Accessible Communication for Election Offices

Communicating Trusted Election Information

May 12, 2020

#TrustedInfo2020

CENTER FOR TECH AND CIVIC LIFE

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

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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)

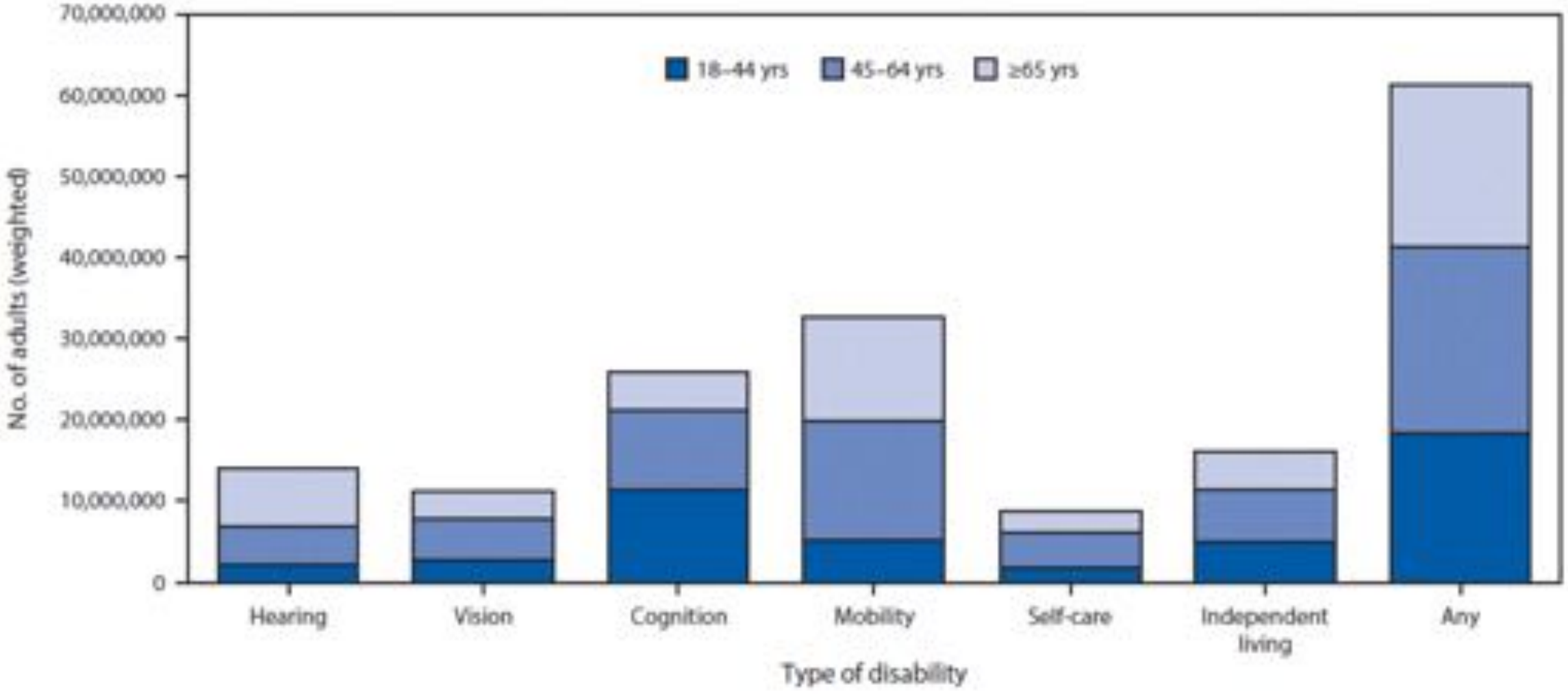
4. Do you have serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs? (5 years old or older)

