

Accessible Communication for Election Offices

Communicating Trusted Election Information

May 12, 2020

#TrustedInfo2020

Before we get started

- Take notes using the **Participant Guide**
- **Captioned recordings** will be available
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and participate in breakouts

What we'll cover today

- Learn the principles of accessible communication and how they increase public trust
- Understand how people with disabilities experience information online
- Establish actionable guidelines for making your website more accessible

Agenda

- Introduction to accessibility (30 min.)
- Breakout: Writing good alt text (15 min.)
- Making content more accessible (15 min.)
- Live demo (10 min.)
- Case study (10 min.)
- Group discussion (10 min.)

What does it mean for something to be accessible? Why is it important?

INTRODUCTION TO ACCESSIBILITY

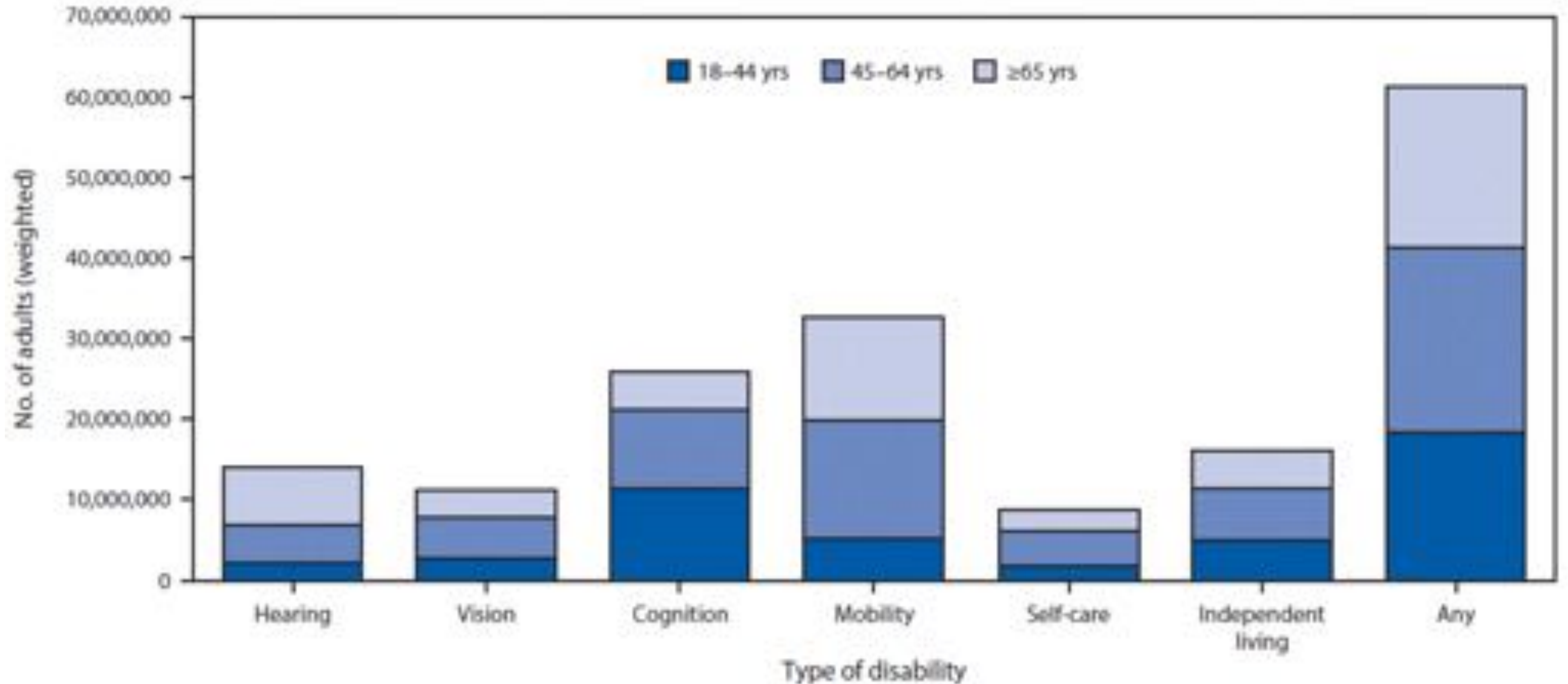
**Who are people with
disabilities?**

The six disability questions are:

