

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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Kurt Sampsel

Project Manager

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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.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.



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](#)

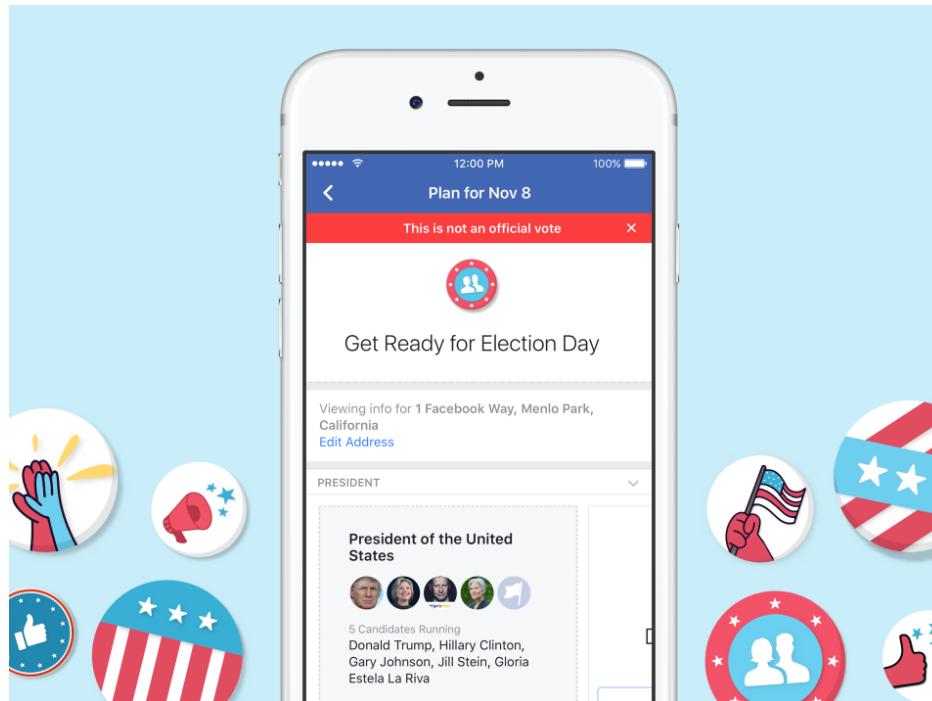
PRESIDENT

President of the United States

- Donald Trump
- Hillary Clinton
- Gary Johnson
- Jill Stein
- Gloria Estela La Riva

5 Candidates Running

Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton, Gary Johnson, Jill Stein, Gloria Estela La Riva

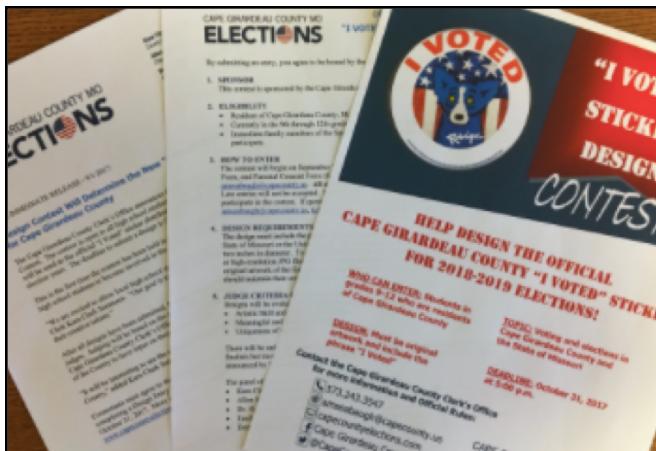


Government Services

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

The image features a large, stylized word 'ELECTRICITY' in a teal and black font. A black circular icon with a teal wavy line representing an electrical plug is positioned in the center. Below the plug, the text 'PLUG IN. GET CONNECTED. STAY CURRENT.' is written in a teal font. At the bottom, there are three social sharing buttons: a 'Share' button with a Facebook icon, a 'Tweet' button with a Twitter icon, and a 'Forward' button with a mail icon.