5. Do you have difficulty dressing or bathing? (5 years old or older)

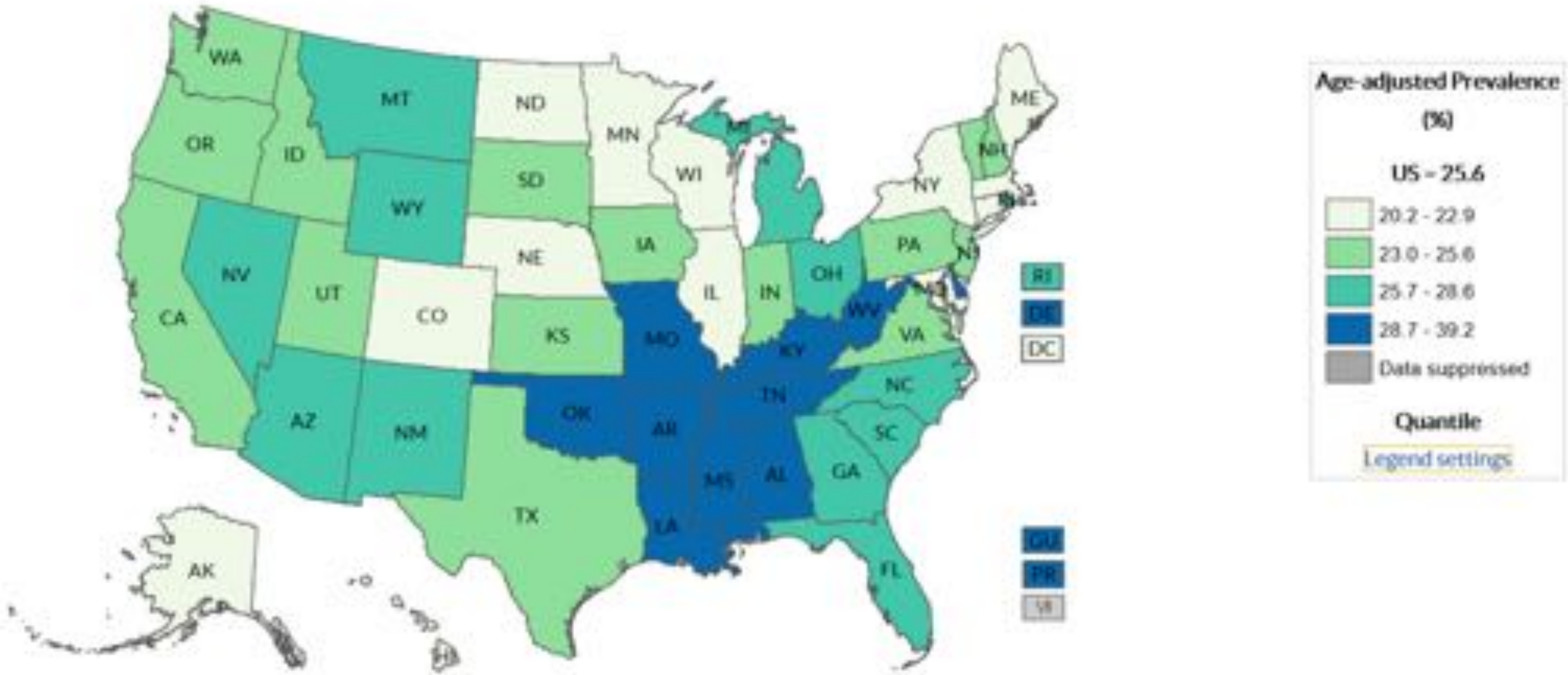
6. Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, do you have difficulty doing errands alone such as visiting a doctor’s office or shopping? (15 years old or older)