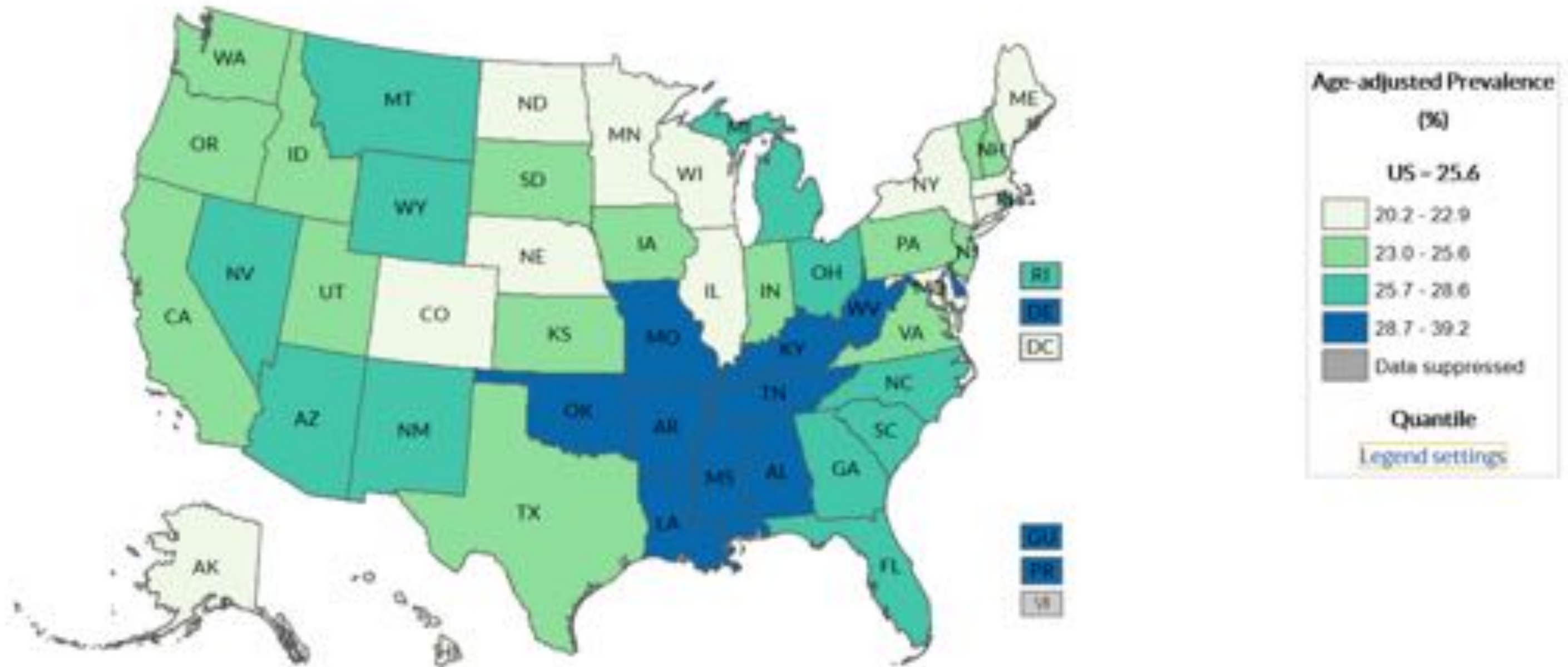
1. Are you deaf, or do you have serious difficulty hearing?
2. Are you blind, or do you have serious difficulty seeing, even when wearing glasses?
3. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have serious difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions? (5 years old or older)
4. Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs? (5 years old or older)
5. Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing? (5 years old or older)
6. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor's office or shopping? (15 years old or older)

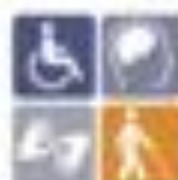
Quick poll!

Estimated that 1 in 4 Americans (25%) have some sort of disability



Disability status among adults 18 & older





Adults with Disabilities: Ethnicity and Race

When it comes to the health of people with disabilities, it's important to know the health differences among racial and ethnic groups