www.techandciviclife.org/news-and-events

Free tools

The screenshot shows the homepage of ElectionTools.org. The top navigation bar includes the site name, a search bar, and links for 'Home' and 'Sign up for updates'. Below the navigation is a search bar with a magnifying glass icon and a 'Search' button. A row of six circular icons represents different tools: 'Communication tools' (orange speech bubble), 'Polling places' (green flag), 'Election data' (red bar chart), 'Social media & web' (gold RSS feed), 'Images' (teal camera), and 'Community outreach' (blue people). Below these are three cards: 'RFP how-to guide for election officials' (image of people at a table, description: 'Guidance to help you write a successful request-for-proposal document'), 'Pocket voter guide template' (image of a voter guide, description: 'A template for creating a simple, informative pocket guide for voters'), and 'Voting time estimator' (image of a ballot, description: 'An easy tool for estimating the average time needed to vote a ballot').

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?



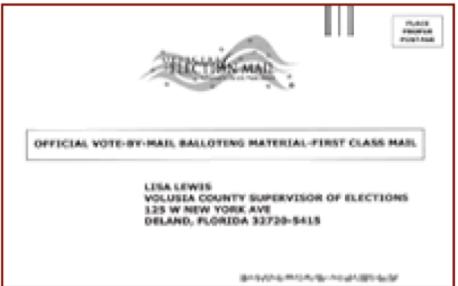
Volusia County Department of Elections

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

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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[Register to Vote](#)

[Vote by Mail Request](#)

[Precinct Locator](#)

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[Provisional Status](#)

[Translate](#)

[Avoid the Rush...](#)



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

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



[Be Election Ready!](#)



[Sample Ballot](#)

Primary Election
August 28, 2018 - Sample Ballot
Elección Primaria
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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

[f](#) [t](#) [g+](#) [\(435\) 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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Election Information



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CLOSE ON ELECTION DAY

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ELECTION DAY
REQUIREMENTS](#)



[CLICK HERE FOR
VOTER
REGISTRATION](#)



[CLICK HERE FOR
EARLY VOTING
INFORMATION](#)



Connect With Us



(435) 477-8300

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

Early Voting

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

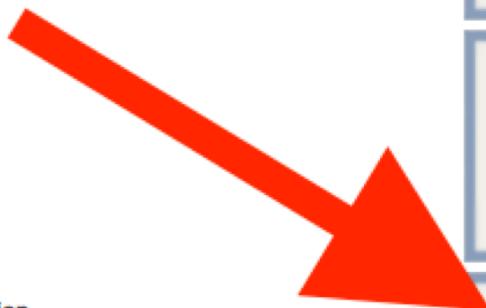
Enoch City Offices

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

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



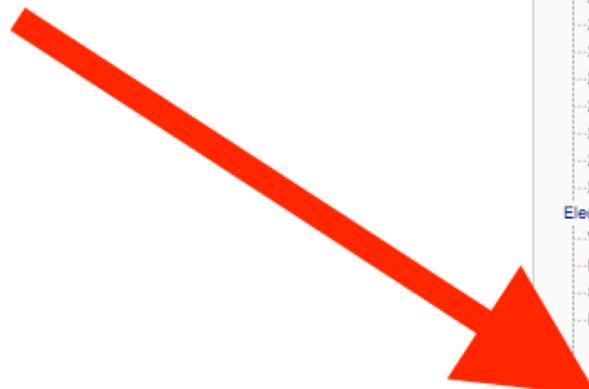
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Minutes

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Election Info

- Voting Locations

- Early Voting

- Sample Ballots

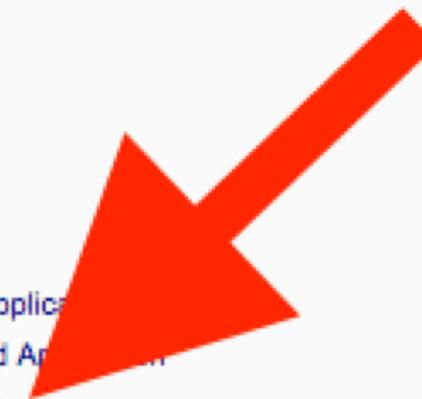
Forms

- Advance Ballot Application
- Federal Post Card Application
- Voter Registration

- 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





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
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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.

