VOTER GUIDE RECOMMENDATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist of our recommendations when creating or reviewing a voter guide.

Include the right information at the appropriate level of detail

☐ Is the information organized by activity or task?
☐ Does the cover page include the following information?
  • County name and seal (or other official insignia)
  • Name or type of election
  • Date of election day and times the polls are open
  • Polling place information
  • How to contact the election office
  • Languages offered

☐ Is it clear how the county and state guides are different and connected?
☐ Are the headings written as questions or active instructions?
☐ Are the plain language principles incorporated? This includes
  • Writing short sentences
  • Using short, simple, everyday words
  • Writing in active voice and writing in the positive
  • Keeping paragraphs short
  • Separating paragraphs by a space, so that each one stands out on the page

☐ Are there definitions and descriptions for election terms and processes?

Organize information in an easy-to-follow path

☐ Is there a table of contents?
☐ Are there questions, quasi-questions, or instructions as headings?
☐ Does each page have a clear topic?
☐ Are there visual elements to make each section easy to see?
☐ Is the voter information organized to include both an overview and details?

From How Voters Get Information: Best practices manual for official voter information guides in California
Created by Center for Civic Design and the League of Voters California Education Fund
https://civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/
VOTER GUIDE RECOMMENDATION CHECKLIST

Present information so it is easy to read and understand

☐ Is the text big enough (at least 12 points)?
☐ Is the information visual?
☐ Is there consistency in presentation and writing?
☐ Is the sample ballot presented in a way that voters easily understand what it is and how to use it?

Personalize information for the voter

☐ Is the availability of languages visible in all versions of the guide?
☐ Is the polling place clearly visible? Is it on the front cover?
☐ Is it clear when the sample ballot is an exact sample and when it’s just similar?
☐ Do the update and registration forms look official?

Use structure and content to close civic literacy gaps

☐ Is there a signature so voters know the source of the guide?
☐ Are voters told their rights (i.e., voter bill of rights)?
☐ Is it easy to learn about and compare the candidates?
☐ Do voters know how the ballot measures will affect them?
☐ Is there an explanation of the type of election?
☐ Has the voter information been tested with low-literacy and low-English-proficiency voters?