Approximate number of adults with a disability by ethnicity and race



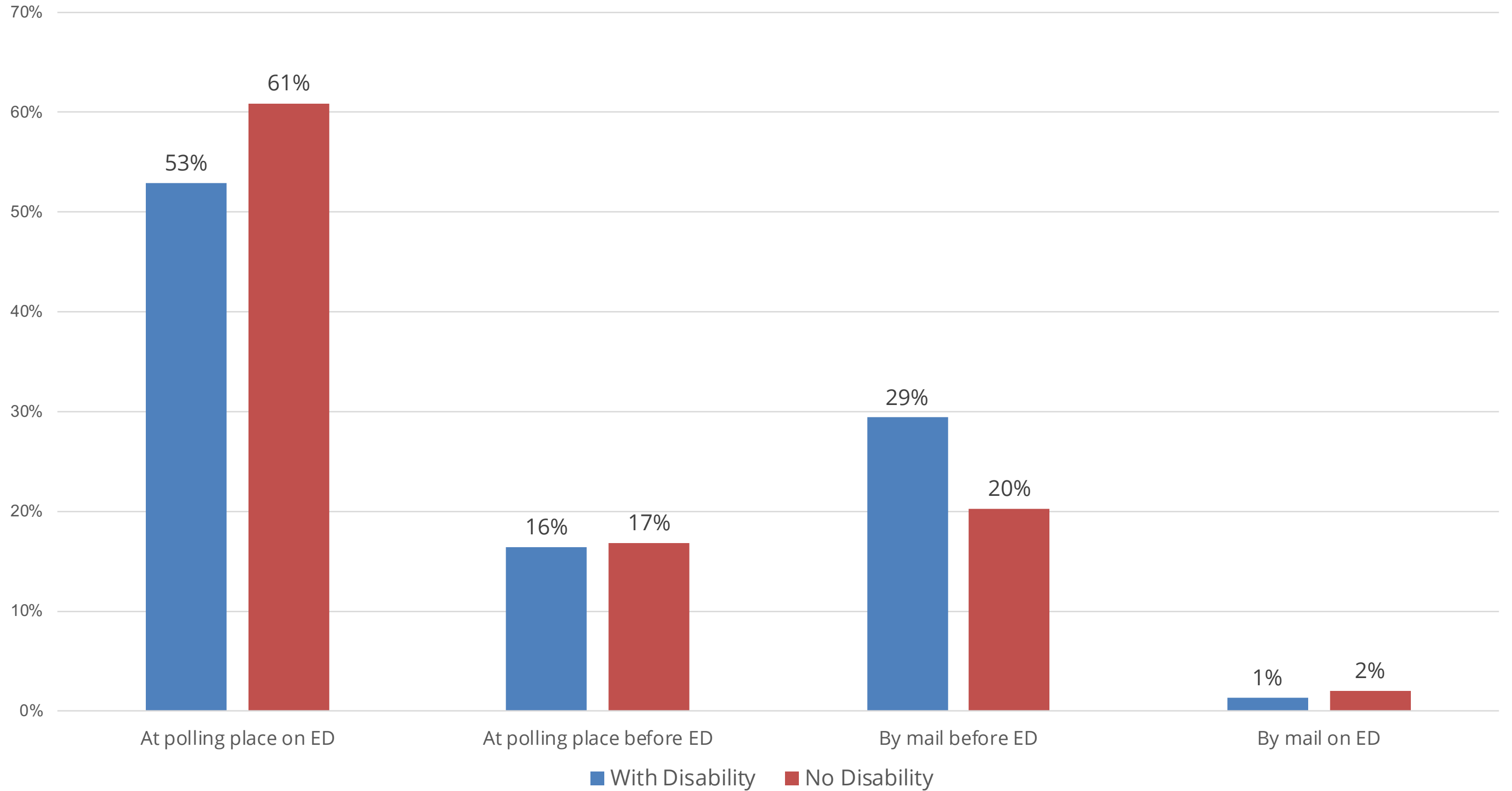
**How people with
disabilities vote?**

	Disability	No Disability	Disability Gap
Registered to vote	65.7%	67.1%	-1.4%
Voted if registered	75.0%	80.6%	-5.6%
How registered to vote:			
At a department of motor vehicles	27.3%	35.6%	-8.4%
Went to a town hall or county/ government registration office	26.4%	18.1%	8.3%
Registered by mail	14.8%	14.1%	0.7%
Registered at polling place	7.7%	7.1%	0.7%
Filled out form at a registration drive	5.4%	4.4%	1.0%
At a school, hospital, or on campus	4.9%	6.1%	-1.3%
Registered using the Internet or online	4.1%	8.2%	-4.0%
At a public assistance agency	2.4%	1.1%	1.2%
Other	7.0%	5.3%	1.7%

If not registered to vote, why not:	Disability	No Disability	Disability Gap
Not interested in the election or not involved in politics	35.5%	44.1%	-8.6%
Permanent illness or disability	25.7%	1.6%	24.1%
Not eligible to vote	6.1%	8.9%	-2.7%
Did not meet registration deadlines	6.1%	13.7%	-7.6%
My vote would not make a difference	3.4%	3.7%	-0.3%
Did not know where or how to register	2.9%	4.7%	-1.8%
Difficulty with English	2.2%	2.1%	0.0%
Did not meet residency requirements/did not live here long enough	1.8%	4.3%	-2.6%
Other reason	16.4%	16.9%	-0.5%

Why didn't vote	Disability	No Disability	Disability Gap
Illness or disability (own or family's)	40.9%	7.8%	33.1%
Not interested, felt my vote wouldn't make a difference	12.1%	16.7%	-4.6%
Transportation problems	7.7%	2.1%	5.6%
Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule	7.3%	31.7%	-24.3%
Didn't like candidates or campaign issues	5.8%	5.5%	0.3%
Forgot to vote (or send in absentee ballot)	5.7%	5.7%	0.0%
Out of town or away from home	3.4%	10.7%	-7.4%
Registration problems (i.e. didn't receive absentee ballot, not registered in current location)	2.7%	3.3%	-0.6%
Inconvenient hours, polling place or hours or lines too long	1.7%	3.8%	-2.0%
Bad weather conditions	1.4%	0.4%	1.0%
Other	11.3%	12.3%	-1.0%

