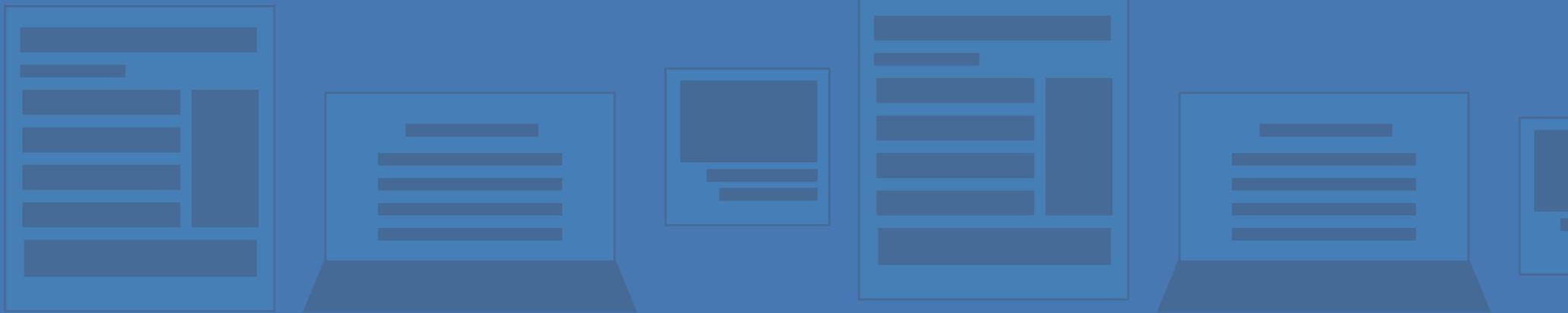


How to

Design Impactful Voter Education Materials



April 2024

Contents

If you're reading this, you likely play a crucial role in your community, creating materials that invite civic participation. This toolkit supports community-based and voter advocacy groups to create engaging, accessible, and action-oriented voter education materials.

Whether you are a team of 1 or 200, you will find something valuable to take your materials to the next level. You can use the recommendations in this book to create a wide array of print or digital materials that fit your budget and staff capacity.

This toolkit will help you:

- Create accessible and digestible voter education content
- Use information design for effective audience engagement
- Easily create materials for your multilingual audiences

In this toolkit, you will find:



Bite-snack-meal content framework
Communications strategy planning document and customizable messaging for your voter education materials.
[Page 4](#)



Starter templates
Canva templates for GOTV materials in the Bite-Snack-Meal framework.
[page 6](#)



Design recommendations
13 recommendations that show you how to incorporate information design into your materials to create the most impact.
[page 10](#)

- Content [page 12](#)
- Digital access and barriers [page 18](#)
- Imagery [page 22](#)
- Color [page 28](#)

