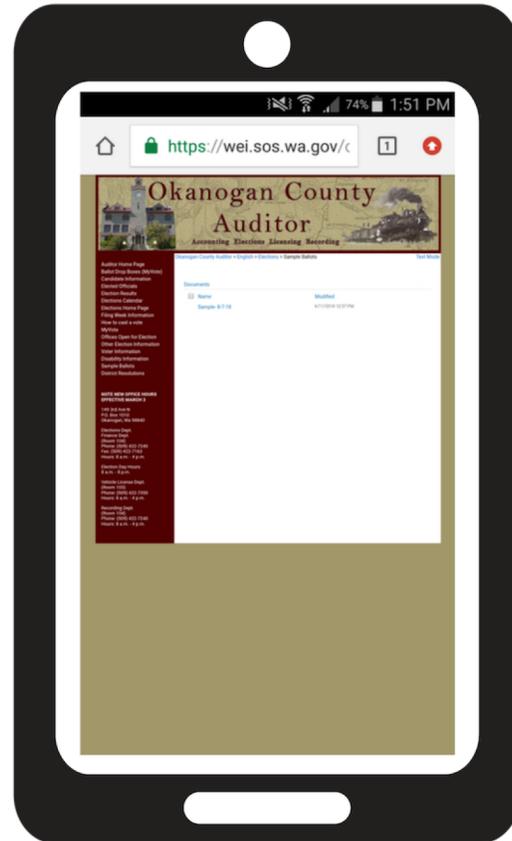
Voters

FROM QUICK, SIMPLE ANSWERS TO DETAILED INFORMATION

The next city-wide election in Minneapolis is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2017. This will be held at city offices, and will use [ranked-choice voting](#).

Note: A blue arrow points from the 'Voters' menu item to the 'Voters' page content, and a large blue question mark is placed next to the arrow.

Test mobile friendliness



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

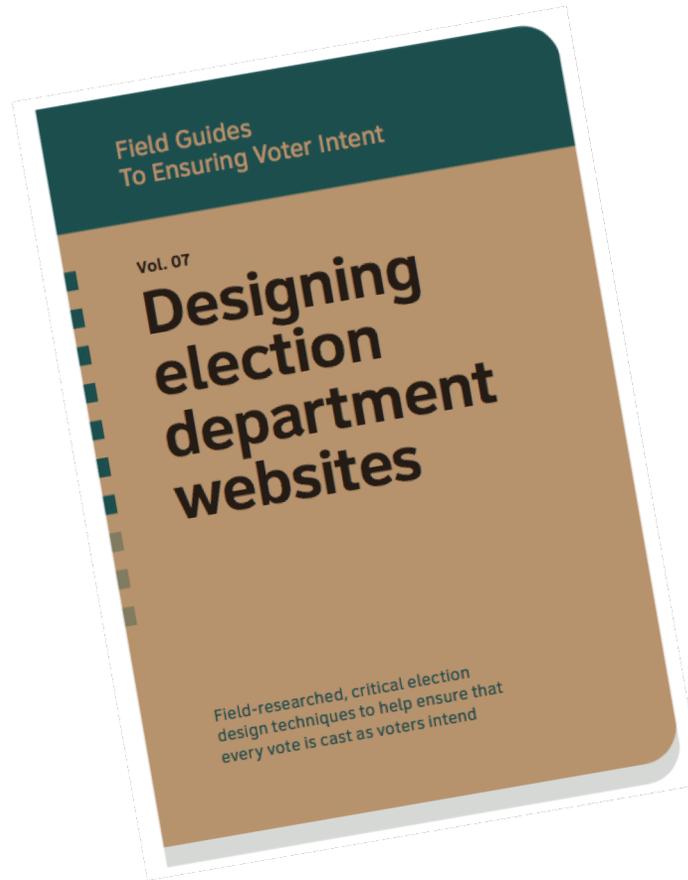
Looking for additional support to improve your election website?