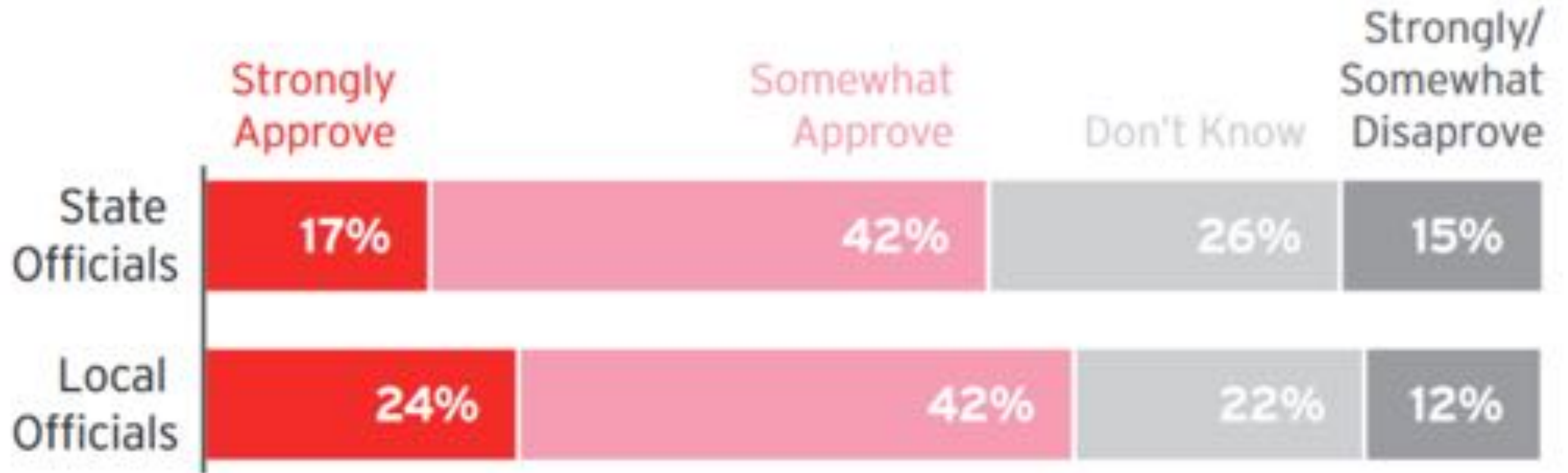
How voters voted in 2018



**"Essential for some, useful
for all"**

How can accessibility build trust?

Local officials have a good start



Accessibility and trust

- Relationship-building
- Accessible information is information someone can and will use
- Transparency

What are ways to think about accessibility?

PRINCIPLES OF ACCESSIBILITY

Principles of accessibility

Perceivable

Operable

Understandable

Robust

**Accessibility
principles**

>

**Accessibility
techniques**

Perceivable

To make content more perceivable

- Ensure transformability
- Make sure message doesn't depend on style
- Use semantic markup (<h1>. , etc.)
- Have alt text for images
- Have labels for forms
- Have captions for videos

Operable

To make content more operable

- Make your site usable by keyboard only
- Use a careful heading structure
- Include a “skip navigation” link
- Make page titles descriptive/specific
- Make link text descriptive (not “click here”)

Understandable

To make content more understandable

- Use plain language
- With complex content, include definitions or a glossary
- Make website functions predictable, obvious, consistent
- Help users avoid and fix errors (e.g., in forms and input)

Robust

To make content more robust

- Avoid HTML validation and parsing errors
- Use markup to facilitate accessibility: forms, form labels, frame titles, etc.
- Speak with your website vendor

What is alt text and how do you write it well?

BREAKOUT

What is alt text?

- **What information does the image add?**
- **If the image contains...**
 - Text -- describe it
 - Visual information -- explain it
 - Sensory information -- describe it
 - Nothing new -- ignore it

- **Avoid noise words...**

“Photo of...”

“This is a ...”

“Picture shows a...”

- **Shoot for 5-15 words**



alt = "An animated simulation showing voters moving realistically through a polling place"

ElectionTools.org is an election official's one-stop-shop to the free tech resources that will transform how they're engaging voters.



The site provides access to the latest field-tested tools, including:

- Collection of civic icons and illustrations
- App to measure how long it takes to vote a ballot
- Simulation tool to allocate resources and minimize voter wait times

Each tool comes with step-by-step instructions, making them easy to use by anyone, regardless of technical ability.

Access the tools at www.electiontools.org.

Null Text: alt = ""

Your turn! (5 min.)

Image #1



Image #2



Report back (5 min.)

Tell us about the alt text you drafted!

What was difficult or easy about your process?

With limited context, what did you use to make your decisions?