Research behind the toolkit

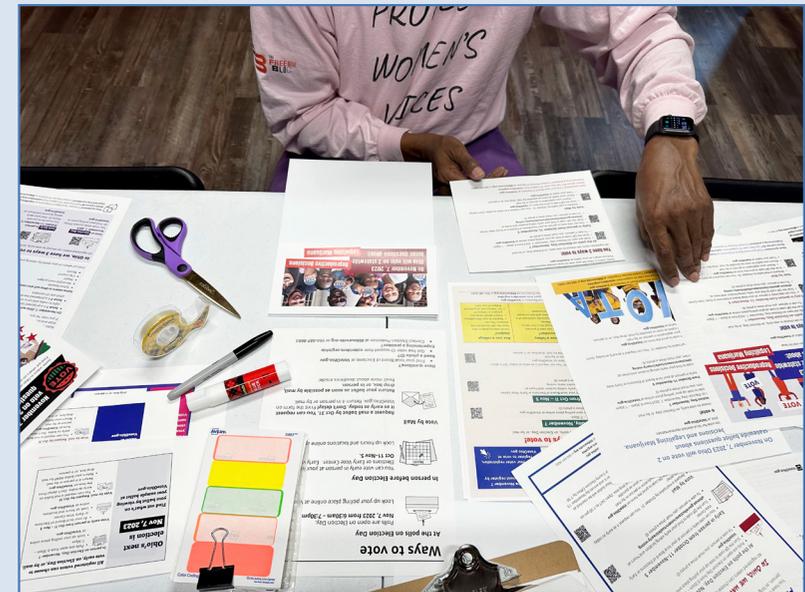
Research goals

This toolkit was developed based on research we conducted in Ohio during 2023 and 2024.

Our goal for this study was to understand how to design impactful and culturally responsive voter materials that encourage participation from voters from diverse communities in Ohio. We aimed to support voter advocacy groups in their GOTV communication efforts during an active election.

With many changes and misunderstandings in Ohio's recent election laws, which could potentially cause disenfranchisement among voters, we explored 3 main areas:

- We looked into how members of communities that are more likely to face barriers to voting perceived design elements in GOTV materials.
- We examined how color and imagery impacted different communication materials' effectiveness, attractiveness, desirability, and usability.
- We tested how tailoring voter materials to be more or less culturally responsive fostered trust within communities.
- We tested how tailoring voter materials to be more or less culturally responsive fostered trust within communities



October 2023 - Research session with voter and advocate from Akron, Ohio.

Research methods

To achieve these goals, we conducted:

- **In-depth semi-structured key expert interviews** with Steering Committee Members of the Ohio Voters Rights Coalition (OVRC) to learn about their existing process of creating materials and communications ecosystem.
- **Listening sessions** with our 5 partnering community-based advocacy organizations to understand their existing voter efforts and challenges.
- **A design audit and analysis** of partnering organizations' existing voting materials used during the 2023 election season.
- **In-person usability testing sessions** with 61 participants across three cities (Cleveland, Akron, and Columbus) in the lead-up to Ohio's August 2023 Special Election and the November 2023 General Election. We tested materials in English, Spanish, and Nepali.

 [View all Center for Civic Design \(CCD\) research reports on our website.](#)



Participatory research session with a participant from Cleveland, Ohio.

Bite-Snack-Meal Content Framework

Bite-snack-meal content framework

What is bite-snack-meal?

As a community organization, you play a crucial role in helping people get involved in their community and vote with confidence. Using content strategies, you can make your voter education materials more effective and reach a wide range of people.

Bite-Snack-Meal is the voter-centered content framework we use at CCD to think about organizing and presenting information to voters. CCD has adapted this framework from the original strategy by Leslie O'Flavahan.

At its core, bite-snack-meal divides a large amount of information into different scales.

A **content framework** is a repeatable, structured blueprint for creating, organizing, and distributing information in formats that allow the audience to understand and navigate topics effectively.

Bite

The “Bite” is the smallest information that tells voters the critical steps to take action.



Snack

The “Snack” adds more context around that smallest essential piece of information. A “Snack” is usually enough for most voters.



Meal

The “Meal” has everything, including information about particular cases/ circumstances that only apply to some. It's usually a website or a written voter guide.



Bite-snack-meal content examples

Bite

What's on your ballot for the November 5 election? Look up your sample ballot on the website

VoteOhio.gov



This “Bite” template is for a social media post that tells voters they can look up who is on their ballot in the November 5 election online. The template includes sample alt text and post text.

[Canva template: Bite](#)

Other examples:

- Social media posts
- Stickers
- Postcards
- Mobile messages
- Website copy
- Memes

Snack

This “Snack” template is a handout covering the critical information most voters need to vote. It covers 3 ways to vote, voter registration deadlines, who to contact if you’re having an issue, voter ID requirements, and specifics for voters with accessibility issues or felony convictions.

[Canva template: Snack](#)

Other examples:

- Flyers
- Short videos
- Email
- Website copy

Meal

This “Meal” template is for a multi-page booklet about the positions on Ohioans’ ballots for the November 5 election. It includes elected official position descriptions and some information about how to vote.

