

# USAEE: medium election websites project

## Website audit report

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Civic Design

# Project background and goals

# Project background

Through USAEE, we will be working with election offices of more varying sizes than much of CCD's previous work. This is an opportunity to take a look at our past website recommendations, and assess how they might need to change in order to work for offices of different sizes.

## **The project has 3 phases**

- Website audit
- Feedback session with voters
- Conversations with election offices whose websites demonstrate best practices

This report covers phase 1: website audit



# Phase 1: Website Audit

## Goal

Review 20 websites from small-medium jurisdictions with a small election staff. We focused on user experience and information design.

## Site selection process

- **Size of jurisdiction.** Counties with a population between 130,000 and 80,000 with a few outliers. All offices had a small full-time staff.
- **Demographics and geography.** Chosen based on a mix of regions, urban and rural areas, and offices that had Section 203 language designation.
- **Legacy.** Several of the websites were reviewed as part of CCD's [2012 report](#) on minority county websites. We wanted to update information



# List of sites audited

Berkeley County, SC

Brunswick County, NC

Boone County, MO

Cass County, MO

Cowlitz, County, WA

Flint, MI

Hartford, CT\*

Henderson County,  
TX\*

Johnson County, IW

Laramie County, WY

Litchfield County, CT

Madison, WI \*

Monroe County, IN

Pennington County, SD

Richmond, VA\*

Robeson County, NC

Rogers County, OK

San Juan County, NM

Santa Cruz County, AZ\*

Shasta County, CA

Valencia County, NM

Wyandotte County, KS

**\*Section 203 designation**



# Rubric methodology and rating

How we measured the sites

# **Rubric categories and guidelines**

# Website evaluation rubric categories and guidelines

## Categories

5 categories were created based on information needs and website best practices.

- Site user interface and information architecture
- Findability, trust, and security
- Key for voter tasks and information
- Special voter circumstances
- Seasonal Election Staff

## Guidelines

Within each category, were guidelines that served as a baseline metric to help determine the quality of information and user experience.





# Rubric categories

## **Category 1: Site user interface and information architecture**

The site's overall user interface and information architecture, including consistency in design, use of plain language, and mobile friendliness.

## **Category 2: Findability, trust, and security**

Measured how easily elections and voting information can be found, the website security, and signs of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness includes site branding and contact information that communicate trust and legitimacy of information.

## **Category 3: Key information for voter tasks and information**

Site's ability to answer important voter questions about deadlines and how to cast a ballot. This includes information about absentee and early voting where applicable.



# Rubric categories

## **Category 4: Special voter circumstances**

A review of presence and quality of information for voters with disabilities (including website accessibility), student voters, returning citizens, and voter that are most comfortable voting in a language other than English.

## **Category 5: Seasonal Election Staff**

Quality of information about temporary elections staff opportunities and training. This included information about responsibilities and training information like a handbook or powerpoint.



**Website rating**

# Rating Overview

## We used a 4-point scale:

- 0 - Failure
- 1 - Bare minimum
- 2 - Good
- 3 - Excellent

Sites were given a rating on each guideline within a category. Then each category was given a rating.

Finally, the sites was given an overall performance rating, based on the ratings in each category.



# Website rating scale

## 0 - Failure

- Key information missing/information
- Vague/confusing navigation labels
- Site does not reflect modern website best practices
- Information takes excessive clicks to access
- PDFs and links with no context

## 1 - Bare minimum

- Partial information
- Top voter questions answered, but difficult to find
- Site reflects some modern website best practices



# Website rating scale

## 2 - Good

- Top voter information present
- Reflects some best practices
- Key information can be viewed in 1-4 clicks

## 3 - Excellent

- Key voter information is visible
- Reflects modern website best practices
- Intuitive navigation
- Interactive maps of voting centers
- Office contact information is visible



# Scoring example: Henderson County, TX

The screenshot shows the Henderson County, TX website. At the top left is the Henderson County seal. The main header includes the text 'Henderson County TX' and a search bar. A navigation menu contains links for HOME, DEPARTMENTS, RESIDENTS, BUSINESS, VISITORS, COUNTY INFORMATION, and I WANT TO... The left sidebar lists various departments, with 'Elections/Voter Registration' highlighted. The main content area features a banner for 'Henderson County Texas' and a 'VOTETEXAS.GOV' logo. Below this, the page is titled 'Elections/Voter Registration' and provides details for the 'May 6, 2023 - Local Political Subdivisions Joint General and Special Election'. Key dates include early voting from April 24-28 and May 1-2, 2023, and a last day to register on April 6, 2023. It also lists the first day to apply for ballot by mail as January 1, 2023. Contact information for Paula Ludtke, Election Administrator, is provided at the bottom.

STATE OF TEXAS  
COUNTY OF HENDERSON  
1856

Search...  
Select Language

HOME DEPARTMENTS RESIDENTS BUSINESS VISITORS COUNTY INFORMATION I WANT TO...

Ag Extension  
▼ Commissioners Court  
Constable  
▼ County Auditor  
County Attorney  
▼ County Clerk  
▼ County Judge  
▼ County Tax Assessor/Collector  
County Treasurer  
▼ Courts  
Crimestoppers  
CSCD  
District Attorney  
District Clerk  
▼ Elections/Voter Registration  
Election Notices  
Election Forms  
Election Results  
Emergency Management  
Fair Park  
▼ Fire Marshal  
Floodplain Administration  
▼ Human Resources  
Indigent Defense  
Indigent Health  
IT  
▼ Justice of the Peace  
Library - Clint W. Murchison Memorial  
Purchasing  
Sheriff

Henderson County Texas

VOTETEXAS.GOV  
POWERED BY THE TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE

Departments

Elections/Voter Registration

Font Size: [+] [x] [-] Share & Bookmark Feedback [x] Print

May 6, 2023 - Local Political Subdivisions Joint General and Special Election

Early Voting April 24-28, May 1-2, 2023

Last Day to Register to Vote for May 6, 2023 Election is APRIL 6, 2023

January 1, 2023 First Day to Apply for Ballot By Mail

Application For Ballot By Mail.  
Click [here](#) to download application in English  
Click [here](#) to download application in Spanish

Paula Ludtke  
Election Administrator

Phone: (903) 675-6149  
Fax: (903) 675-6101  
[hcelections@henderson-county.com](mailto:hcelections@henderson-county.com)

201 J East Larkin St  
Athens, Texas 75751



# Scoring example: Henderson County, TX

The site's strengths included:

- List of deadlines
- Easily identifiable staff with contact information



The screenshot shows the 'Elections/Voter Registration' page for Henderson County, TX. At the top right, there are utility links for 'Font Size', 'Share & Bookmark', 'Feedback', and 'Print'. The main heading is 'May 6, 2023 - Local Political Subdivisions Joint General and Special Election'. Below this, it lists 'Early Voting April 24-28, May 1-2, 2023' and states 'Last Day to Register to Vote for May 6, 2023 Election is APRIL 6, 2023'. It also notes 'January 1, 2023 First Day to Apply for Ballot By Mail' and provides links for 'Application For Ballot By Mail' in both English and Spanish. At the bottom, contact information for Paula Ludtke, Election Administrator, is provided, including phone, fax, email, and address.

**Elections/Voter Registration**

Font Size: [+](#) [-](#) [+](#) Share & Bookmark [Feedback](#) [Print](#)

**May 6, 2023 - Local Political Subdivisions Joint General and Special Election**

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# Scoring example: Henderson County, TX

Areas of improvement included:

- Information about voter registration, polling locations, and how voters can cast their ballots
- Section 203 language access



The screenshot shows the Henderson County website for the May 6, 2023 election. The page title is "Elections/Voter Registration". At the top right, there are links for "Font Size", "Share & Bookmark", "Feedback", and "Print". The main heading is "May 6, 2023 - Local Political Subdivisions Joint General and Special Election". Below this, it states "Early Voting April 24-28, May 1-2, 2023". A key message is "Last Day to Register to Vote for May 6, 2023 Election is APRIL 6, 2023". Another message says "January 1, 2023 First Day to Apply for Ballot By Mail". Under "Application For Ballot By Mail", there are two links: "Click [here](#) to download application in English" and "Click [here](#) to download application in Spanish". At the bottom, contact information for Paula Ludtke, Election Administrator, is provided, including phone, fax, email, and address.

**Elections/Voter Registration**

Font Size: [+](#) [-](#) [+](#) Share & Bookmark [Feedback](#) [Print](#)

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# Scoring example: Henderson County, TX

<b>02: Findability, trust, and security:</b>				
<b>Guideline</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>How it might look</b>	<b>Notes for review</b>	<b>SCORE: 3</b>
Secure?	Communicates trust and legitimacy	Lock symbol		3
.Gov url				3
Connects to SOS and other local gov sites		Voters start by looking for information locally. They often search for their town or county name plus "elections," which leads them to a local site.		3
Easy to find election info				1
Contact info		Contact information is easy to find. Voters have a choice of how to contact the office.		3
<b>03: Voter task and info: This information matches top voter questions. The when, where, and what questions</b>				
<b>Guideline</b>	<b>Why</b>	<b>How it might look</b>	<b>Notes for review</b>	<b>SCORE</b>
Voter registration		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Steps on how to register to vote</li> <li>Information about multiple options</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offers interactive tabs with all voting options</li> </ul>	0
List of important election deadlines		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Show dates and deadlines in a list, in chronological order. Or display dates in a calendar format.</li> </ul>	The updated list includes 2023 election last days to register and when you can apply by mail	3



# Overall ratings

Most sites received a rating of "1" or "1.5", meaning they met basic voter information needs.