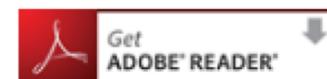
If you are unsure of the correct location for you to vote on Election Day, select the "Where do I vote?" option below.

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?](#)





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



I WANT TO...

GOVERNMENT

RESIDENTS

SERVICES



HOME ABOUT CONTACT CAREERS



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

	 <p>Town of Bethlehem, Connecticut</p>		
OTHER TOWN OFFICES/SERVICES	<p>Household Hazardous Waste & Paint Collection - 04/27/2019 Woodbury Middle School</p>		
AGENDAS & MINUTES	<p>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</p>		
BIDS	<p>Free Electronics Recycling for Bethlehem Residents Mill Rate for Fiscal Year: 07/01/17 - 06/30/18</p>		
JOB OPENINGS	<p>Town Offices and Boards Application for Employment Click for 2019 Schedule of Meetings Municipal Housing Rehabilitation Program</p>		
SENIOR CITIZENS	<p>Board of Selectmen Leonard Assard - First Selectman ljassard@bethlehemct.org</p>		
BETHLEHEM POST OFFICE	<p>Meetings: First Tuesday - 7:00 PM - Library Third Tuesday - 7:00 PM - Town Hall</p>		
BUSINESSES OF BETHLEHEM	<p>David Deakin - Selectman ddeakin@bethlehemct.org</p>		
COMMUNITY LINKS	<p>David Butkus Jr. - Selectman dbutkus@bethlehemct.org</p>		
GENERAL INFORMATION	<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>		
CONSERVATION COMMISSION	<p>Selectman's Office</p>		



[Application for Employment](#)
[Municipal Housing Rehabilitation Program](#)

Let your menu do the work



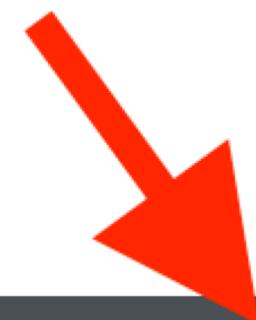
Election Office

Ronnie Metsker, Election Commissioner

[Home](#)[Elected Officials](#)[Voter Information](#)[Become a Candidate](#)[Election Workers](#)[Election Info](#)[Election History](#)

2101 East Kansas City Road
Olathe, Kansas 66061

Phone: (913) 715-6800
Fax: (913) 791-1753
election@jocolection.org



Cut redundant content

The image shows a screenshot of a website for the Clerk / Auditor of Cache County. The top navigation bar includes a photo of Jill N. Zollinger, Clerk / Auditor, and links for 'Clerk's Office' and 'Elections'. The 'Elections' link is currently selected, as indicated by a blue background. The main content area has a blue header 'Elections' and a sub-section titled 'On Election Day Voter Assistance Centers Will be located at:'. This section lists three locations: Cache County Administration Bldg, 179 North Main, Logan; Nibley City Offices, 455 West 3200 South, Nibley; and Smithfield City Offices, 96 South Main, Smithfield (Moved from Smithfield Civic Center). Below this are three red buttons: 'Voter Registration', 'Candidate Information', and 'Candidate Filings'. A large blue arrow points from the 'Elections' link in the sidebar to the 'Candidate Filings' button. Another blue arrow points from the 'Candidate Filings' button to a large red-bordered box containing the text: 'NOTICE OF CACHE COUNTY 2018 PRIMARY ELECTION AUDIT'.

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 (tommorrow) unless you call that you are picking up. Student Electon Judges I have money for you!!! Please Share this post!! call 658-3611.