[Canva template: Meal](#)

Other examples:

- Voter guide or booklets
- Long videos
- Website copy

Why use bite-snack-meal?

It helps voters take action.

Participating in elections as an informed voter requires a lot of small and large tasks. From registering to vote to researching ballot items to finding your polling station, you can use bite-snack-meal to deliver information at every phase of the voter journey to make the voter experience less overwhelming.

It makes your job easier.

Voter education starts long before election day. Making information easy to find and understand encourages potential voters to engage in the political process. By presenting information in appropriately sized chunks with bite-snack-meal framework, you can guarantee that voters are receiving precisely what they need when they need it.

It simplifies complex topics.

The bite-snack-meal framework helps voters navigate complex topics by presenting information in a digestible, logical, and intuitive way. Each piece of the framework builds on the one before it, creating an easy-to-follow flow of information with increasing levels of detail at each level.

It ensures voters get timely, relevant information.

Most voters gather information about elections from different sources. Whether printed materials or online resources, the bite-snack-meal method works well across all platforms, making it easier for diverse groups of people to access the information they need in a way that suits them best.

It's adaptable and accessible.

Most voters will use information from various sources to learn about an election. Whether your audience prefers print or digital materials, you can use the bite-snack-meal method across all formats. This approach allows diverse audiences to access information in the best way for them.

Voter education materials are crucial at all phases of the voting process. Understanding the journey of American voters can help you brainstorm the most helpful applications of the bite-snack-meal framework for your audience.

 [Read more about The Epic Journey of American Voters.](#)

Planning your content with bite-snack-meal

How to begin planning content

The variety of ways voters search for information about elections is as diverse as the U.S. electorate. Some prefer information on paper, and some want to click a link for a digital experience. One thing all voters have in common is that they hope to find the correct information in their favorite format at the right time in their voter journey.

This is why it's important to plan:

- The goals and objectives of your key message.
- The differing needs of diverse voter populations.
- How much information to shared at a given point in the voter journey.
- And which format is the most effective for this amount of information.
- Answering these questions will require identifying the diverse needs of your audience(s) and building a strategy around their preferred methods of receiving information.

For more tips on communicating with voters, visit the CCD website:

[Field Guide Vol. 5: Choosing How to Communicate with Voters.](#)

Project Name				
<i>(i.e., Ohio Primary Voter Education Campaign)</i>				
Project Goals and Objectives				
What are the project's overall goals and objectives?				
Understanding Your Voter Populations and Needs				
<i>Different voters have different needs and questions. CCD has researched some voting populations, but this isn't a complete list. Get to know your community members, and plan to answer their questions in your voter education materials preemptively.</i>				
Voter Population Subgroup		Voter Population Needs. What are the needs of this specific population?		
<i>Add voter population groups here.</i>				
<i>(i.e., First-time Nepali student voters with limited English proficiency)</i>				
Targeted Outreach Communications Strategy				
<i>For each voter population you are targeting, complete the following table.</i>				
Voter population Subgroup	Objectives	Key Message(s)	Communication Channels (i.e. email, flyers)	Bite/Snack/Meal
<i>(i.e. Student voters)</i>	<i>I.e. Voter ID</i>			

This communications strategy planning document allows you and your team to create targeted voter education communications strategies for diverse voter populations.

The link to this document and other planning resources can be found on the next page.

Tools and templates to support your voter education content creation using bite-snack-meal

Plan

Project Name (i.e., Ohio Primary Voter Education Campaign)	
Project Goals and Objectives What are the project's overall goals and objectives?	
Understanding Your Voter Populations and Needs Different voters have different needs and questions. CCD has researched some voting populations, but this isn't a complete list. Get to know your community members, and plan to answer their questions in your voter education materials preemptively.	
Voter Population Subgroup	Voter Population Needs. What are the needs of this specific population?
Add voter population groups here.	