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



 **Hardeman County
Election
Commission**
Amber D. Moore, Administrator

[Election Calendar](#) [Ways To Vote](#) [Where To Vote](#) [Voter Registration](#) [Sample Ballot](#) [Candidate Materials](#)

-  **Next Election: March 3, 2020**
-  **Register to Vote Online**
-  **What's on the ballot**
-  **Results of the last election**

www.techandciviclife.org/courses

Course: Improving Your Election Website



The image shows a screenshot of the Harford County Board of Elections website. At the top left is the Harford County Board of Elections logo. To its right is the title "Harford County Board of Elections" and the address "133 Industry Ln, Forest Hill, MD 21050 | 410 638 3565 | Elections@harfordcountymd.gov". Below this is a dark navigation bar with links for HOME, VOTER RESOURCES, CANDIDATES, ELECTION JUDGES, ELECTIONS AND RESULTS, and ABOUT US. Three red arrows point from text boxes below to the VOTER RESOURCES, CANDIDATES, and ELECTIONS AND RESULTS links. The text boxes contain the following instructions:

- Click here if you want...
- Click here if you are, or want to become, one of these...
- Click here if you want information about upcoming ...
OR
if you want ...

www.techandciviclelife.org/courses

Build your own site using our template



Election website template

A template to create a straightforward election website that answers voters' top questions



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

Usability Testing Kit



Usability testing kit

A collection of guidelines and templates to help you check the usability of election materials



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



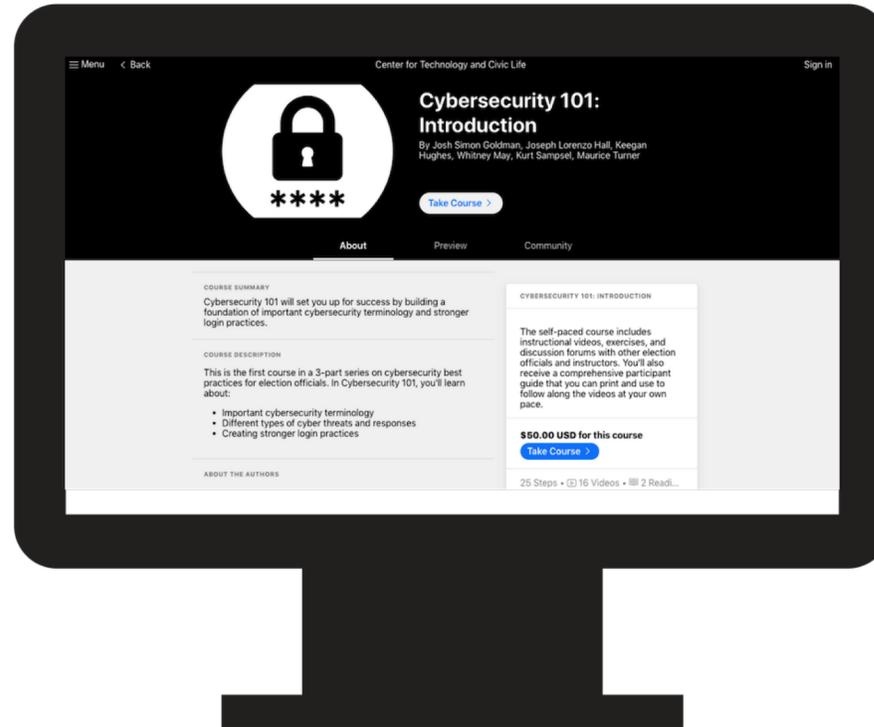
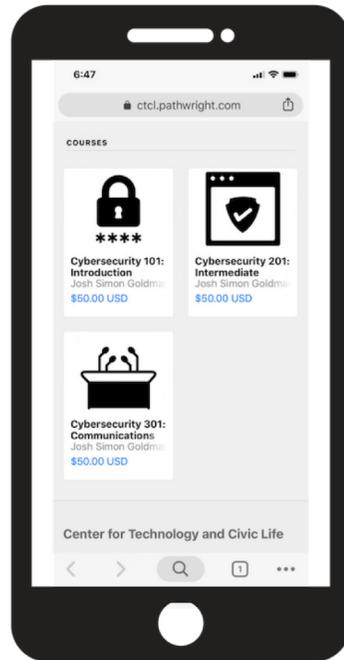
Tools for tracking

Tuesday, February 20th | 2pm EST



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Questions?

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