## Strengths

- Security
- Connection to local and state government
- Maps and GIS polling locations
- Consistent styles, fonts, and color

## Areas of improvement

- Plain language
- Navigation
- Information architecture
- Special circumstance voter information



# Trends and highlights

What our website review and rated found

**Category 1: Site user  
interface and information  
architecture**

# Category 1

## Site user interface and information architecture

### Average rating: 1

We saw 3 distinct site structures used to present information. Sites had consistency in style and font, but information design and navigation was a noticeable area of improvement.

#### Strengths

- Uniform fonts and styles
- Consistency in site design

#### Areas to improve

- Information presented in plain language
- Easy to find, navigate, and scrollable information



# Site user interface trends

Sites reviewed fell into one or all three site structures

## **Single pager**

Most of the site's content is on one page.

## **The mosaic**

Key information is present, but divided throughout a few pages.

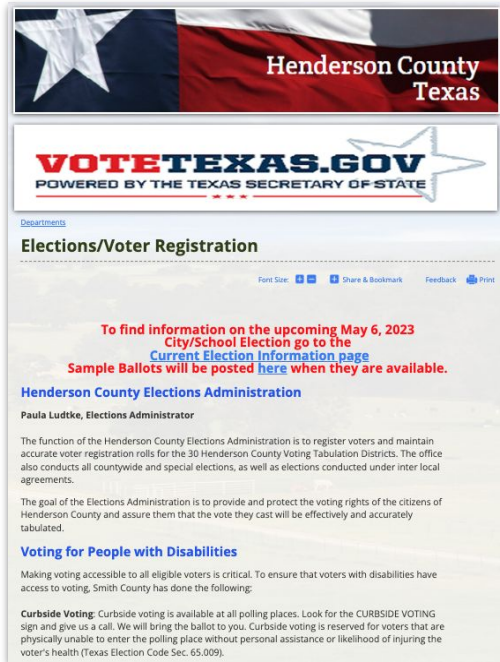
## **The list linker**

Site information is mostly compiled of lists to relevant resources.



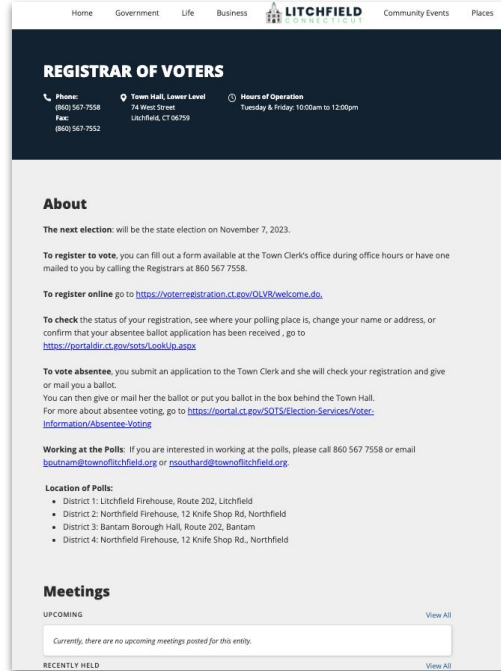
# Site user interface trends: single page

## Information is on one page, divided by headers



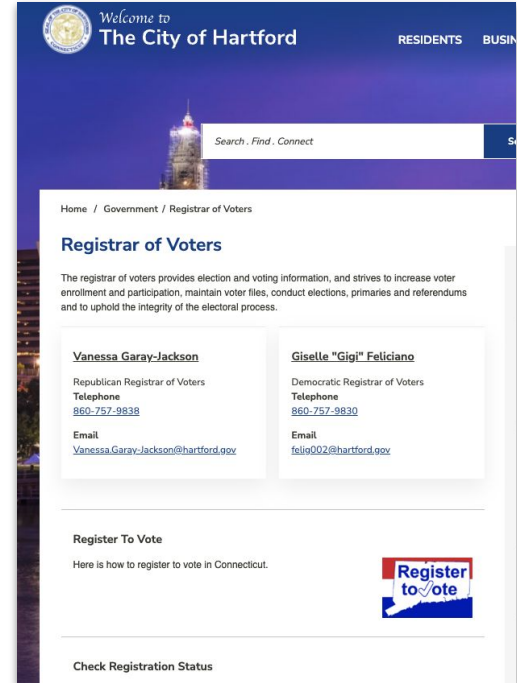
The screenshot shows the Henderson County, Texas website. At the top is a banner with the Texas state flag and the text "Henderson County Texas". Below this is a logo for "VOTETEXAS.GOV" with the tagline "POWERED BY THE TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE". The main content area is titled "Elections/Voter Registration" and includes a "Departments" link. A prominent red and blue announcement states: "To find information on the upcoming May 6, 2023 City/School Election go to the Current Election Information page Sample Ballots will be posted here when they are available." Below this is the "Henderson County Elections Administration" section, featuring Paula Ludtke, Elections Administrator. The text describes the county's role in voter registration and provides information on voting for people with disabilities and curbside voting.

Henderson County, TX



The screenshot shows the Litchfield, CT website. The top navigation bar includes "Home", "Government", "Life", "Business", "LITCHFIELD", "Community Events", and "Places". The main heading is "REGISTRAR OF VOTERS". Contact information for the Registrar is provided, including a phone number (860-567-7558) and the address (Town Hall, Lower Level, 74 West Street, Litchfield, CT 06759). Hours of operation are listed as Tuesday and Friday, 10:00am to 12:00pm. The "About" section states the next election is on November 7, 2023, and provides instructions on how to register to vote, register online, and check the status of registration. It also includes information for absentee voters and a list of polling locations. A "Meetings" section at the bottom shows "UPCOMING" and "RECENTLY HELD" meetings, with a note that there are no upcoming meetings posted for this entity.

Litchfield, CT



The screenshot shows the Hartford, CT website. The top navigation bar includes "Welcome to The City of Hartford", "RESIDENTS", and "BUSINESS". A search bar is located below the navigation. The main heading is "Registrar of Voters". The text describes the registrar's role in providing election and voting information. Two registrars are listed: Vanessa Garay-Jackson, Republican Registrar of Voters, and Giselle "Gigi" Feliciano, Democratic Registrar of Voters. Contact information for both, including phone numbers and email addresses, is provided. A "Register To Vote" section includes the text "Here is how to register to vote in Connecticut." and a "Register to Vote" logo. A "Check Registration Status" link is also present.

Hartford, CT

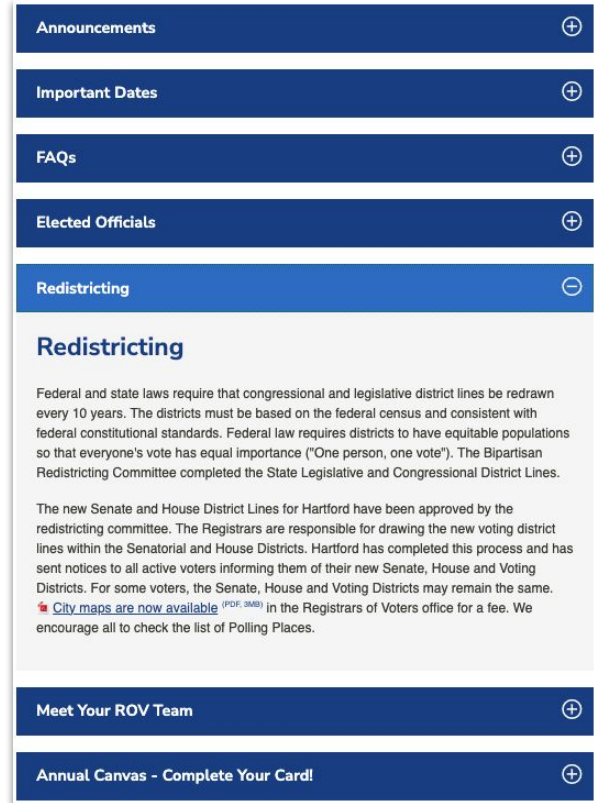




# Site user interface trends: single page

## Dividers included accordions

Hartford, CT is a single page with 7 accordions that expand and collapse.



## Site user interface trends: mosaic

Voter information is often distributed throughout different parts of the county's site.



For example, in Monroe County, IN, information about elections is on 2 different parts of the county's website, "Document Center" and "Voter Registration".

Having voting related information on two different sections on the website may confuse voters, or fail to answer their questions.

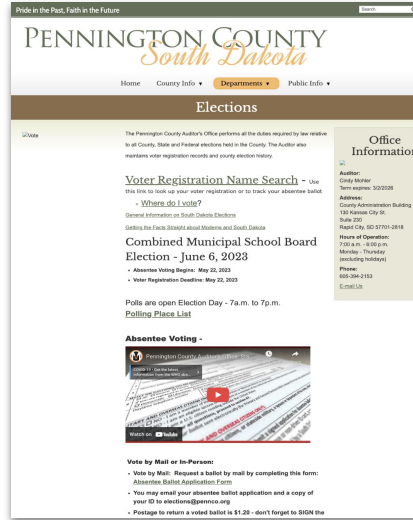


# Site user interface trends: list of links

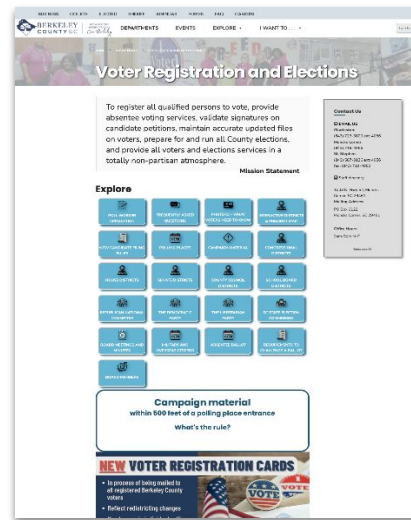
## Sites consist of link to external resources or downloads

“List of link” style sites looks different, but have a similar feature; most of the site is compiled of links to external sites.