Bite-snack-meal communications strategy planning document

The Bite-Snack-Meal framework is designed to adapt to your organization's larger communications strategy.

[Get the communications strategy template here.](#)

Write

	English	?
Bite	To vote in [ELECTION DATE Month DD, YYYY] Election, you must register by [Voter Registration Deadline] . Check your voter registration or register to vote at VoteOhio.gov	
Snack	Are you registered to vote in Ohio? Check your voter registration or register to vote at VoteOhio.gov . To register to vote, you must provide the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Last 4 digits of your social security number orOhio driver's license number orOhio state ID	

Customizable messaging for your bite-snack-meal materials

We've drafted a customizable starter language kit for you to answer commonly asked questions in the Bite-Snack-Meal format.

[Get the messaging document here.](#)

Design

Ohio's next election is November 5, 2024

In Ohio, we have 3 ways to vote!

All registered voters can choose to vote early, on Election Day, or by mail.

Vote in person on Election Day, November 5

- Polls are open from 6:30am - 7:30pm
- Scan the QR code to look up your polling place on the website [VoteOhio.gov](#)
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote early in person from October 8 - November 3

- You can vote early in person at your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
- Scan the QR code to find your early voting location and hours on the website:

Ready-to-use GOTV starter templates

This toolkit's starter bite, snack, and meal templates are built in Canva.

[Canva Template: Bite](#)

[Canva Template: Snack](#)

[Canva Template: Meal](#)

If you need help using Canva, learn more online at

[A Beginner's Guide to Canva](#)

Recommendations

Simple design
techniques to
engage your
audience

Recommendations to put it all together

Introduction

Now that you have your content prepared, we'll explore how to incorporate visual and information design into your materials to create the most impact. Written and visual communication work together to communicate concepts effectively. Design elements, such as a balanced layout, intentional use of color, a clear information hierarchy, and informative and concise content, work together to create “professional-looking” materials.

Throughout our research, we repeatedly heard the word “professional” to describe designs that voters trusted. In this toolkit section, we will demystify some easy-to-implement design techniques that will make voters think you have an in-house design team!

At CCD, we call this **information design**: The process of making the information you want to share clear, engaging, accessible, and usable. Design is about more than just making things look pretty. Accurate information, written in plain language, and well-designed materials lead to trust.

In this section

Some aspects of design that we'll cover in the following recommendations are:

- **Content:** How to write and structure information for your voter education materials on [page 12](#)
- **Digital access & barriers:** Considerations to ensure that voter education information is accessible to all people, regardless of digital literacy and access on [page 18](#)
- **Imagery:** How to use photos, icons, and illustrations to enhance your message in your voter education materials on [page 22](#)
- **Color:** Tips on how color can be used as a tool to support navigation of voter education materials on [page 28](#)

Recommendations

Content

1. Write a general invitation as the top-line header message on voter education materials.

Recommendation: Content

About this recommendation

The first thing readers look for on your voter education materials should be a general invitation to vote that includes the election day and type of election. Starting with general information gets readers the information they need first.

Some examples of top-line header messages that work are:

- Ohio's next election is November 5, 2024!
- Are you ready to vote in Ohio's primary election on March 19, 2023?
- Vote on issues that will impact your community in Ohio's election on November 5, 2024!

? Why follow this recommendation?

Answering questions quickly and easily appeals to all potential voters. When tailoring your communication to specific community groups, including cultural language or ballot issues at the top of GOTV materials can have the opposite of the intended effect, including making voters feel targeted and singled out instead of included. It can also be perceived as biased or skewed, which can discourage or alienate people and potentially cause distrust.

Ohio's next election is
Nov 7, 2023

Find out what's on your ballot by viewing your sample ballot at VoteOhio.gov

All registered voters can choose to vote early, on Election Day, or by mail.