County
Johnson
Election A
Illinois Co
2009

Answer voters' top questions

MINNEAPOLIS

YourCity. YourVote.

Next City-

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

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

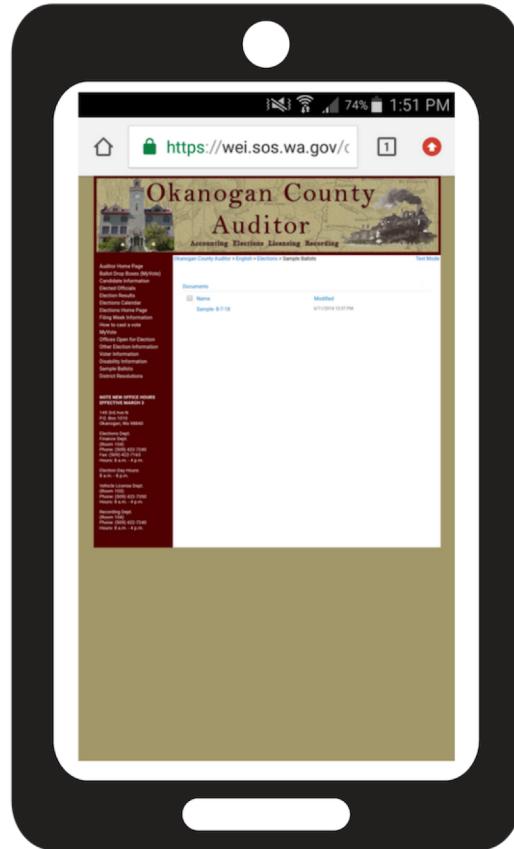
Home > Voters

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 the first election to use ranked-choice voting. The election will be held in all city offices, and will use ranked-choice voting.

Test mobile friendliness



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

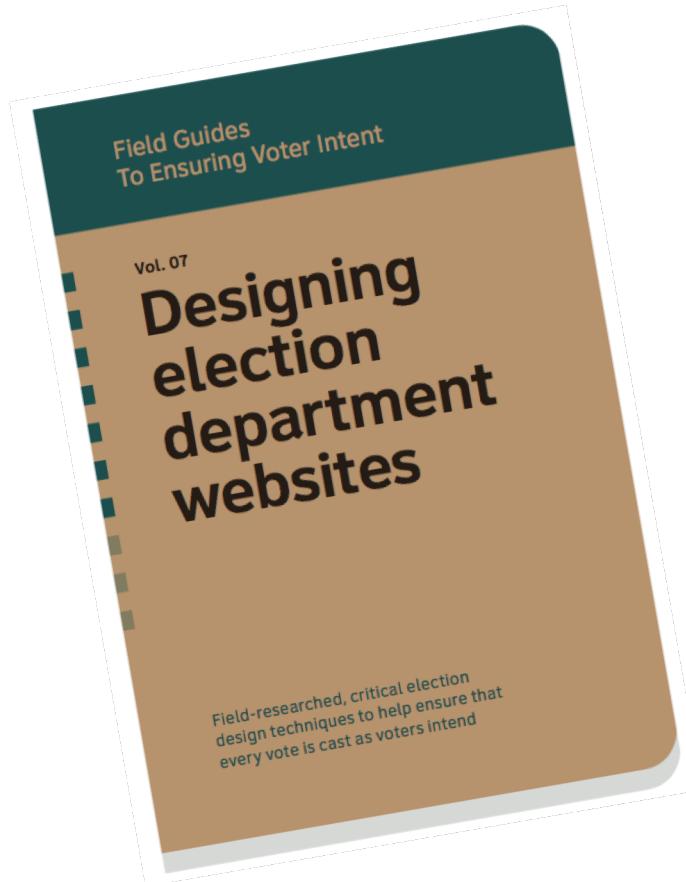
Looking for additional support to improve your election website?