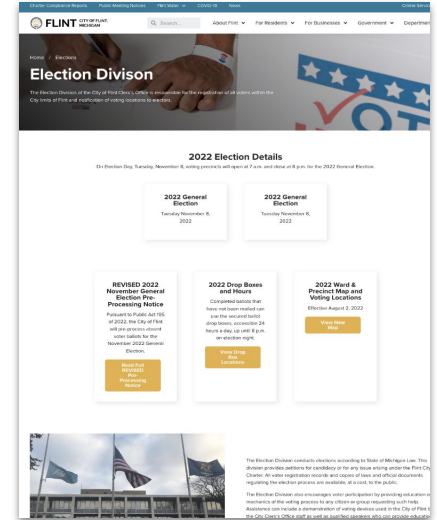
Examples include links to secretary of state absentee voting information, voter registration look ups and applications.



Pennington County, SD



Berkeley County, SC



Flint, MI



# Site user interface trends: list of links

Links are often either PDF downloads or redirect users to an external site, like the SOS office.

Many sites used a "point and click" structure. Main navigation menu items opened a pdf or an external link.

Links that do not give context or inform users of a change may confuse site visitors.



## Election Information

- Register to vote
- Change address voter registration
- Check your voter information
- Request an absentee ballot
- Authorization to Return Ballot Form
- Polling Places



# Site user interface trends: common CMS system

## Several county sites often used the same CMS system: CivicPlus

5 counties we reviewed used CivicPlus as their content management system.

The CivicPlus template uses a left and right panel model. Creating a best practices guide for popular CMSs could help offices better present information.

**On the right:** Valencia County, NM, and Cass County, MO.

The screenshot shows the Valencia County, NM website. At the top, there is a red banner for an "EMERGENCY ALERT" stating "Today is a NO Burn Day 2/18/2023". Below the banner is a navigation menu with links for "Home", "How Do I...", "Departments & Offices", "Our County", "Services", and "Business". A search bar is located below the navigation. The main content area features a "Voting Convenience Centers" section with a sub-heading "Polling Locations, Dates & Times for The 2022 General Election". To the right of this section is a "Contact Us" area with a photo of Mike Millam, County Clerk, and his contact information. A sidebar on the left contains a "General Information" section with links for "Candidate Services", "Voter Registration", "Federal Qualified Electors", "Party Affiliation", "REGULAR LOCAL ELECTION 2023", "Voting Convenience Centers", "Local & County Election Results", and "State Election Results".

The screenshot shows the Cass County, Missouri website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for "Elected Officials", "Government", "Our County", "Business & Development", and "How Do I...". A search bar is located below the navigation. The main content area features a "County Clerk/Election Authority" section with a photo of the County Clerk and his contact information. To the right of this section is a "Mission Statement" and "County Clerk's Office Services" section. A sidebar on the left contains a "General Information" section with links for "Election Results", "Voter Registration", "Election Calendar", "Sample Ballots", "Polling Locations", "Past Election Results", "Absentee Information", "Election Judge App", "Tax Information", "Cass County Clerk Home Page", "Cass County Codes/Ordinances", "Liquor Licenses", "Notary Information", "Auctioneer Information", and "Tow License".



# Site user interface trends: navigation

## **Top navigation was key to findability**

The name of the office that administers elections varies by state. Some sites used keywords in the description or naming of a section that housed voting related information, making it easier to find.

## **Compact navigation**

Most the sites reviewed used side navigation and accordions to help users find information. The use of sidebar navigation could be, in part, due to the limitation of the jurisdiction's content management template.

## **Primary, secondary, and all of the above**

Several of the websites audited had multiple navigation bars, but no hierarchy of information. The navigation cluttered the page, and sometimes had similar topics but inconsistent information.



# Site user interface trends: navigation

## Mixed navigation can help users find information

Wyandotte County, Ks is an example of mixed navigation. The site utilized side navigation and accordions to group information and help users navigate the site.

### Mixed navigation

- Side navigation leads to topics
- Accordions create subtopics

Here, mixed navigation could help users find general and specific information.

The screenshot displays a website page for 'Election Workers' with a side navigation menu and accordion-style subtopics. The side navigation menu includes: Home / Departments / Election Office / Election Workers; In This Section; Appraiser's Office; Area Agency on Aging; Clerk's Office; Community Corrections; Community Development; County Administrator's Office; Delinquent Real Estate; Economic Development; Election Office; Elected Officials; Election Commissioner's Biography; Election Information; Election Workers; Maps; Voting; Emergency Management; Ethics Commission; Finance; Fire; Health; Human Resources; and Human Services. The main content area features the title 'Election Workers' and the sub-header 'Be a Part of Democracy in Action'. Below this, there are four accordion-style sections: 'QUALIFICATIONS:', 'DUTIES INCLUDE:', 'TRAINING:', and 'COMPENSATION:'. The 'Apply' section follows, containing a list of steps: 'Complete the Election Worker Application', 'Mail the application to the Election Office', 'Fax: (913) 573-8581', and 'Email'. A feedback section at the bottom asks 'Was this page helpful?' with 'YES', 'MAYBE', and 'NO' buttons.



# Site user interface trends:navigation

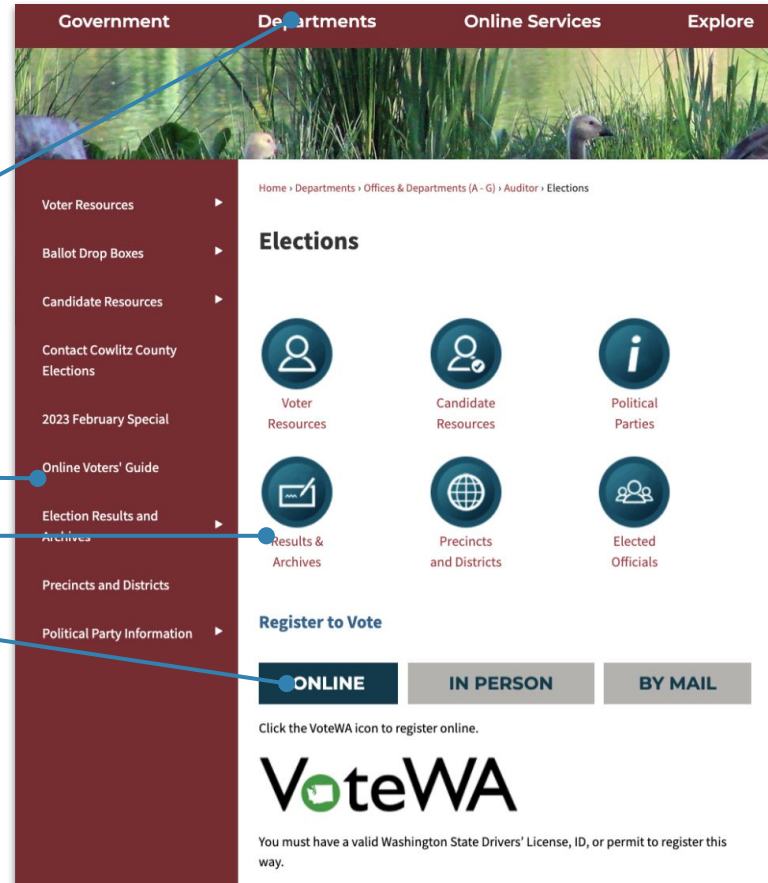
## Too many navigation options may confuse voters

Cowlitz County, Wa's elections website is an example of multiple navigation options that may confuse users, and

### Mixed navigation

- Top navigation
- Side navigation
- Icon grid
- Tabs navigation

Too many options do not allow users to focus on information.





## **Category 2: Trust and security**

# Category 2

## Trust and security

**Average rating: 1.5-2**

Sites reviewed had bare minimum to good features that improve trust and security. These features include information that increases legitimacy, and trustworthy information.

### Strengths

- SSL certificate lock symbol
- Office and staff contact information

### Areas to improve

- Use of .Gov
- Easily findable elections page from city/county website



# Trust and security

Most websites had "minimum" or "good" trust indicators

## **100% of websites audited used a SSL certificate**

The lock symbol and related URL containing "https" mean that the connection between a web browser and the website server is encrypted.

## **Office name, location, staff, and hours clearly displayed**

Knowing who to contact and where to find them is an integral part of communicating accessibility and legitimacy. A strong majority of sites displayed this information on their site.

## **20/22 websites were embedded in local government websites**

Voters start by looking for information locally. They often search for their town or county name plus "elections," which leads them to a local elections website. Embedding elections information within a county site help connect voter trust and findability of information.



# Trust and security

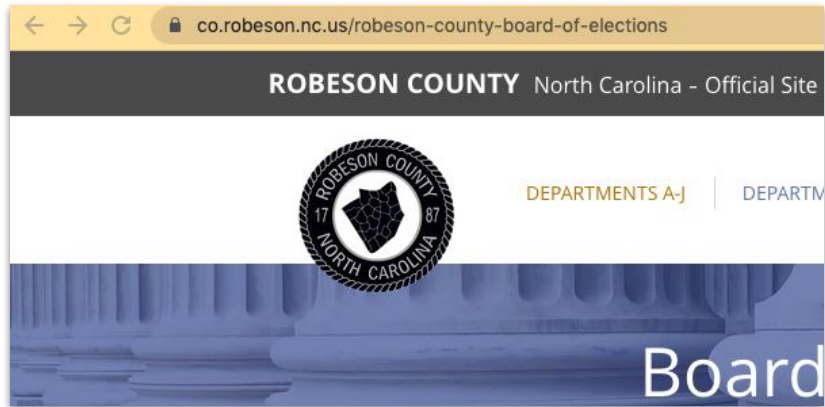
Many sites received a "0" rated on their domain

## Variations of .US,.Com.Org, and .Gov

The majority of websites did not have a .Gov domain. Instead, there were variations of domains with .Us and .Org being the most common. We suggest local election sites use .Gov, because it communicates trust and legitimacy of brand and information.