In person on Election Day, November 7

- Polls are open from 6:30am – 7:30pm
- Look up your polling place online at VoteOhio.gov

Vote early in person from Oct 11 – Nov 5

- At your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
- Look up hours and locations online at VoteOhio.gov

Vote by mail. Request by Oct 31

- You can request a mail ballot as early as today. Don't delay! Print the form on VoteOhio.gov Return it in person or by mail.
- Return your ballot ASAP by mail, drop box, or in person.

Include the date of the upcoming election and registration reminders, which are both important pieces of information for everyone including new and avid voters.

1. Write a general invitation as the top-line header message on voter education materials. *(Continued)*

Recommendation: Content

Considerations

Are you making voter education materials or advocacy materials?

Voter education materials should focus primarily on what voters need to be able to vote. Avoid using ballot issues as the header on GOTV education materials. While voters must understand what issues are on the ballot, listing ballot issues in the header can be perceived as issue lobbying. Voters want to feel free of being influenced to vote in one direction or another.

- Instead, explain ballot issues further down in the content in smaller text and link to other trusted, nonpartisan resources that give detailed information about ballot issues.

Avoid using culturally specific terms in top-line header messages, which can make voters feel targeted and singled out instead of included.

During our testing, we learned that using culturally specific terms in headlines to encourage certain groups to participate in the voting process, like “Cleveland Boricuas” were not well received. These headlines were perceived as divisive and led to questions about how people identified themselves.

2. On snack and meal-sized voter education, start with general how-to-vote information, then add subheader callouts for voters with specific information needs.

Recommendation: Content

About this recommendation

Start general

Start with general information about when, why, and how to vote that applies to everyone. Then, address voters directly with critical information that applies to them.

Use headers and subheaders to:

- **Highlight critical information**
Use headers and subheaders so people can find the information they're looking for.
- **Highlight unique circumstances**
Consider including specifics for:
 - Voters with accessibility needs
 - Language access needs
 - New voters
 - College students
 - Returning citizens/those with felony convictions

Are you registered to vote in Ohio's next election?

To vote in the November 7, 2023 General Election, you must register by October 10. Check your voter registration, or register to vote at VoteOhio.gov

You have 3 ways to vote!
All registered voters can choose to vote early, on Election Day, or by mail.

In person on Election Day, November 7

- Polls are open from 6:30am – 7:30pm
- Scan the QR code to look up your polling place online at VoteOhio.gov
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote early in person from Oct 11 – Nov 5

- You can vote early in person at your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
- Scan the QR code to find your early voting location and hours at: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote by mail

- Request a mail ballot by October 31. You can request it as early as today. Don't delay!
 - Scan the QR code to print the form on VoteOhio.gov
 - Return your application in person or by mail.
- Return your ballot as soon as possible by mail, drop box, or in person.
- Track your ballot at VoteOhio.gov

Have in-person accessibility needs?
If you have a disability and can't physically enter a polling place, you must be allowed to vote.

Have a felony conviction?
You can vote if you are...

- In jail for a non-felony offense.
- Previously convicted of a felony and are no longer incarcerated.

Are you a college student?
Out of state students in Ohio have the right to vote in Ohio elections. You can:

- Register at your Ohio address
- Vote in person using your passport or military ID
- Or, vote by mail using the last 4 digits of your SSN.

Have questions? Find your local Board of Elections at VoteOhio.gov
Need a photo ID? Get free voter ID support from voteriders.org/ohio
Experiencing a problem? Contact Election Protection at 866ourvote.org or 866-687-8683

Why follow this recommendation?
Subheaders and callouts that highlight specific information needed by different populations have the potential to make non-voters feel included.

3. Use a side-by-side layout for bilingual materials.

Recommendation: Content

About this recommendation

A side-by-side bilingual layout is especially helpful for bilingual voters with varying fluency levels in both languages.

This layout style provides learning opportunities for voters with varying fluency to learn specific election terminology. If they don't recognize the word in one language, they might recognize it in the other!