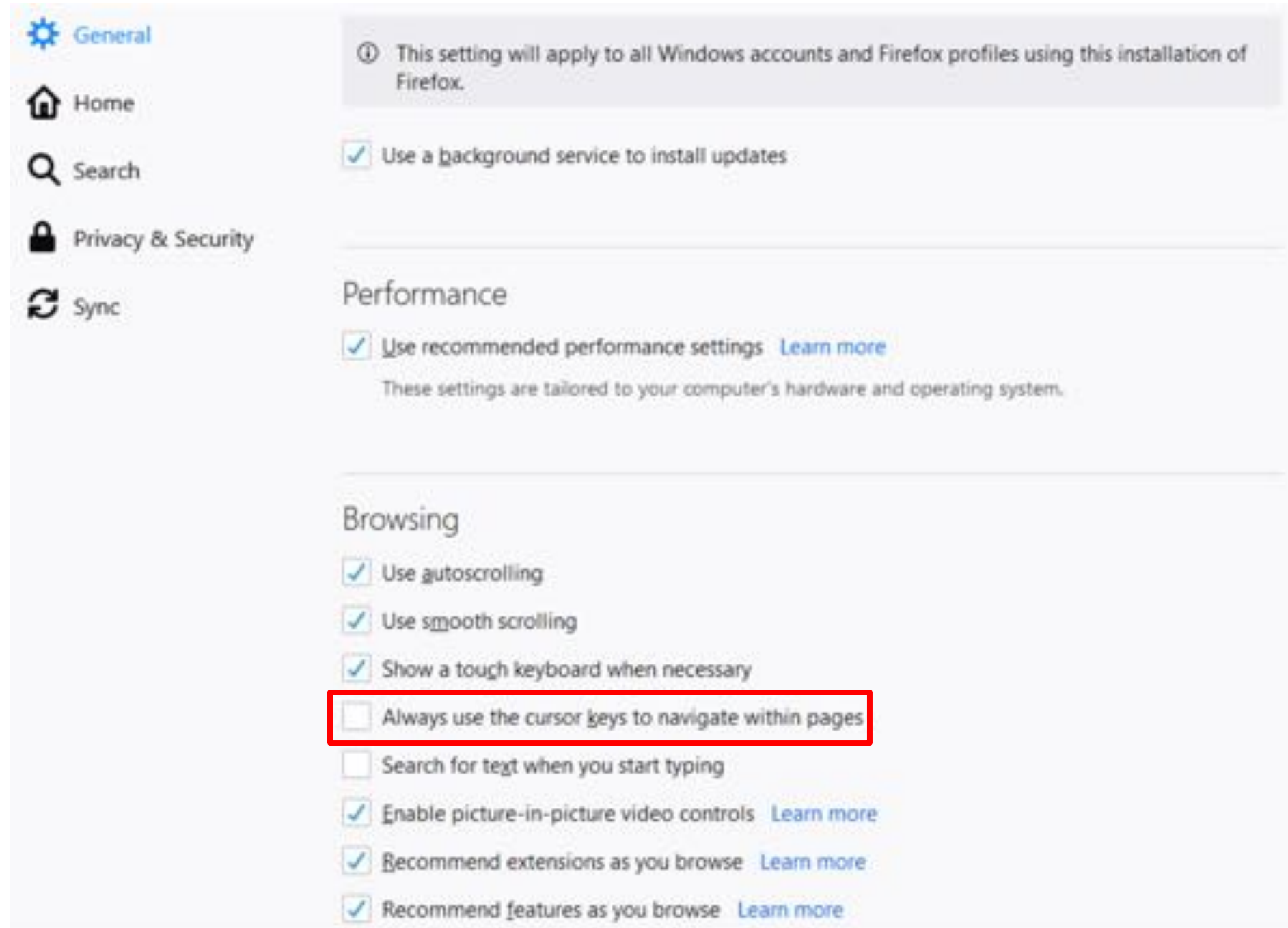
How do you move towards more accessible communication?

MAKING YOUR CONTENT MORE ACCESSIBLE

Set goals & expectations

- What you want to accomplish
- Timeline
- Staff and roles
- Budget

Try assistive technology



The image shows the Firefox settings interface. On the left is a sidebar with navigation options: General (selected), Home, Search, Privacy & Security, and Sync. The main content area is divided into sections: General, Performance, and Browsing. A grey informational box at the top states: "This setting will apply to all Windows accounts and Firefox profiles using this installation of Firefox." Under the Performance section, the option "Use recommended performance settings" is checked. Under the Browsing section, the option "Always use the cursor keys to navigate within pages" is unchecked and highlighted with a red rectangular box. Other browsing options include "Use autoscrolling", "Use smooth scrolling", "Show a touch keyboard when necessary", "Search for text when you start typing", "Enable picture-in-picture video controls", "Recommend extensions as you browse", and "Recommend features as you browse".

General

Performance

Browsing

- Use a background service to install updates
- Use recommended performance settings [Learn more](#)
These settings are tailored to your computer's hardware and operating system.
- Use autoscrolling
- Use smooth scrolling
- Show a touch keyboard when necessary
- Always use the cursor keys to navigate within pages
- Search for text when you start typing
- Enable picture-in-picture video controls [Learn more](#)
- Recommend extensions as you browse [Learn more](#)
- Recommend features as you browse [Learn more](#)

Power of RFPs



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

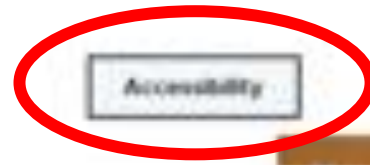
- † District 1 Commissioner Luke Johnson
- † District 2 Commissioner Les Nash
- † District 3 Commissioner Bruce Koeman

Pipestone County is governed by the Board of Commissioners. These elected officials represent the five districts of the county (Commissioners District Map pdf link) and serve staggered terms of office.

The Board elects the Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the calendar year. The Chair is the presiding officer during the Board Meetings and the Vice Chair presides in the Chair's absence.

During Board Meetings, the Commissioners develop policy, make decisions, and make and amend laws for governing the county. The Board's responsibilities include establishing a county budget and tax levy, setting policy for delivery of services, and approving and revising ordinances.