Boone County, MO is a .Com domain



Robeson County, NC uses .US domain



**Category 3: Key info for voter  
tasks and information**

# Category 3

## Key voter tasks and information

### Average rating: 1

We found key information about voting on all the sites audited, but presenting the information in a easy to find and understand matter was a challenge.

#### Strengths

- All sites had information about important deadline.
- Information about method of voting. This includes Early voting, vote my mail, a person information was available.

#### Areas to improve

- Information presented in plain language.
- Easy to find, navigate, and scrollable information.



# Answers to voter questions

Most websites answered top questions, but they were difficult to find

## Labels and keywords

Navigation and link labels were integral to a site's ability to answer questions.

## Information architecture

Many sites presented key information in a way that was not intuitive, difficult to read, or understand.

## Interaction dead ends

Most sites linked users to external sites, however this was not obvious may take users away from their local elections site.



# Answers to voter questions

## Voters look for words associated with task or question

### Keywords and navigation

Voters look for keywords related to tasks like "early voting" or "voting with a disability". Many of the sites reviewed did not use intuitive labeling or keywords, making voting related information easy to find. This includes web pages related to voting, as well as links to information like maps and polling locations.

Sites often used words such as:

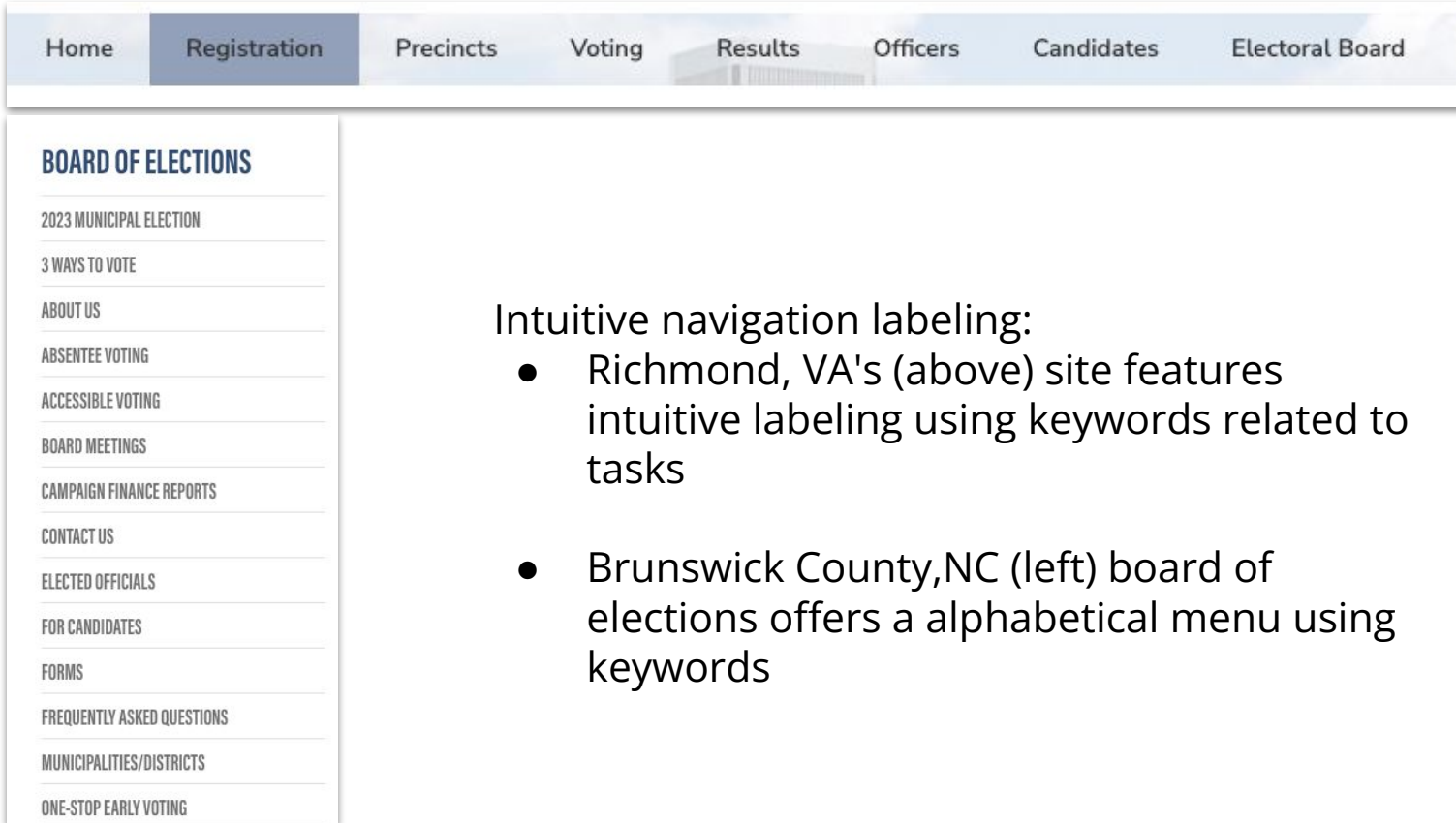
- Voter registration instead of Voter application
- Elections office instead of Registrar or Clerk
- Early Voting Location instead of Central Operations
- Voter information instead of Voter registration, on a one page websites with information about voting, not just registration exclusively
- Ballot instead of sample ballot





# Answers to voter questions

## Labeling is key to findability



The image shows a screenshot of the Richmond, VA Board of Elections website. At the top is a horizontal navigation bar with the following items: Home, Registration (highlighted in a darker blue), Precincts, Voting, Results, Officers, Candidates, and Electoral Board. Below this is a vertical sidebar menu titled "BOARD OF ELECTIONS" with the following items: 2023 MUNICIPAL ELECTION, 3 WAYS TO VOTE, ABOUT US, ABSENTEE VOTING, ACCESSIBLE VOTING, BOARD MEETINGS, CAMPAIGN FINANCE REPORTS, CONTACT US, ELECTED OFFICIALS, FOR CANDIDATES, FORMS, FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS, MUNICIPALITIES/DISTRICTS, and ONE-STOP EARLY VOTING.

Intuitive navigation labeling:

- Richmond, VA's (above) site features intuitive labeling using keywords related to tasks
- Brunswick County, NC (left) board of elections offers a alphabetical menu using keywords



# Answers to voter questions

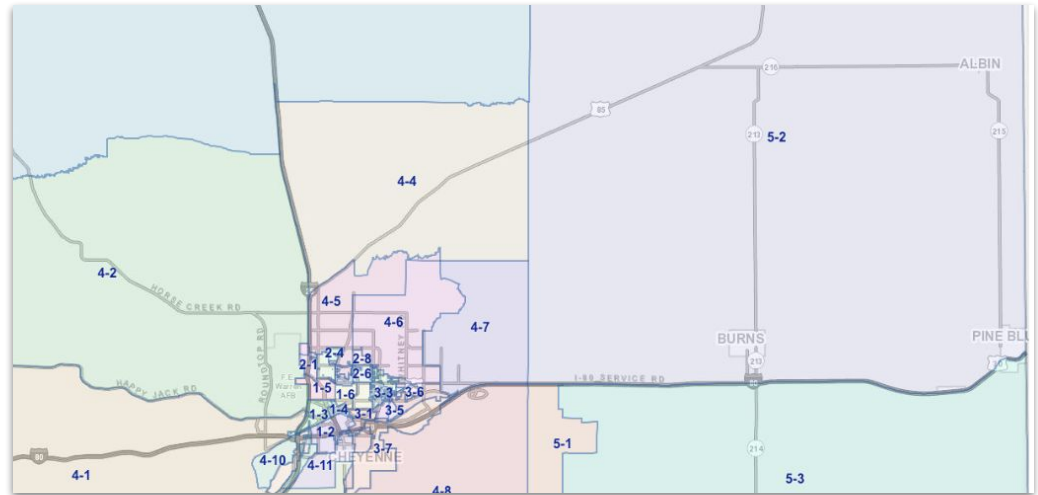
## Vague or inaccurate labels confuse voters

Intuitive navigation labeling:

Laramie County, WY's link to view a sample ballot and polling place lead to an interactive map with no sample ballot information



Find a polling place and view my Sample Ballot. (Enter your address under Find My Voter Info)



# Answers to voter questions

## Vague or inaccurate labels confuse voters

Intuitive navigation labeling:

Boone County, MO's "What's on My Ballot" link leads to a tool to look up voter registration or request for sample ballot by email.



### SEARCH VOTERS

Use the form below to look up your current voter registration information. Type in your last name, first name, and date of birth. Your middle name is not required.

View My Current Information or Find My Polling Place  
 Request Sample Ballot by Email

Last Name  First Name

Date of Birth  
MM / DD / YYYY



# Answers to voter questions

## FAQ link results may confuse or overwhelm voters

Frequently asked questions should not end a conversation.

Stamford, CT's "More FAQ" button leads to a long page of information about county operations. Users have to remember the name of the election's office and search for answers.