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

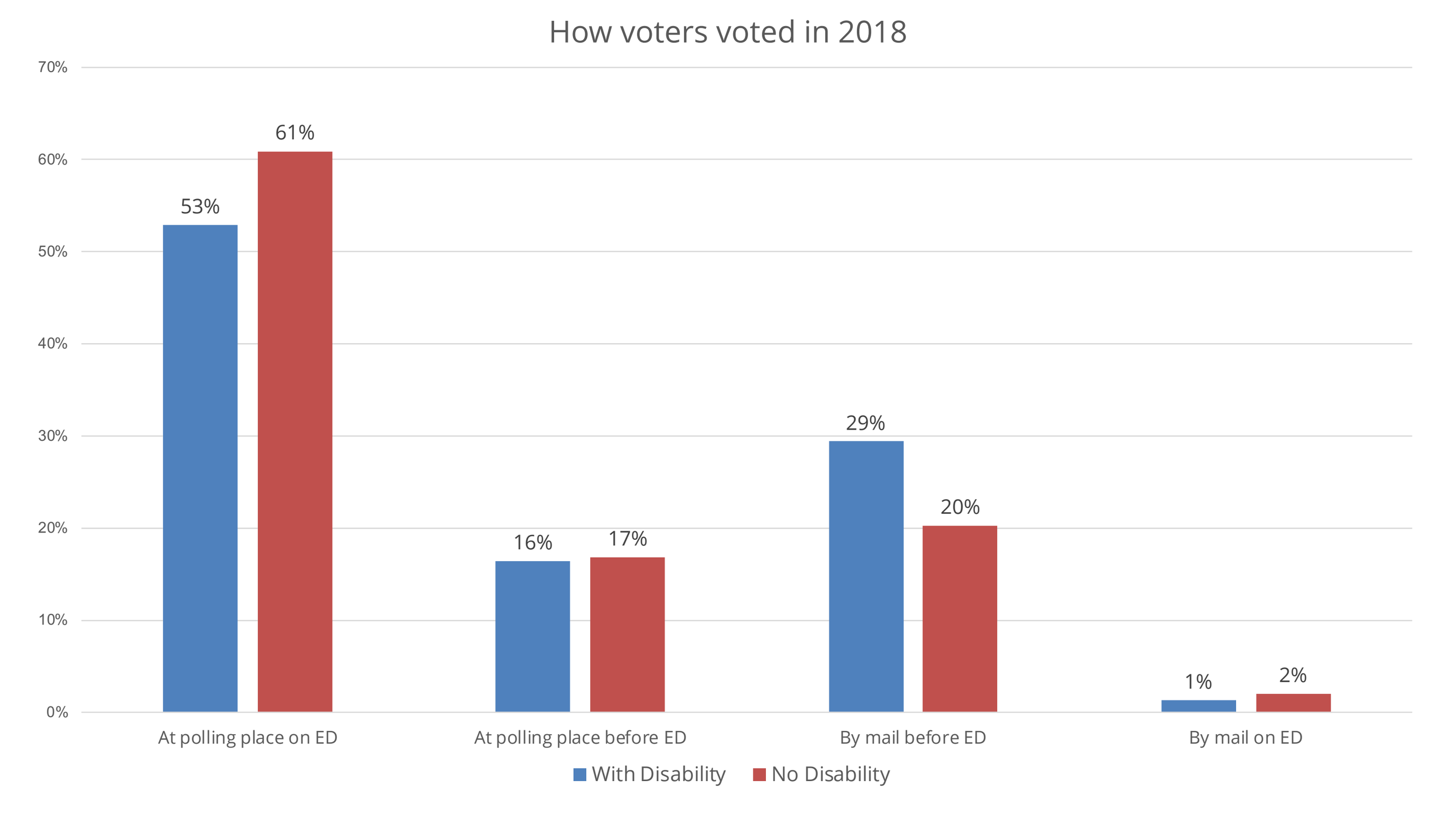
When it comes to the health of people with disabilities, it's important to know the health differences among racial and ethnic groups

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%

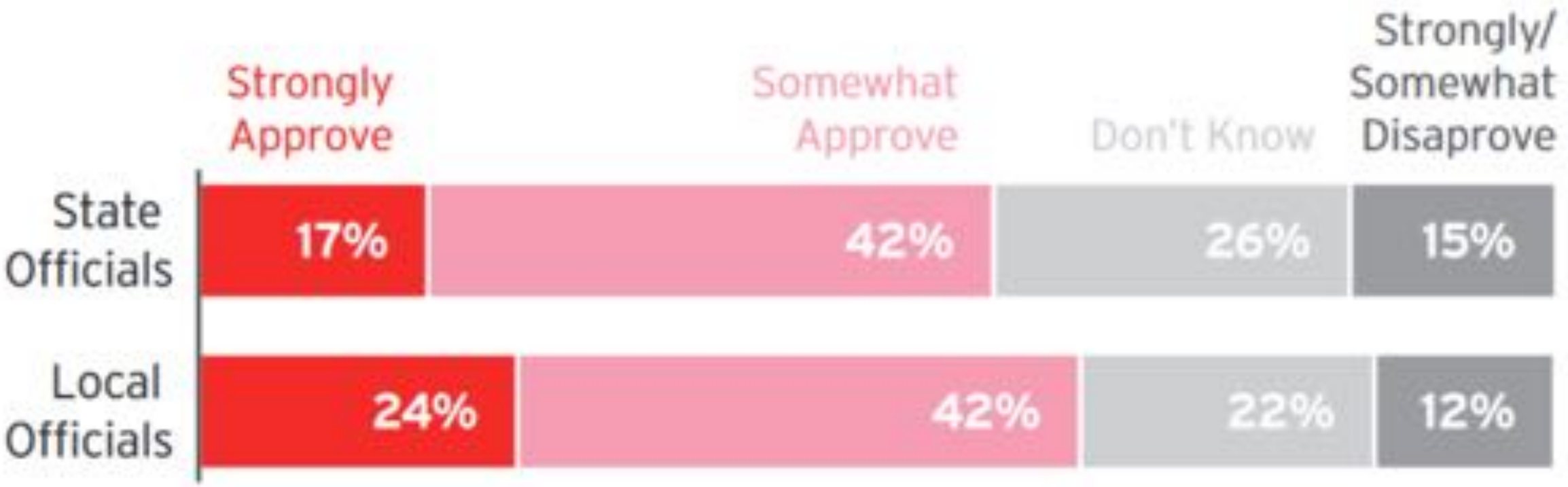
Why didn't vote	Disability	No Disability	Disability Gap
Illness or disability (own or family's)	40.9%	7.8%	33.1%
Not interested, felt my vote wouldn't make a difference	12.1%	16.7%	-4.6%
Transportation problems	7.7%	2.1%	5.6%
Too busy, conflicting work or school schedule	7.3%	31.7%	-24.3%
Didn't like 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
70%
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
53%
61%
16%
17%
29%
20%
1%
2%
At polling place on ED
At polling place before ED
By mail before ED
By mail on ED
With Disability
No Disability