Additional suggestions for supporting audiences with low English proficiency

- Tell people if the election office supports their language.
- Direct people to resources in the language they speak wherever possible. For example, use the in-language phone number for Vote411 phone support.

? Why follow this recommendation?

Using bilingual layouts support multilingual voters by making it easy to compare the text in each language.

Page 4



What do my local elected officials do? ¿Qué hacen los funcionarios electos de mi localidad?

Common Pleas Court Judge

Each county in Ohio has a Court of Common Pleas. Judges serve six-year terms. What they do:

- Hear and decide on civil and criminal court cases.

Juez del Tribunal de Causas Comunes

Cada condado de Ohio tiene un Tribunal de Causas Comunes. Los jueces tienen mandatos de 6 años. Lo que hacen:

- Escuchar y decidir sobre casos judiciales civiles y penales.

Prosecutor

Prosecutors serve a four-year term. What they do:

- Guide victims of crime through the criminal justice process.
- Represent the U.S. government in court for local criminal cases by recommending sentencing, initiating further investigations, and presenting cases against a suspected lawbreaker.

Fiscal

Los Fiscales tienen un mandato de 4 años. Lo que hacen:

- Guiar a las víctimas de delitos a través del proceso de justicia penal.
- Representar al gobierno de EE.UU. ante los tribunales en casos penales locales recomendando sentencias, iniciar investigaciones adicionales, y presentar casos contra un presunto infractor de la ley.

Bilingual layouts serve as a bridge, putting translated words next to each other so that readers can make connections between words they recognize in either language.

4. Design voter education materials in multiple mediums, including in print and online.

Recommendation: Content

About this recommendation

To serve everyone's overlapping preferences and accessibility needs, make information available in multiple places in different formats.

Making materials available in one format that works for everyone is nearly impossible because people have different accessibility needs and media consumption preferences.

Making information available in multiple formats will increase the likelihood of meeting your voters with the right format at the right time. For example, to help non-English speakers engage with online materials only available in English, have multilingual staff or volunteers support with in-person translation.

Increasing accessibility to invite participation

Once you understand where your audience goes for information, you can choose your means of communication. When making your decisions, consider the following:

What languages and dialects does your audience speak?

- Design translated and bilingual materials.
- For digital materials that are not translated, provide live translation support.
- Add translated captions or voice overs to videos.

Are your print voter education materials accessible to those with visual impairments?

- Make sure that your colors have enough contrast to be accessible by using mostly dark text on light-colored backgrounds.
- Use a large enough text size. 11-12 pts for body copy.

Are your digital voter education materials (websites and social media contents) accessible to those with visual and audio impairments?

- Add alt text to images.
- Make sure that critical information is included in both the image and the text of a post.

What are the digital needs of your audience?

- Design your website mobile-first for those who do not have access to a desktop or laptop. (See Recommendations 6 + 7.)
- Provide in-person support for your audience members with limited tech literacy.

Recommendations

Digital Access & Barriers

5. Provide support for voters who need digital literacy assistance.

Recommendation: Digital Access & Barriers

About this recommendation

Today, a lot of election information can be accessed online. To support voters with accessing digital information across various touchpoints, it's important to include multiple ways to access digital content from printed voter education materials.

Election offices have also built a lot of digital tools to share information that voters really want to know like:

- Voter Registration Status
- Sample Ballot (which can only be accessed online in Ohio)
- Tracking a mail ballot

? Why follow this recommendation?

People have different information access abilities, habits, and preferences. Include multiple ways of accessing additional information and support to meet everyone's needs.

Digital literacy is people's ability to access, understand, and communicate with digital media.

Ohio's next election is November 5, 2024

In Ohio, we have 3 ways to vote!
All registered voters can choose to vote early, on Election Day, or by mail.