**Department FAQs**

Font Size: + - + Share & B

(All Departments) ▾

**Building**

- [Can I convert my basement for habitable use?](#)
- [Can I make minor alterations to an existing non-conforming structure?](#)
- [Can you give me your email address for general questions?](#)
- [Can you provide some guidance on required documents for a swimming pool?](#)
- [Can you provide some guidance on required documents for WPCA approval?](#)
- [Do I need a license to work as a General Contractor in Stamford CT?](#)
- [Do I need a permit if I am doing repairs?](#)
- [How do I conduct inspections as a Third Party Inspector?](#)
- [How do I know if I need a building permit for my proposed project?](#)
- [How do I know if my plans need to be "sealed" by a licensed architect/engineer?](#)
- [How do I verify if my architect or engineer is licensed in Connecticut?](#)
- [Is a building permit required for a lawn irrigation system?](#)
- [Is a CRS number required for electrical service?](#)
- [My home is owned by an LLC and I am the sole owner of the LLC. Am I allowed to pull a permit as a home owner doing his/her own work per CGS 20-340?](#)
- [My structure was built in 1928. What building code was it built under?](#)
- [What are the building code requirements for maintaining construction safety?](#)
- [What are the license/registration requirements for a contractor?](#)
- [What are the regulations related to light pollution caused by excessive exterior lighting?](#)
- [What documents are required by other Stamford Departments](#)
- [What documents are required for obtaining a Final Certificate of Occupancy?](#)

**FAQS**

- [How do I register to vote or change party affiliation?](#)
- [Who are the Elected Officers of the City?](#)
- [Vacancies in Elective Offices?](#)
- [Elections?](#)
- [Voting Districts?](#)

**MORE FAQs**



# Answers to voter questions

## Poor information architecture made answers difficult to find

### Information hierarchy and presentation

Many sites did not have a well defined hierarchy of information. Using headers, bullet points or numbers to explain processes, and grouping similar topics, make information easier to find.

### Inline information

Date, times, and deadlines are important to voters. However, many sites evaluated received a "minimum" due to presenting deadlines, dates, and location information in paragraph or longer section of text. Voters looking for this information may miss important dates if they do not read carefully, or do not see the section. A list of key dates, as well as inline information could satisfy information needs.



# Answers to voter questions

## Presenting information using groups and hierarchy contribute to findability

Pennington County, SD's single page layout does not have an identified hierarchy, headers, or grouping of information.

Information about where to vote is split between two section of the page register.

General information about voting and elections are small link at the top of the page that may not catch voter's attention.

The screenshot shows a website page for the Pennington County Auditor's Office. At the top, there is a link for "Voter Registration Name Search" with a sub-link "Where do I vote?". Below this is a section for "Combined Municipal School Board Election - June 6, 2023" which lists "Absentee Voting Begins: May 22, 2023" and "Voter Registration Deadline: May 22, 2023". It also states "Polls are open Election Day - 7a.m. to 7p.m." and includes a "Polling Place List" link. A video player for "Absentee Voting" is embedded, showing a video thumbnail with a red play button. Below the video, there is a "Vote by Mail or In-Person:" section with a list of instructions: "Vote by Mail: Request a ballot by mail by completing this form: Absentee Ballot Application Form", "You may email your absentee ballot application and a copy of your ID to elections@pennco.org", "Postage to return a voted ballot is \$1.20 - don't forget to SIGN the back of the return envelope", "You may drop your voted ballot off in person by returning the ballot to the County Administration Building, 130 Kansas City Street and dropping your ballot into the ballot box in the Auditor's Office.", and "Vote on Election Day: Polling places will be open on Election Day 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Make an announcement, but not required. Please allow for the possibility of..."



# Answers to voter questions

## Hierarchy can help voters understand processes

Hierarchy and steps simplify processes.

New Brunswick, NC's absentee voting page has a high level overview of the process with deadline information. Each step in the process has a header and relevant information

Any registered voter in Brunswick County may vote by absentee ballot. There are three steps to voting by absentee ballot:

1. Request your ballot
2. Vote your ballot
3. Return your ballot

### 1. REQUEST YOUR BALLOT

Requests for the 2023 municipal election must be received by the Board of Elections no later than 5 pm on Tuesday, October 31.

#### REQUEST A BALLOT ONLINE

Registered voters can request their absentee ballot online through the NC Absentee Ballot Portal.

[Request a Ballot](#)

#### PRINT AN ABSENTEE REQUEST FORM

Registered voters can use the NC Absentee Request Form to request a ballot. The form cannot be returned electronically; it must be submitted by mail or in person to the Board of Elections. Be sure to use the drop down box at the top of the form to select an election. You are required to select an election date for our office to process your request form.

*2023 Absentee Request Form not yet available*



# Answers to voter questions

## Links without context impacted information journey

### External links without context

Many sites used external links to meet site visitor needs. The most common sites linked to were Secretary of state sites for ballot tracking and vote by mail information. Regardless of destination, most sites did not inform users that links would take them away from their local election site. This may confuse voters, and create a negative user experience.

### FAQs

Several sites had FAQ sections on pages with frequently asked questions from other county or city offices. Without clear navigation, users may be confused



[Learn more about designing links for a good user experience](#)



# Answers to voter questions

## Election webpage was hard to find, contact information was easy

### **From County/City home page**

Identifying the webpage of local election offices starting from the county/city website was difficult for several of the sites reviewed. This was due in part to the various names used by election officials in each state.

### **Office name, location, staff, and hours clearly displayed**

All of the websites reviewed received at least a "1" or bare minimum on the "contact information" guidelines. All sites displayed office name, physical locations, at least one staff member, and hours of operation clearly. Several offices offered additional means of communication including email and social media links.



# Secretary of state website and resources were used

## SOS resources used to help answer key voter questions

### **Forms, graphs, trackers and lookup**

Local election offices used a variety of resources including forms, ballot trackers, and graphs created by the secretary of state.

### **Meeting the needs of diverse voters**

Information created by the Secretary of State's office was also used to answer questions and provide resources to student voter, language access, people with disabilities, and returning citizens. For example, most offices with a section 203 designation used bilingual voter registration forms and ballots.



**Category 4: Special voter  
circumstances**

# Category 4

## Special voters circumstances

### Average rating: 1

Overall, information about voting for students, people with disabilities, returning citizens, and voting in a language other than English was an area of improvement.

#### Strengths

- Several sites had "2" or "good" rating accessible voting information
- High school student voter information

#### Areas to improve

- Most sites did not have adequate information about special voter circumstances
- English links to language access resources (ex. ballots and voter registration)



# Student voter information

## Four websites addressed college student voters

Overall, websites did not provide information for college student voters.

The 4 websites that did include student voter information varied in depth. All, 3 sites had specific areas dedicated to student voting that included information about residency and voting. Of the sites audited, 2 put student voter information in their registration section, while the other 2 distinct student voting sections.



# Student voter information

## Some key questions answered, but not all

[Home](#) › [Departments](#) › [Offices & Departments \(A - G\)](#) › [Auditor](#) › [Elections](#) › [Voter Resources](#) › [University Voters](#)

### University Voters

As a student, you probably change your address more frequently than the average voter. Remember to update your voter registration each time you move to ensure you get a ballot!

University and college students may register to vote in Washington if you have lived in the state for at least 30 days and have established a residential address in the state. Please note that Washington State residency requirements for voting are not the same as residency for in-state tuition purposes. You may vote in only one state. If you were previously registered in another state, cancel your registration in that state when you register in Washington.

Cowlitz County's page dedicated to University Voters provides minimal information and is not written in plain language. The page also uses terms and concepts unfamiliar to the intended audience.



# Student voter information

## Key questions and resources

Madison, Wisconsin's Elections site is an example of excellent student voter information.

The page includes information about registration, how to determine residency, and a downloadable guide for student voters.

### Student FAQ

---

#### Frequently Asked Questions

**I am a student here for 8 months of the year. Where should I register?**

You have the option to register in the municipality where you are a student. Alternatively, you may register in your hometown. If you have been previously registered elsewhere, you are required to list your old address in section 7 of the form, so your old registration can be canceled.

**If a student leaves for the summer, where do they vote for summer elections?**

Students might fall into one of these two groups:

1. Leaving for the summer with intent to return. If they do not intend to establish residency at any place they stay until returning for school in the fall, then they may vote absentee from their school address until they have resided for 28 days at a new school address.
2. Leaving their school address permanently with intent to make permanent residence outside of Wisconsin. They are no longer a Wisconsin resident and may not vote in Wisconsin.

**I am leaving to study abroad for a year. Do I lose my right to vote?**


No. If your permanent address remains in Wisconsin, you may vote according to that permanent address.

**For additional questions about student residency,** view the [Student Residency Guide PDF](#).



# High school civic engagement was a common focus

## A number of websites had information for youth

 **Wyandotte County Election Office**  
Bruce L. Newby, Election Commissioner  
Frances D. Sheppard, Assistant Election Commissioner

**Student Election Worker Application**  
(A letter of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, or administrator is required)  
There are a limited number of student election worker positions. The Election Office will notify students who have been selected by a letter of appointment.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print)

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_  
(HOME) \_\_\_\_\_ (CELL) \_\_\_\_\_  
I am willing to receive text messages about training on my cell phone.

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Attending: \_\_\_\_\_

Graduation Year: \_\_\_\_\_ Election Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that in order to meet the legal requirements and to qualify as a participant in the Student Election Worker Program I must be:

- at least 16 years of age at the time of the election at which I am serving as a member of the precinct board.
- a United States citizen, or I will be a US citizen at the time of the election at which I am serving as a member of the precinct board.
- a resident of Wyandotte County, with parent/guardian and school consent.

I agree to provide a copy of my appointment letter to the school office in order to obtain an excused absence for the day. I will promptly notify the Election Office if I am unable to obtain an excused absence. It is my responsibility to collect and complete any and all school assignments for the day.

Signature of Student \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact Number \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent/Guardian \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Home / Government / Registrar of Voters / Frequently Asked Questions

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. [Deadlines for New Registrations](#)
2. [I'm moving can I still vote?](#)
3. [My Move Will Be Temporary](#)
4. [I'm Moving Out of the Country](#)
5. [I've changed my name](#)
6. [I'm in High School - When can I register?](#)
7. [I'm a newly Naturalized Citizen - Can I register?](#)
8. [I have been convicted of a felony - Can I still vote?](#)

### 6. I'm in High School - When can I register?

You must be 18 years old to vote. You may register to vote when you are 17 years old, so long as you will be 18 on or before election day. Your application will be accepted and processed in the normal manner, and you will automatically be given active voter status on your birthday. Hartford's Registrars of Voters make frequent visits to the city's public high schools, colleges, universities, recreation centers and community events. If you'd like the Registrars of Voters to come to your school, community center or event, please contact Hartford Registrars of Voters to schedule a date.