"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

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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

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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

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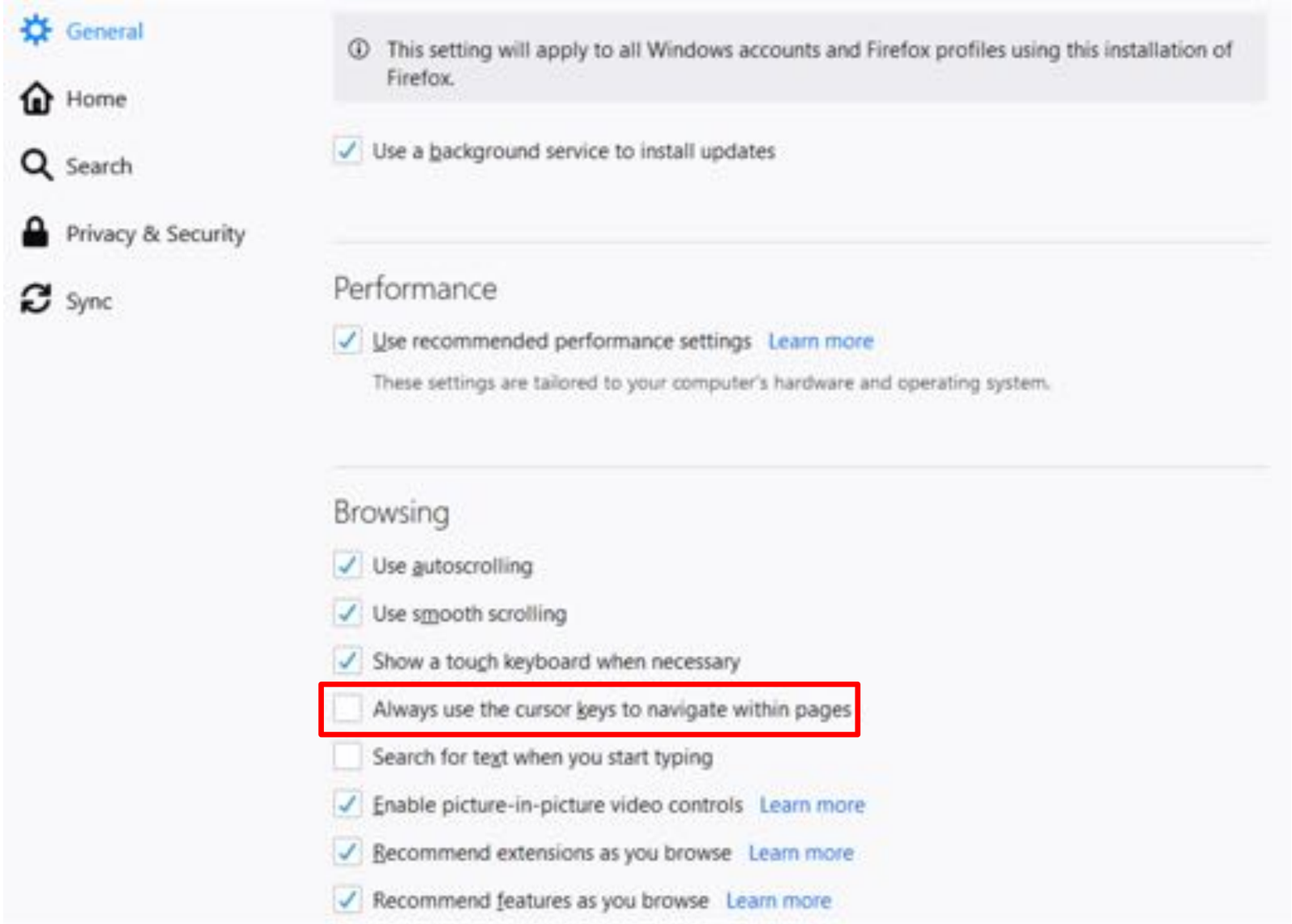
Set goals & expectations

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

Try assistive technology



Power of RFPs

BOARD OF COMMISIONERS

- District 1 Commissioner Luke Johnson
- District 2 Commissioner Les Nath
- District 3 Commissioner Bruce Kooiman

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.