To vote in the November 5 Election, you must register by October 7. Check your voter registration, or register to vote at VoteOhio.gov

Vote in person on Election Day, November 5



- Polls are open from 6:30am – 7:30pm
- Scan the QR code to look up your polling place on the website VoteOhio.gov
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote early in person from October 8 - November 3



- You can vote early in person at your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
- Scan the QR code to find your early voting location and hours on the website: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote by mail



1. Request a mail ballot by October 29. You can request it as early as today. Don't delay!
 - Scan the QR code to print the form on the website VoteOhio.gov. Or, get an application from your Board of Elections in person.
 - Return your application in person or by mail.
2. Return your ballot as soon as possible. There are different deadlines if you return your mail ballot by mail, drop box, or in person.
3. Track your ballot on the website VoteOhio.gov

Have in-person accessibility needs? If you have a disability and can't physically enter a polling place, you must be allowed to vote.	Have a felony conviction? You can vote if you are... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In jail for a non-felony offense.• Previously convicted of a felony and are no longer incarcerated.	Voter ID rules have changed! To vote in person, you must now show current photo ID: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• OH driver's license• OH state ID card• US passport or card• US military ID card• OH national guard ID card• US Veterans Affairs (VA) card
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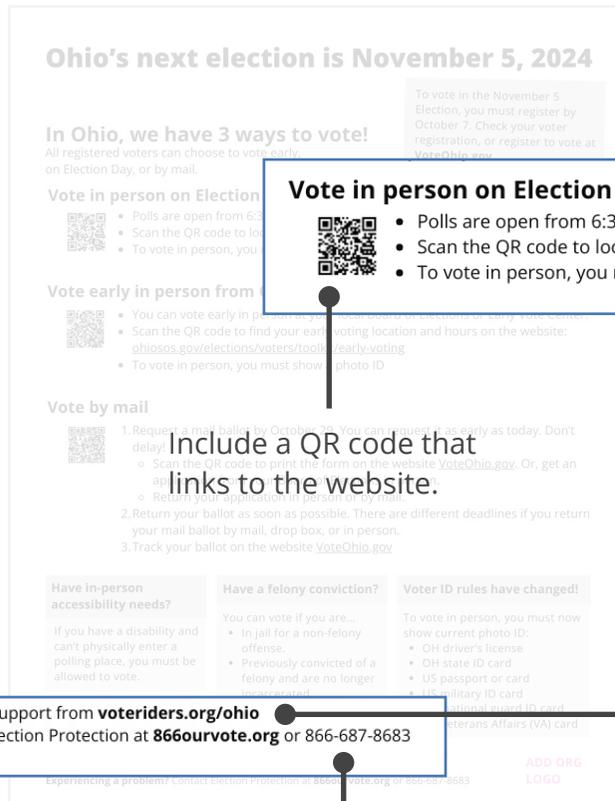
Have questions? [ADD BOARD OF ELECTIONS WEBSITE AND PHONE NUMBER HERE](#)
Need a photo ID? Get free voter ID support from voteriders.org/ohio
Experiencing a problem? Contact Election Protection at 866ourvote.org or 866-687-8683

[ADD ORG LOGO](#)

The “snack” template included in this toolkit shows how to include multiple ways of accessing websites.

5. Provide support for voters who need digital literacy assistance. (Continued)

When adding website links to printed voter education:



Include the full website address (URL).

Include a QR code that links to the website.

Add the word 'website' before the link, for people who are unfamiliar with how URLs are written.

Need a photo ID? Get free voter ID support from voteriders.org/ohio
Experiencing a problem? Contact Election Protection at 866ourvote.org or 866-687-8683

Short website links that are easier for people to type, such as Bitly. Ideally, try to use meaningful words, not random strings of letters and numbers. For example website.gov/register could be an easier to remember short link for a voter registration page. Advocate for election offices to do the same.

Include phone numbers for people without Internet access, or who have further questions and need support.