Wyandotte County,  
Kansas's student election  
worker application

Hartford, Connecticut's elections website features  
high school voter registration information





# Section 203 language access

## Most sites did not provide adequate language access

### **Sites with section 203 designations**

Several of the sites reviewed were required to provide elections material in at least one language other than english. However, these sites were not translated, and used link text written in english to direct voters to resources in their preferred language. This produced a weak information scent, and made the information difficult to find.

### **Translation widgets**

Most sites regardless of federal designation used a translation widget. These widgets translate text on a website to the users preferred language. However, the translations are not specific to elections. So, they may provide confusing information.



# Section 203 language access

## English links to non-english resources were common



**May 6, 2023 - Local Political Subdivisions Joint General and Special Election**

Early Voting April 24-28, May 1-2, 2023

Last Day to Register to Vote for May 6, 2023 Election is APRIL 6, 2023

January 1, 2023 First Day to Apply for Ballot By Mail

Application For Ballot By Mail.  
Click [here](#) to download application in English  
Click [here](#) to download application in Spanish

Henderson County, TX received a score of "1" due to english language links to Spanish voter information.

El Departamento de Elecciones del Condado de Santa Cruz, bajo la dirección de la Junta de Supervisores, administra, lleva a cabo y cuenta todas las elecciones federales, estatales y del condado celebradas en el Condado de Santa Cruz de acuerdo con los Estatutos Revisados de Arizona. El departamento también brinda servicios electorales por contrato y asistencia a la ciudad de Nogales, los distritos escolares, los distritos de bomberos y el distrito de colegios comunitarios provisionales. El condado de Santa Cruz tiene aproximadamente 31,000 votantes activos registrados que residen en 24 precintos electorales.

### Responsabilidades

Es la responsabilidad del Department de Elecciones de:

- Tabulación de la votación final y resultados oficiales para el escrutinio de la Junta de Supervisores
- Emitir, aceptar y mantener presentaciones de candidatos, iniciativas, referéndums y retiros e informes financieros del comité de campaña.obtener sitios para votar
- Proporcionar la impresión de todo el material relacionado con las elecciones.
- Reclutar, contratar y capacitar a los trabajadores de las juntas electorales
- Asegurar los lugares de votación

Santa Cruz County had one sections of the site translated.



# Student voter information

Some key questions answered, but not all

[City of Madison](#) / [Clerk](#) / [Elections & Voting](#) / Hmong

## Hmong

[Kev Xaiv Tsa Hauv Daim DS200 PDF](#)

[Cov Lus Qhia Txog Kev Pov Npav Uas Tsis Tuaj Koom Kev Xaiv Tsa Thaum Lub Cajj Nplooj Ntoo Hlav Xyoo 2023 PDF](#)

[Xuv Lus Qhia Rau Cov Neeg Pov Npav Uas Tsis Mus Koom Ntawm Wisconsin PDF](#)

[Xuv Lus Qhia Rau Cov Neeg Pov Npav Uas Yog Tub Rog thiab Nyob Txawv Teb Chaws PDF](#)

[Ua kom ntseeg siab tias suav koj li kev pov npav uas tsis mus koom lawm PDF](#)

### Elections & Voting

Voting +

Voter Registration +

Election Officials +

Candidates & Campaigns +

Español

**Hmong**

Madison, WI's site included mini sites in three languages.



# People with disabilities

## Information about accessibility was limited

### **An area of improvement**

Only a third of the sites reviewed explicitly addressed voting with a disability or accessibility. Furthermore, several sites could not be used without a keyboard due to poor information architecture.

### **Standouts**

Several websites had sections of their website dedicated to people with disabilities. These pages and sections included a range of resources including information on how to vote, a list of accessible polling places, and links to state disability advocacy offices.



# People with disabilities

## Variation in layout and information design

**SHASTA COUNTY ELECTIONS**  
CATHY DARLING ALLEN, COUNTY CLERK / REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

VOTER REGISTRATION | VOTING INFORMATION | CANDIDATES & CAMPAIGNS | ELECTION RESULTS | POLL WORKER | ABOUT | PRESS RELEASES

### Accessible Voting for All Voters

**Can you vote from home?**

You can now use a computer or smart phone to vote from home using Remote Accessible Vote by Mail (RAVIM). RAVIM allows you to mark your ballot electronically, after which you will print and submit it. Contact your office for more information or go online to ShastaVotes.org.

Request a Remote Accessible Vote by Mail Ballot

**How accessible are the polling places?**

Some polling places will have temporary thresholds, ramps, signage, cones, and door props to improve accessibility. Please check in at a later time to find out more information.

**Will there be curbside voting?**

If needed, you may vote nearby a polling place from your vehicle. A poll worker will help you complete the required forms and return your ballot to the polling place.

To request curbside voting assistance, you must call in advance to coordinate a time and place or have an assistant request it at the polling place.

**How accessible is the voting system?**

All US polling places have a touch screen voting system with the following:

- an audio option that reads the ballot to you,
- a universal plug for a personal assistive device,
- large print (24 point).

**What other assistance can be offered?**

Some additional assistance includes:

- Quick Links
- UPCOMING ELECTION INFORMATION
- VOTER INFORMATION LOOKUP
- REGISTER TO VOTE
- ELECTION OBSERVERS

Shasta County, Ca's voting for all page

### Voters with Disabilities

Ready, Set... **VOI TE**

Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS) Phone Line 711, (800) 375-7394

**Voter requiring assistance or with disability may:**

1. Request an early ballot be mailed to them. (Request such ballot 30 days before election.)
2. Have their name placed on a pre-registered ballot list (PRL). (Prepare to be on PRL.)
3. Vote at one of their early voting sites. Early Voting Sites. (Accessible with aid available at all early voting sites.)
4. Vote at their precinct poll site. (Accessible with aid available at all polling locations on Election Day.)
5. Request to bring someone from family member, friend, or legal guardian to your poll site.
6. Curbside Voting for those that are unable to enter their polling location. (See Curbside Voting Information below.)
7. If in the hospital or in custody, request emergency voting through Voter Registration at 800-375-7394.
8. To request an accommodation in voting at the polling site contact the Election Department at (800) 375-7394.

**Curbside Voting for those unable to enter their polling location:**

Inspection is a charge of this precinct & must be certified first.

**Requirements for curbside voter:**

- MARSHAL** using the precinct register book, shall:
  - Verify Voter's ID using voter rules as with any non-curbside voter
  - Verify registration number of voter
  - Notify Registrar
- INSPECTOR** will direct two poll workers of opposite political parties (Judge and/or Clerk) to go to curbside with appropriate ballot, secrecy cover & Signature Board or Provisional Ballot.

**REGISTRARS:**

- Take appropriate ballot, secrecy cover & Signature Board or Provisional Ballot & turn out to voter.
- Provisional Ballot procedure must be followed for Curbside Voter if Voter is a Provisional Ballot (if allowed).
- Ballot must be placed in secrecy cover or Provisional envelope will be placed in the ballot box as for Provisional Ballot.

**REGS** shall notify the Poll List Clerk of the curbside Voter who will record the Voter's information same as any other voting situation.

If you believe you have a special circumstance or need Curbside Voting, please call the Election Department: (800) 375-7394 Help America Vote Act (HAVA).

In 2002, Oregon passed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), intended to reform and improve the voting process. HAVA created minimum standards that states must address in key areas of the voting process, including voter registration and vote access. The additional information about HAVA, visit the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. They have the right to file a complaint under HAVA if you believe a violation has occurred. For a complaint form, click here.

**Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**

The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, transportation, public accommodations, communications, and governmental activities. Its purpose is to make sure that people with disabilities have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. The ADA gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities similar to those provided to individuals on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age and religion. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals with disabilities in public accommodations, employment, transportation, state and local government, services, and telecommunications. For additional information about how to file an ADA complaint with the Department of Justice, click here.

**Americans with Disability Act (ADA)**

The Accessible Call Rights Act (ACRA) is an Arizona law that prohibits discrimination in employment, voting, public accommodations, disability and housing on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age (40 years old or older), national origin or disability. For information about filing a charge of discrimination with the Arizona Attorney General Civil Rights Division, click here.

**11 The CVI (Closed Caption) Guide**

The Federal Communications Commission adopted use of the TVI dialing code for access to Telecommunications Relay Services (TRS). TRS permits persons with a hearing or speech disability to use the telephone system via a text telephone (TTY) or other device to call persons with or without disabilities. For more information about the various types of TRS, see the FCC's consumer guide at [www.fcc.gov/consumers/communications/relay-services](http://www.fcc.gov/consumers/communications/relay-services), or visit the website of the Disability Rights Office (DRO) at [www.fcc.gov/disability](http://www.fcc.gov/disability).

Santa Cruz County, Az's voter accessibility page

in the Future

Search

# PENNINGTON COUNTY

## South Dakota

County Info | Departments | Public Info

### General Information

Polling Place Locations

Things You Should Know When Conducting a Voter Registration Drive

Polling Place Accessibility

South Dakota Agencies for People with Disabilities

**Disability Rights of South Dakota - Elections & Voting**

Pennington County, Sd Accessibility resource links to a third party advocate's website



# Restoration of rights

## Most sites did not have restoration of rights information

The 4 websites that did have information ranged in language and approach. These include:

**A letter or page with wording directly from the Secretary of State or court order**

This method was the least accessible due to legalese and failure to answer top voter questions.

**A link to the state's Secretary of State website with rights restoration information**

This method may offer more information depending on the website, but most outlined the legal requirements and did not use plain language.