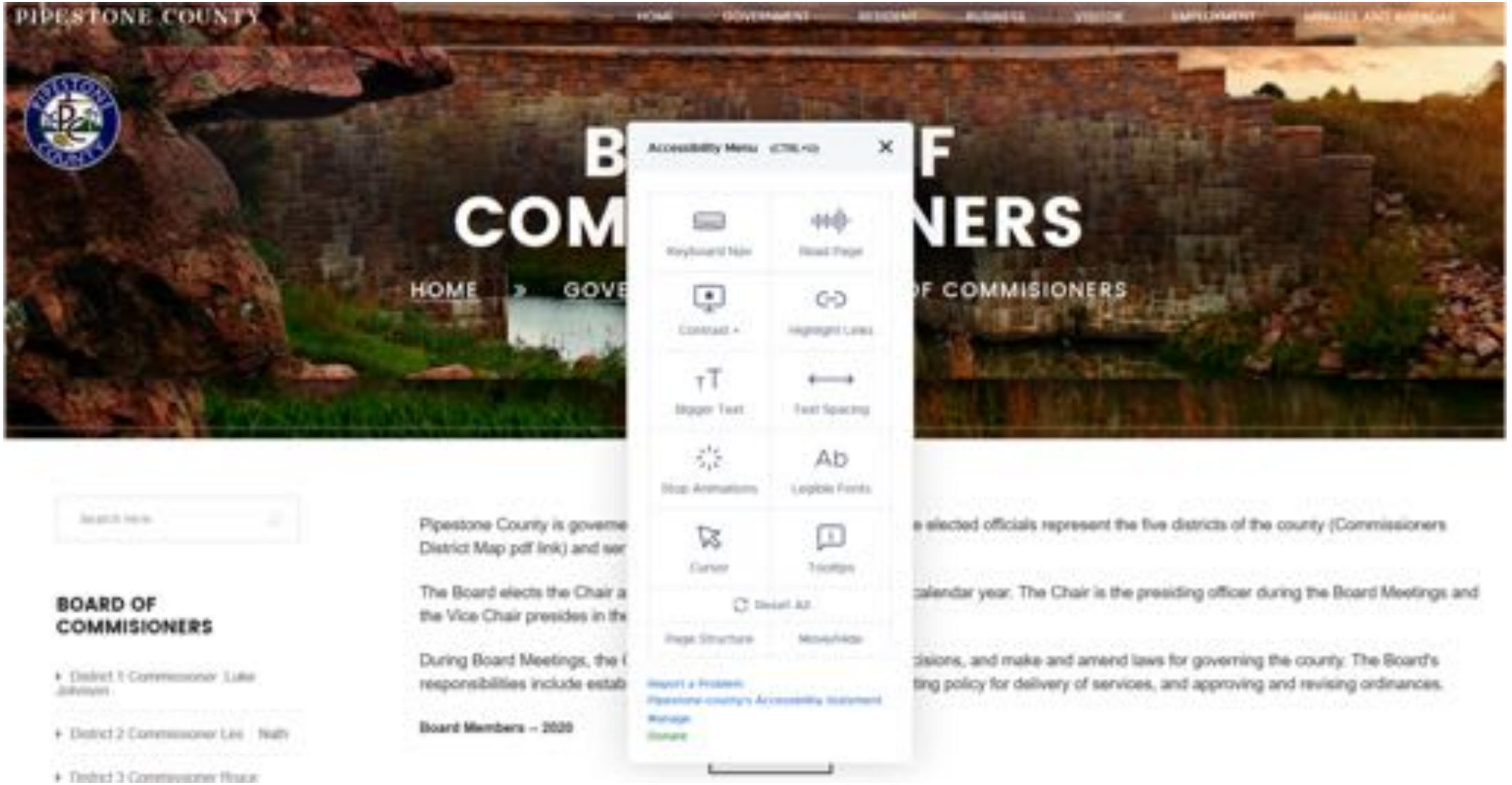
The Board elects the Chair and Vice Chair at the first meeting of the calendar year. The Chair is the presiding officer during the Board Meetings and the Vice Chair presides in the Chair's absence.