Board Members – 2020



Power of RFPs

The image shows a screenshot of the Pipestone County Board of Commissioners website. The page features a navigation bar at the top with links for HOME, GOVERNMENT, RESIDENT, BUSINESS, VISITOR, EMPLOYMENT, and NEWS AND EVENTS. The main heading reads "BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS" and "OF COMMISSIONERS". A search bar is located on the left side. Below the search bar, the text "BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS" is repeated. The page content includes a search bar, a list of commissioners for District 1, 2, and 3, and a section for "Board Members -- 2020". An accessibility menu is overlaid on the page, listing various options such as Keyboard Help, Read Page, Contrast, Highlight Links, Stop Text, Text Spacing, Stop Animations, Reduce Fonts, Cursor, Text Size, Page Structure, and More Help. The background of the website is a scenic landscape with a large rock formation and a body of water.

PIPESTONE COUNTY

HOME GOVERNMENT RESIDENT BUSINESS VISITOR EMPLOYMENT NEWS AND EVENTS

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

OF COMMISSIONERS

HOME > GOVERNMENT

Search Here

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

- + District 1 Commissioner Luke Johnson
- + District 2 Commissioner Lee Nally
- + District 3 Commissioner Bruce

Pipestone County is governed by the Board of Commissioners. The Board is responsible for the County's operations and is composed of five elected officials representing the five districts of the county (Commissioners District Map pdf link) and serving a four-year term. The Board elects the Chair and the Vice Chair presides in the absence of the Chair. The Board's responsibilities include establishing the County's budget, approving the County's calendar year. The Chair is the presiding officer during the Board Meetings and making decisions, and make and amend laws for governing the county. The Board's primary responsibility is to establish the County's policy for delivery of services, and approving and revising ordinances.

Board Members -- 2020

Accessibility Menu (CTRL+H)

- Keyboard Help
- Read Page
- Contrast +
- Highlight Links
- Stop Text
- Text Spacing
- Stop Animations
- Reduce Fonts
- Cursor
- Text Size
- Page Structure
- More Help

Report a Problem
Pipestone County's Accessibility Statement
Privacy
Contact

Use plain design



Please note, as of March 17, the Inyo County Election's office is closed to all walk-in traffic, until the Covid-19 health emergency has been lifted.

-  Election results
-  Next election: November 3, 2020
-  What's on the ballot
-  Did you get my ballot?
-  Where to vote
-  Register to vote
-  Update your voter registration

Use plain language

The screenshot shows a text editor interface with a toolbar at the top containing options for Bold, Italic, H1, H2, H3, Quote, Bullets, Numbers, and Link. The main text area contains a paragraph about application deadlines, with several phrases highlighted in yellow and green. To the right, a sidebar displays the Hemingway logo and readability metrics. The readability score is Grade 12, with a note 'OK. Aim for 9'. Below this, there are five colored boxes providing feedback: 0 adverbs (Well done), 3 uses of passive voice (Cut to 1 or fewer), 0 phrases with simpler alternatives, 1 of 3 sentences is hard to read, and 1 of 3 sentences is very hard to read.

Write Edit

Hemingway

Readability
Grade 12
OK. Aim for 9

Words: 71
Show More +

- 0 adverbs. Well done.
- 3 uses of passive voice. Cut to 1 or fewer.
- 0 phrases have simpler alternatives.
- 1 of 3 sentences is hard to read.
- 1 of 3 sentences is very hard to read.

Don't rely only on PDFs

Elections

- [Winner Announcement](#)  202KB 2019/11/27
- [Judith Gorman Recount](#)  202KB 2019/11/27
- [Ballot Drop Box Locations w/images](#)  405KB
2019/10/23
- [Sample Ballot](#)  665KB 2020/01/23
- [Candidates Who Have Filed](#)  32KB 2019/10/18
- [Online Voters Guide](#)
- [Elections Calendar](#)
- [Archived Election Results](#)
- [Key dates in 2020](#)

Precincts

- [Voter Precincts](#)  [WA](#)

Register to Vote:

Washington State Elections offers 3 ways to register.

- [VoteWA \(Online\)](#)
- [By Mail](#)
- [In Person](#)

[Voter's Registration Challenge](#)

Make links descriptive

If you are using the FPCA to register to vote or update your registration, as well as to request an absentee ballot, your FPCA must be received by the Board by no later than the 21st day before an election.

You may also register to vote using the Board's voter registration form online [here](#), or you may download a form [here](#). For more information on how to register to vote, visit our website [here](#).

Instead:

You may register to vote online using the Board's [voter registration form](#). Visit our [register to vote website](#) to learn more.

Check your contrast

Election Day is March 3, 2020

Ballots for the Republican Party and Democratic Party Presidential Primaries have been mailed! Anyone with Disabilities who need assistance may vote at the [REDACTED] County Clerk/Auditor's Office located at:

EARLY VOTING held February 25 - February 26 from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 PM at:
County Clerk's Office, 160 North Main Room # 113 [REDACTED]

VOTE CENTER on March 3, 2020 from 7 AM to 8 PM at:
[REDACTED] County Clerk/Auditor's Office 160 North Main Room #113, [REDACTED]

For questions call [REDACTED]

Add alt text to images

Mobile County Board of Registrars



alt="Mobile County Board of Registrars Group Photo"

Add captions to videos



Check font size

Filing deadlines for county offices:

**Monday, March 2, 2020 through
Friday, March 20, 2020 5 p.m.**

Non-partisan candidates (click here) for:

- County Supervisor Districts 1, 2, & 5
- County Auditor
- County Sheriff
- Soil & Water Conservation Commission
- Township Trustee

The offices listed above will be on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot.