**A page on the county/city website with information about eligibility and registration**

This method was the most user friendly because it offered informative and instructional information about rights restoration.



# Restoration of rights examples

## Official letter or notice

This example from Santa Cruz County, AZ

- Does not use plain language
- Informative, not instructional
- Did not use "voter first" language, and instead used "a person" or "the person"



Suzanne "Suzie" Sainz  
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY RECORDER  
2150 N. Congress Dr., Nogales, Arizona 85621

### RESTORATION OF RIGHT TO VOTE

The Santa Cruz County Recorder's Office receives numerous inquiries concerning a convicted felon's right to vote. The following information is provided as a courtesy only.

Under Arizona law, a person who has been convicted of a felony offense has their civil rights suspended. Those rights include the right to vote or to seek and hold public office, the right to serve on a jury and the right to possess a gun or firearm, among other rights, A.R.S. § 13-904. The Recorder's Office is only providing the following information regarding voter registration. After a felony conviction, a person may have their right to vote restored. The procedures are as follows:

#### Single Felony Conviction

If the person has been convicted of one single felony offense, regardless of the classification of the offense, the process is easy. Please note that this does not mean only one criminal case number. A person may be convicted of more than one felony offense in a single case number. If a person has only been convicted of a **single felony offense**, the right to vote is automatically restored as soon as the court-imposed sentence has been completed. The person must fully complete the sentence before the automatic restoration of the right to vote applies. For example, if a prison sentence was imposed, the person must also complete the parole or community supervision period before they are eligible. If a fine or restitution was imposed, that fine and/or restitution must be paid in full. When the individual has completed the sentence, in this situation, the only action they need to take to be eligible to vote is to complete and submit a new registration form. In this situation, the person does not have to apply to the court to have the right to vote restored; it is automatic, A.R.S. § 13-912.

#### Two or More Felony Convictions

If the person was convicted of two or more felony offenses, either in a single criminal case or in separate cases, the individual (or their attorney) must petition the court that sentenced them for restoration of their civil rights, including the right to vote. For example, if a person was sentenced in Maricopa County, they must petition the court in Maricopa County; they may not petition the court in Santa Cruz County.

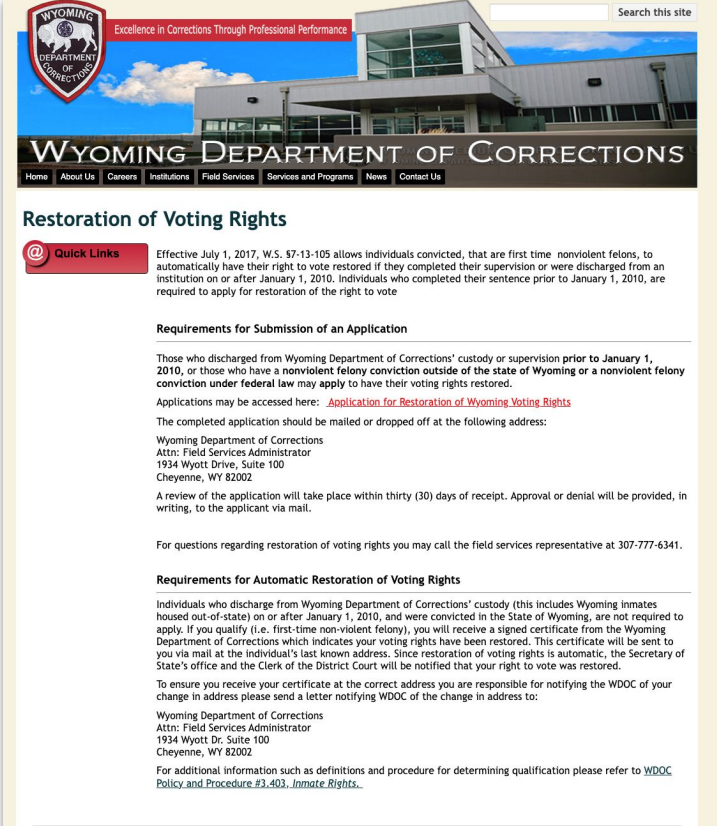


# Restoration of rights examples

## Link to Secretary of State website

The "Restoration of Rights" link on the Laramie County, Wy Elections website directs users to a Department of Corrections page.

There is no information about who to contact at a local election office for assistance and questions.



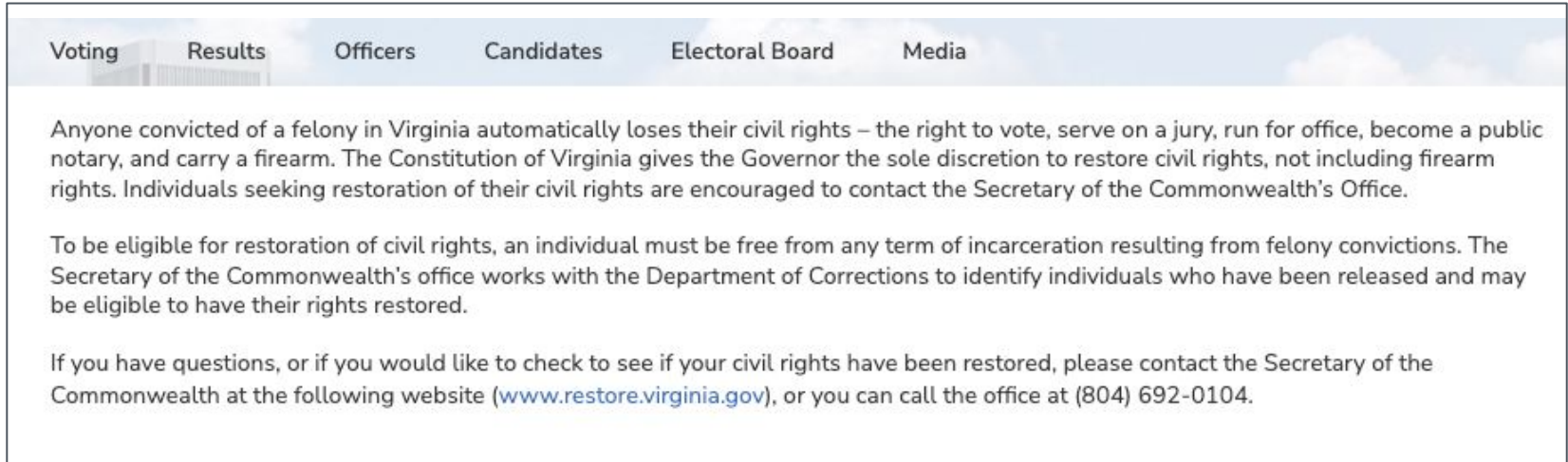
The screenshot shows the Wyoming Department of Corrections website. At the top left is the Wyoming Department of Corrections logo with the tagline "Excellence in Corrections Through Professional Performance". To the right is a search bar. Below the logo is a navigation menu with links: Home, About Us, Careers, Institutions, Field Services, Services and Programs, News, and Contact Us. The main heading is "Restoration of Voting Rights". Underneath is a "Quick Links" icon. The main text states: "Effective July 1, 2017, W.S. 57-13-105 allows individuals convicted, that are first time nonviolent felons, to automatically have their right to vote restored if they completed their supervision or were discharged from an institution on or after January 1, 2010. Individuals who completed their sentence prior to January 1, 2010, are required to apply for restoration of the right to vote". A section titled "Requirements for Submission of an Application" follows, stating that those discharged from custody or supervision prior to January 1, 2010, or those with nonviolent felony convictions outside Wyoming or nonviolent federal convictions must apply. It provides the application link: [Application for Restoration of Wyoming Voting Rights](#). The completed application should be mailed to: Wyoming Department of Corrections, Attn: Field Services Administrator, 1934 Wyott Drive, Suite 100, Cheyenne, WY 82002. A review of the application will take place within thirty (30) days of receipt. For questions, call 307-777-6341. A second section, "Requirements for Automatic Restoration of Voting Rights", states that individuals discharged from custody on or after January 1, 2010, and not convicted in Wyoming, are not required to apply. It provides the address for notifying the WDOC of a change in address: Wyoming Department of Corrections, Attn: Field Services Administrator, 1934 Wyott Dr. Suite 100, Cheyenne, WY 82002. For additional information, refer to [WDOC Policy and Procedure #3.403, Inmate Rights](#).





# Restoration of rights examples

## Link to Secretary of State website



The screenshot shows a navigation menu with the following items: Voting, Results, Officers, Candidates, Electoral Board, and Media. Below the menu, the main content area contains three paragraphs of text explaining the restoration of civil rights in Virginia.

Voting Results Officers Candidates Electoral Board Media

Anyone convicted of a felony in Virginia automatically loses their civil rights – the right to vote, serve on a jury, run for office, become a public notary, and carry a firearm. The Constitution of Virginia gives the Governor the sole discretion to restore civil rights, not including firearm rights. Individuals seeking restoration of their civil rights are encouraged to contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office.

To be eligible for restoration of civil rights, an individual must be free from any term of incarceration resulting from felony convictions. The Secretary of the Commonwealth's office works with the Department of Corrections to identify individuals who have been released and may be eligible to have their rights restored.

If you have questions, or if you would like to check to see if your civil rights have been restored, please contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth at the following website ([www.restore.virginia.gov](http://www.restore.virginia.gov)), or you can call the office at (804) 692-0104.

Richmond, Va's section on rights restoration uses voter first language (ex:To be eligible...), gives a plain language explanations, and offers visitors resources from the Secretary of State.



# **Category 5: Seasonal Election Staff**

# Category 5

## Seasonal elections staff

**Average rating: 1**

We saw information about seasonal election staff opportunities on several of the sites audited.