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

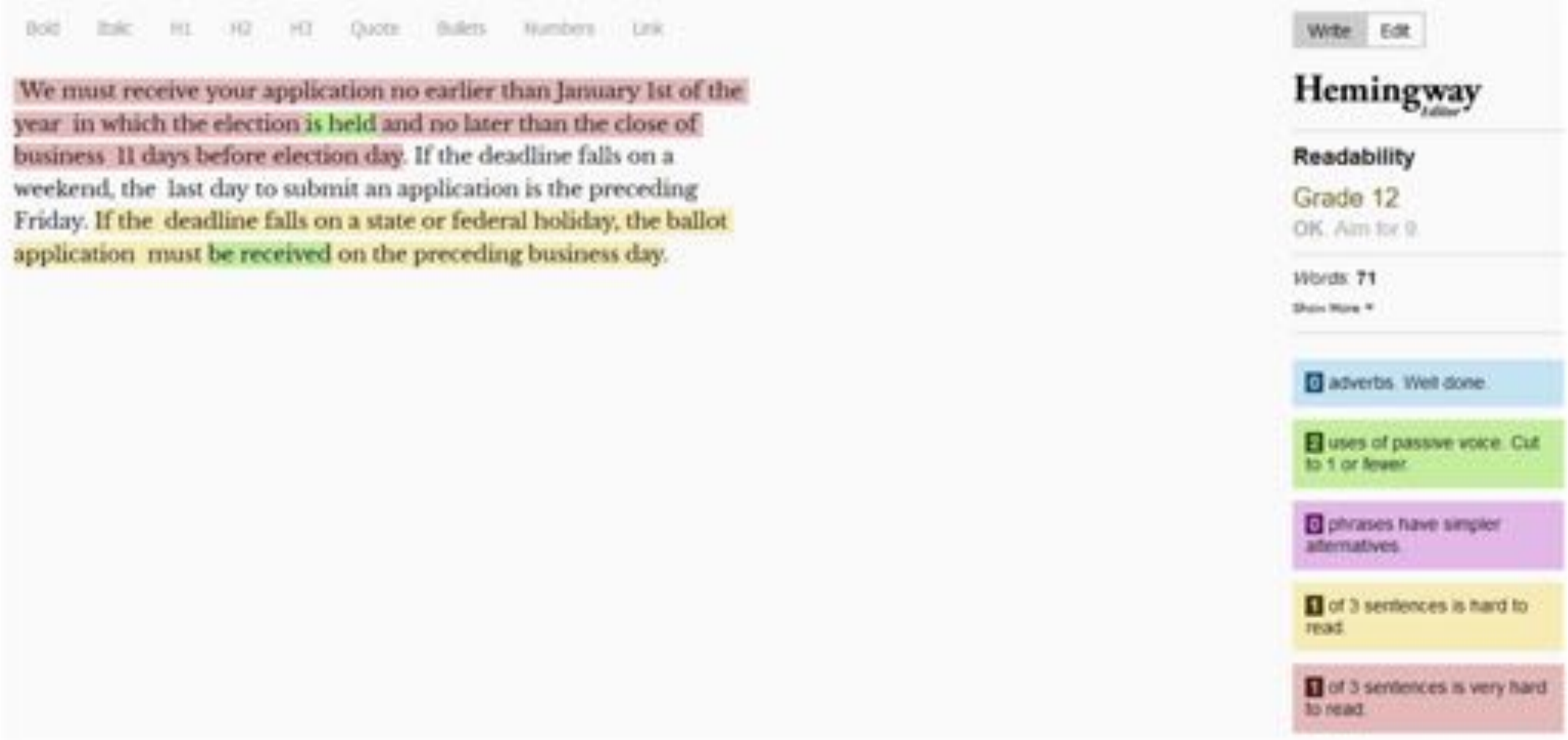
Accessibility

Power of RFPs



Use plain design

Use plain language



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 [redacted] WA

Register to Vote:

Washington State Elections offers 3 ways to register.