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



The image is a screenshot of the Hardeman County Election Commission website. The header features the Great Seal of the State of Tennessee, which is circular with a yellow border containing the text 'THE GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE' and '1796'. The center of the seal depicts a plow, a sheaf of wheat, and a cotton plant. To the right of the seal, the text 'Hardeman County Election Commission' is displayed in white, sans-serif font. Below this, the name 'Amber D. Moore, Administrator' is shown. A red navigation bar at the top includes links for 'Election Calendar', 'Ways To Vote', 'Where To Vote', 'Voter Registration', 'Sample Ballot', and 'Candidate Materials'. The main content area is white and contains four items with icons: a calendar icon for 'Next Election: March 3, 2020', a ballot box icon for 'Register to Vote Online', a document icon for 'What's on the ballot', and a pie chart icon for 'Results of the last election'.

**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**

Course: Improving Your Election Website



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Harford County Board of Elections website. The header features the Harford County Board of Elections logo on the left, followed by the text "Harford County Board of Elections" and the address "133 Industry Ln, Forest Hill, MD 21050 | 410 638 3565 | Elections@harfordcountymd.gov". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for HOME, VOTER RESOURCES, CANDIDATES, ELECTION JUDGES, ELECTIONS AND RESULTS, and ABOUT US. The main content area contains three red arrows pointing upwards, each accompanied by text: "Click here if you want...", "Click here if you are, or want to become, one of these...", and "Click here if you want information about upcoming ... OR if you want ...".

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 ...

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

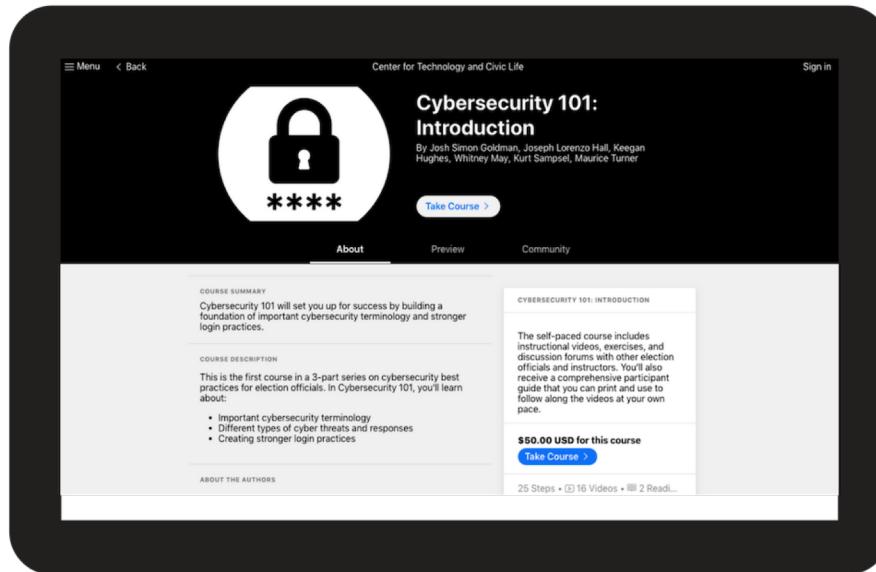
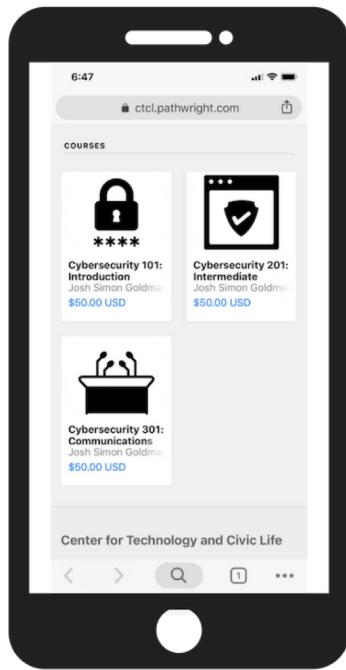


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Questions?

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