### Strengths

- Position applications, compensation, and contact person
- Training videos and handbooks

### Areas to improve

- Some sites had no information about seasonal elections staff



# Seasonal elections staff

## Information about seasonal opportunities varied

### **Basic information about seasonal election staff**

Several, but not all of the sites audited had information about seasonal elections staff opportunities. Sites given a "2" or "Good" rating

### **Training**

Some of the PDF and mapping software produced images and maps that were not easy to understand. This was due to a range of issues including poor color contrast and an inability to distinguish landmarks, borders, and addresses that could help voters locate polling places.



# **New things we noticed**

Some patterns we started to notice that weren't part of the original rubric

**Maps**

# Maps and use of GIS

Offices used a variety of mapping tools to help voters

## Maps

The majority of websites had a map of polling locations or dropboxes if applicable. Many predicted maps for candidate use, instead of the public. The maps ranged in presentation method, with sites using color coded PDFs to interactive GIS platform ARCGIS.

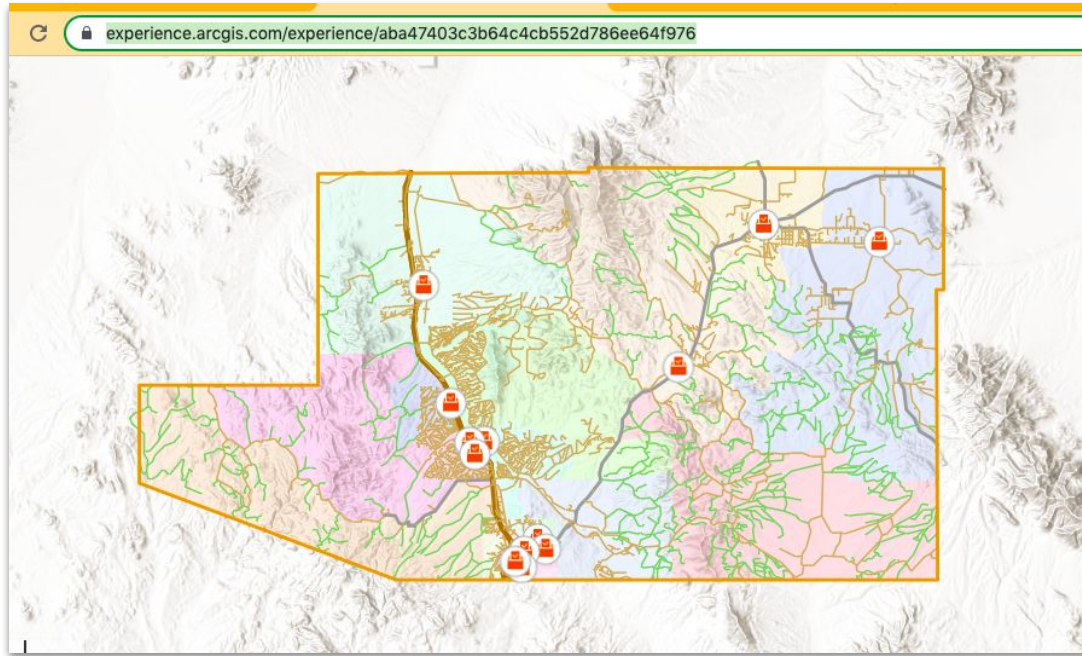
## Usability

Some of the PDF and mapping software produced images and maps that were not easy to understand. This was due to a range of issues including poor color contrast and an inability to distinguish landmarks, borders, and addresses that could help voters locate polling places.

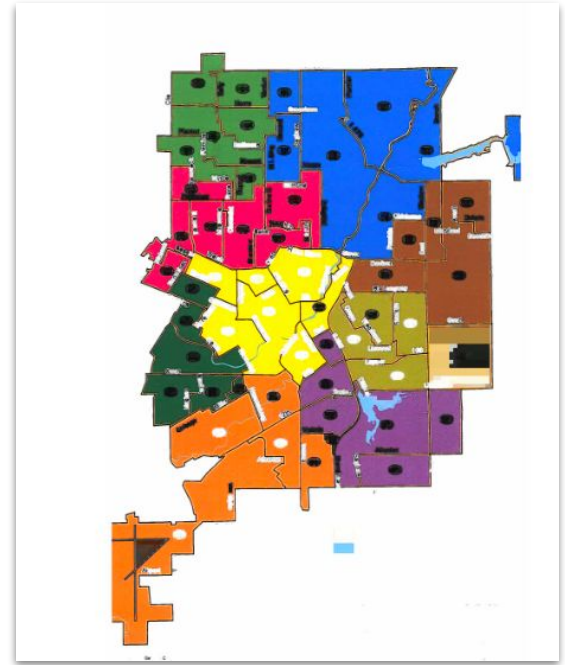


# People with disabilities

## Variation in layout and information design



Interactive map from AZ



PDF map from Flint, MI





**Freedom of information links**

# Freedom of information requests

## Links to FOIA requests were common on elections sites

### **Prominent feature**

Of the sites audited 5 had visible links to request information related to elections through the freedom of information act.

Links to FOIA requests were not common in 2012. The increase in links and requests for election information may have increased since 2012, requiring elections offices to provide this information on their websites.



# Recommendations for election offices

# Recommendations to improve trust and security

## **100% of websites audited used a SSL certificate**

The lock symbol and related URL containing “https” mean that the connection between a web browser and the website server is encrypted.

## **Office name, location, staff, and hours clearly displayed**

Knowing who to contact and where to find them is an integral part of communicating accessibility and legitimacy. A strong majority of sites displayed this information on their site.

## **18/20 websites were embedded in local government websites**

Voters start by looking for information locally. They often search for their town or county name plus “elections,” which leads them to a local elections website. Embedding elections information within a county site help connect voter trust and findability of information.



# Recommendations

## Navigation

- Use intuitive navigation labels
- Choose one main navigation
- Provide more context to links
- Improve site syntax to improve accessibility and scrollability

## Special voter categories

- Create links with a strong information scent for language access
- Provide student voter information in plain language that answers questions for students in a variety of circumstances ( ex. a resident of the county who is studying away)
- Provides plain language voter first information that answers top questions for returning citizens, include local contact information



**Questions/next steps:**

# Questions for future research

The audit conducted shed light on strengths and areas of growth, but there are additional areas that need to be explored.

These include:

- The mobile usability experience-testing or auditing the full website user experience from a mobile device
- Candidate information-information about running for local office
- Information elections- this includes information about canvas, count, and audit process
- Results-getting feedback about how best to present and report election results



# Next steps

The next step in this project will be conversations with voters in some of the areas we've reviewed. Through exploratory conversations that include reviewing current websites and mock ups, we will learn more about :

- What site structures are most useful to voter?
- What keywords they find helpful when searching for information?
- What is is too much information?





# Thank you

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# Appendix

**Website rating**

# Websites

Website	Score	Top Strength	Top Area of Growth
<a href="#">Berkeley County, SC</a>	1	Connection to SOS site	No information hierarchy
<a href="#">Brunswick County, NC</a>	2	Site style and UI consistency	No voter ID information No sample ballot
<a href="#">Brunswick County, NC</a>	2	Site style and UI consistency	No voter ID information No sample ballot
<a href="#">Boone County, MO</a>	1.5	Navigation labels, use of keywords	No sample ballot
<a href="#">Cass County, MO</a>	1	Easy to find election information, navigation	No clear in person voting information

[A complete score card for all sites is in this folder](#)



# Websites

Website	Score	Top Strength	Top Area of Growth
<a href="#">Cowlitz County, WA</a>	1.5	Easy to find answers to questions in a few clicks	Too many navigation options
<a href="#">Flint, MI</a>	1	Election document section	No voter registration information
<a href="#">Hartford, CT</a>	1.5	Information architecture, use of headers and grouping information	Accordions create very long pages,
<a href="#">Henderson, TX</a>	1	Staff, contact, and office location information	Language access; Spanish
<a href="#">Johnson County, IW</a>	1	Navigation labels	Too many accordions hide information, makes navigation difficult

[A complete score card for all sites is in this folder](#)



# Websites

Website	Score	Top Strength	Top Area of Growth
<a href="#">Laramie County, WY</a>	1	Accordions, use of headers to organize information	List of key deadlines in an easily accessible place
<a href="#">Litchfield, CT</a>	1	Accordions, use of headers to organize information	Labeling and navigation to key information
<a href="#">Madison, WI</a>	2.5	Information for students and returning citizens, language access,	Deadlines need to be more prominent, give date instead of written description
<a href="#">Monroe County, IN</a>	1	Labeling of links, headers, and grouping of information	No easy to read/ accessible list of deadlines
<a href="#">Pennington County, SD</a>	1	Absentee voting video	Headers, navigation, information architecture

[A complete score card for all sites is in this folder](#)



# Websites

Website	Score	Top Strength	Top Area of Growth
<a href="#">Richmond,VA</a>	2	Consistency in style, headers and navigation	No student voter information
<a href="#">Robeson County,NC</a>	1	Headers	No identifiable information structure or hierarchy
<a href="#">Rogers County, OK</a>	1	Navigation labels	No accessible voting, inaccessible links
<a href="#">San Juan County,NM</a>	1	Language access, headers, navigation	Voter registration link leads to online only voter registration
<a href="#">Santa Cruz County, AZ</a>	1	Accessible voting information	Language access;Spanish

[A complete score card for all sites is in this folder](#)



# Websites

Website	Score	Top Strength	Top Area of Growth
<a href="#">Shasta County, CA</a>	1.5	Use of headers, information structure	Too many navigation options
<a href="#">Valencia County, NM</a>	1	Headers, information grouping	Answer to top voter questions
<a href="#">Wyandotte County, KS</a>	1.5	Information hierarchy, grouping, and depth of information	Pages are long, require a lot of scrolling



[A complete score card for all sites is in this folder](#)