- VoteWA (Online)
- By Mail
- In Person

Voter's Registration Challenge

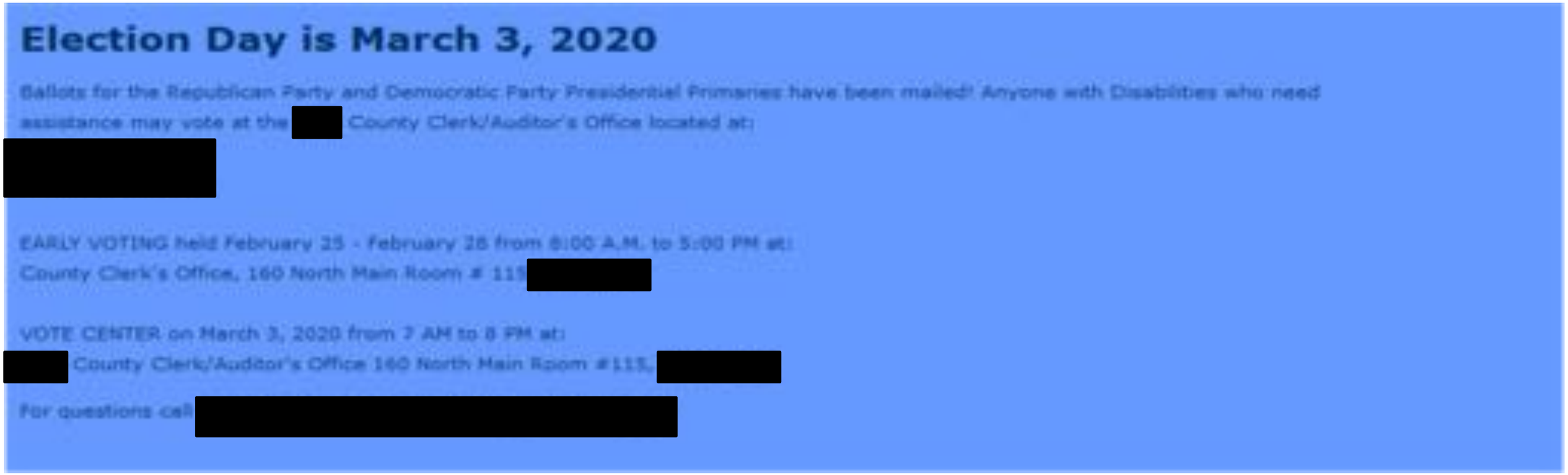
Make links descriptive

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



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:

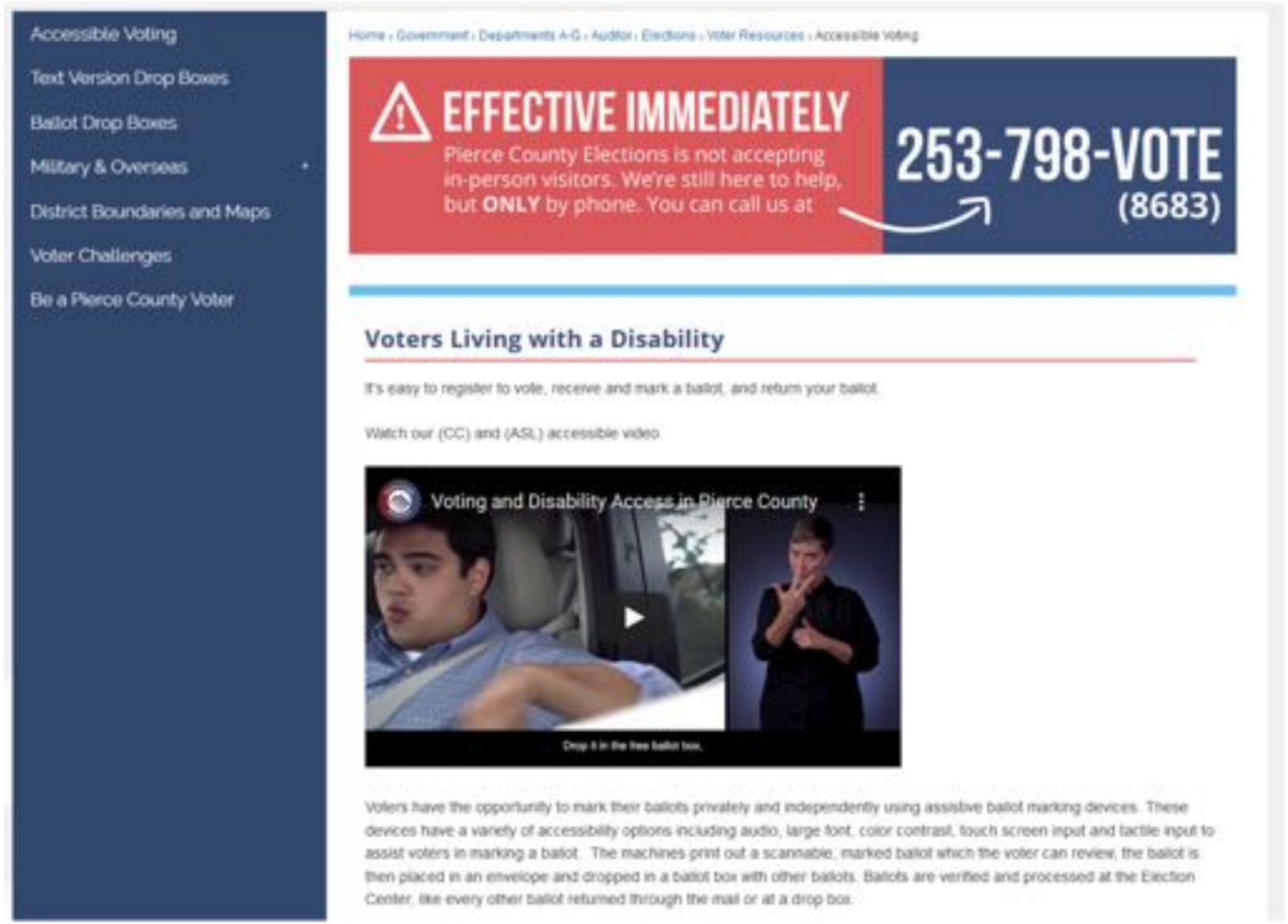
- County Supervisor District 1, 2, & 5
- County Auditor
- County Sheriff