**Monday, March 2, 2020 through
Wednesday, March 25, 2020 at 5 p.m.**

Partisan candidates (click here)

(i.e. Democrat or Republican) for:

- County Supervisor District 1, 2, & 5
- County Auditor
- County Sheriff

The offices listed above will be on the June 2, 2020 Primary Election ballot, with the nominees listed on the November 3, 2020 General Election ballot.

Wednesday, August 26, 2020 5 p.m.

Candidates (non-partisan) (click here) for:

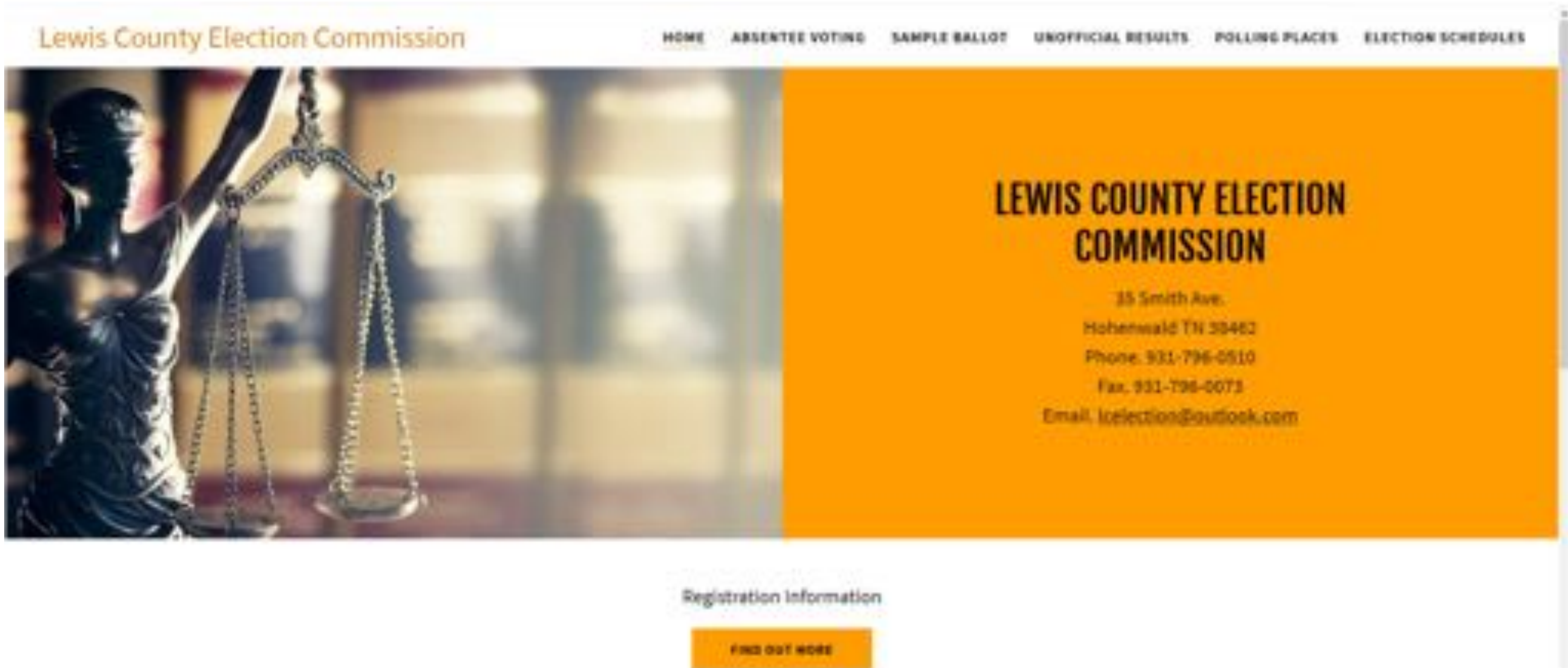
- Agricultural Extension Council
- Partisan (Democrat or Republican) candidates nominated by convention to fill ballot vacancies for:

County Supervisor Districts 1, 2, & 5
County Auditor
County Sheriff

Publicize voting options

The screenshot shows the website for Pierce County Elections. On the left is a dark blue navigation menu with the following items: Accessible Voting, Text Version Drop Boxes, Ballot Drop Boxes, Military & Overseas, District Boundaries and Maps, Voter Challenges, and Be a Pierce County Voter. The main content area has a breadcrumb trail: Home > Government > Departments A-G > Auditor > Elections > Voter Resources > Accessible Voting. Below this is a prominent banner with a red background on the left and a dark blue background on the right. The red section contains a white warning triangle icon and the text: "EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY Pierce County Elections is not accepting in-person visitors. We're still here to help, but **ONLY** by phone. You can call us at". The dark blue section contains the phone number "253-798-VOTE (8683)" in white, with a white arrow pointing from the text in the red section to the phone number. Below the banner is a section titled "Voters Living with a Disability" with a red underline. The text below the title reads: "It's easy to register to vote, receive and mark a ballot, and return your ballot. Watch our (CC) and (ASL) accessible video." Below this text is a video player with the title "Voting and Disability Access in Pierce County". The video thumbnail shows a man in a car and a man in a black shirt using sign language. Below the video player is a caption: "Drop it in the free ballot box." At the bottom of the page, there is a paragraph of text: "Voters have the opportunity to mark their ballots privately and independently using assistive ballot marking devices. These devices have a variety of accessibility options including audio, large font, color contrast, touch screen input and tactile input to assist voters in marking a ballot. The machines print out a scannable, marked ballot which the voter can review, the ballot is then placed in an envelope and dropped in a ballot box with other ballots. Ballots are verified and processed at the Election Center, like every other ballot returned through the mail or at a drop box."

Make contact information prominent



Test with users

Usability testing kit

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



Usability testing is a way to learn how easy or difficult it is for people to use something by observing them actually using it.

The resources provided in this kit can help you systematize the process, produce reliable findings, and generally expand your ability to test voting materials thoroughly with real users — before you launch them out into the world.

CATEGORIES

Communication tools
Community outreach
Polling places

WHAT'S REQUIRED

Technical skills



Time required



Resources



SHARE



Demo: WebAim WAVE

What is WebAim and WAVE?



WAVE Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool

WAVE is a suite of evaluation tools that helps authors make their web content more accessible to individuals with disabilities. WAVE can identify many accessibility and Web Content Accessibility Guideline (WCAG) errors, but also facilitates human evaluation of web content. Our philosophy is to focus on issues that we know impact end users, facilitate human evaluation, and to educate about web accessibility.

You can use the online WAVE tool by entering a web page address (URL) in the field above. [WAVE Firefox and Chrome extensions](#) are available for testing accessibility directly within your web browser - handy for checking password protected, locally stored, or highly dynamic pages. We also have a [WAVE Runner service subscription](#), [WAVE API](#) and a [stand-alone WAVE API](#) for easily collecting data on many pages. If you need enterprise-level reporting and tracking of accessibility, WAVE powers the [Pope Tech accessibility tool](#).



Live WAVE demo

Courtney Bailey-Kanelos
Registrar of Voters
Sacramento County, CA

CASE STUDY: VOTING ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VAAC)

VAAC

- Creation
- Member recruitment

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)

Inquire about the availability of documents in [accessible formats](#).



[Register to Vote](#)



[My Election Information](#)



[My District Information](#)



[Current Election](#)

Sacramento County Voter Registration & Elections department has established a citizen advisory committee to make recommendations for improving access to voting and election materials. This Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, or VAAC, is designed to advise and assist in ensuring all voters in Sacramento County can vote independently and privately.

[Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Goals](#)

[2019 VAAC Meeting Schedule](#)

For more information on Sacramento County's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, please email VAACinfo@saccounty.net or call Courtney Bailey-Kanelos, VAAC Chair, at (916) 875-6558.

Membership

To become a member of the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee, please complete the [VAAC Application](#) and email to VAACinfo@saccounty.net. For information on the desirable qualifications to serve as a member, please read the [Call for Members: Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee](#).

VAAC topics

- Physical accessibility
- Voting equipment
- Website accessibility
- Alternate formats
- Accessible vote-by-mail and county information guide
- Outreach and demonstrations



VAAC – Building trust & collaboration

- Listen to the committee
- Be honest
- Keep your word
- Track action items
- Be transparent
- Be a leader



What are your next steps towards greater accessibility?

GROUP DISCUSSION

Your plans

- What ideas from today resonated?
- What are your next steps?
- Any “a-ha” moments?

Questions for us

- What questions do you have about ideas we covered today?
- Do you have an accessibility question that today's course didn't answer?

We've covered a lot today

WRAPPING UP

What we covered today

- Learn the principles of accessible communication and how they increase public trust
- Understand how people with disabilities experience information online
- Establish actionable guidelines for making your website more accessible

Communicating Trusted Election Information

Social Media for Voter Engagement

Thursday, May 14th | 2pm EST

Later this summer...

Combating Election Misinformation

Thursday, July 30th | 2pm EST

techandciviclifef.org/course/trusted-info/

Free COVID-19 Webinars for Election Officials

- May 19 – June 30
- 2 webinars per week (except June 2)
- 60 minutes each, with plenty of time for Q&A
- Sessions are stand-alone: register for what's useful to you
- We'll post the captioned recordings and slides after each webinar

techandciviclifef.org/covid-19-webinars/

Evaluation

- How was your experience with today's course?
- A brief survey is linked in the chat box.
- Please complete the survey now to provide feedback and improve the course for future participants.

THANK YOU!

Email: courses@techandcivicle.org

Twitter: @HelloCTCL

Website: www.techandcivicle.org

#TrustedInfo2020