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.

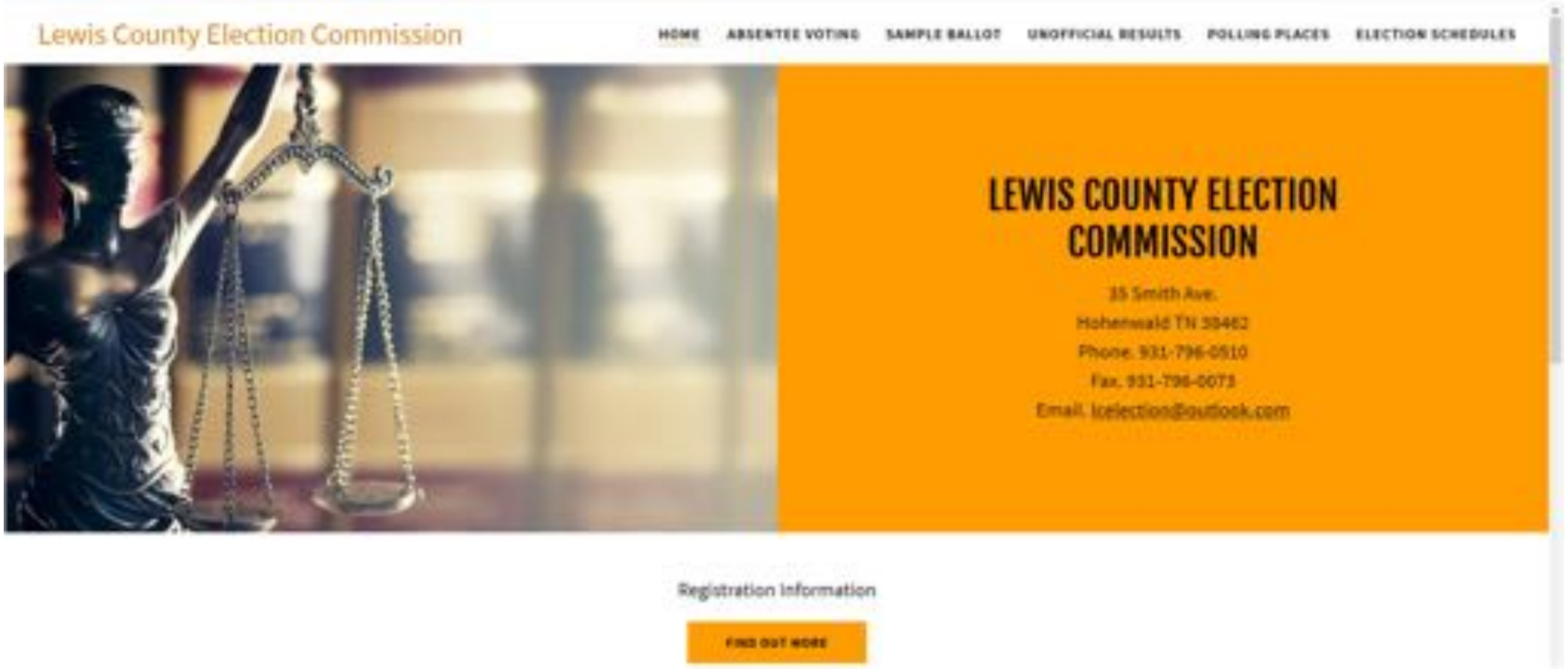
Wednesday, August 26, 2020 5 p.m.
Candidates (non-partisan) (click here) for:

- 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



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?

WebAIM
web accessibility in mind

Utah State University

Live WAVE demo

Courtney Bailey-Kanelos
Registrar of Voters
Sacramento County, CA

CASE STUDY: VOTING ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VAAC)

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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

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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

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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

techandciviclife.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

techandciviclife.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@techandciviclife.org

Twitter: @HelloCTCL

Website: www.techandciviclife.org

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