6. Create in-person opportunities to use digital tools for voters who lack access to technology.

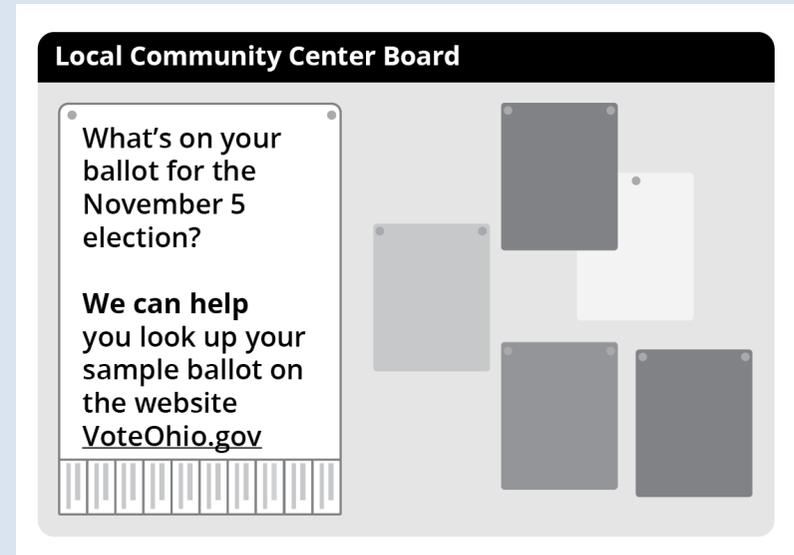
Recommendation: Digital Access & Barriers

About this recommendation

The **digital divide** refers to the gap between those with access to technology and digital literacy training and those without. Factors influencing the digital divide include geographic location, socioeconomic status, age, and physical disabilities.

Creating live opportunities for people who don't have technology at home to use online tools can reduce the voter information gap. You can do this by:

- Training community organizers to provide digital information in person.
- Hosting In-person tabling to support people who struggle with technology to access information that is only available online:
- Transitioning voter registration tabling to tabling for sample ballots and resources about what's on their ballot.
- Creating "Digital Translator Programs" that collaborate with libraries and community centers that already do digital access work for their communities.



This fictional illustration of a community center message board includes a poster advertising digital access support.

? Why follow this recommendation?

The seniors and new citizen voters we spoke to in our research are not moving from print to digital voter education. Some seniors and new citizen voters may be unfamiliar with QR codes and written website URL links on printed voter education materials.

Recommendations

Imagery

7. Use imagery that shows the voting process.

Recommendation: Imagery

About this recommendation

Information design uses imagery intentionally to complement the main message. In good information design, imagery is used intentionally to complement the main message. Use images to supplement but not replace written information. You can help familiarize voters with election materials before engaging with them in real life by using illustrations, icons, and photos of items related to the voting process, such as:

- Voter ballots
- Vote-by-mail envelopes
- And ballot drop boxes.

Similarly, using imagery that shows voters' actions throughout the civic engagement process can help potential voters visualize themselves participating in elections.

Imagery can also be a navigation element to break up and guide people through the information.

Nuevo votante en Ohio?
Ohio's next election is the Presidential Primary March 19, 2024
La próxima elección de Ohio es la elección primaria el 19 de marzo de 2024

To vote in the March 19 Primary Election, you must register by February 20.
Check your voter registration, or register to vote at VoteOhio.gov

In Ohio, we have 3 ways to vote!
All registered voters can choose to vote early, on Election Day, or by mail.

Vote in person on Election Day, March 19
• Polls are open from 6:30am – 7:30pm
• Scan the QR code to look up your polling place online at VoteOhio.gov
• To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote early in person from February 21 - March 17
• You can vote early in person at your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
• Scan the QR code to find your early voting location and hours at: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
• To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote by mail
• Request a mail ballot by March 12. You can request it as early as today. Don't delay!
◦ Scan the QR code to print the form on VoteOhio.gov.
◦ Return your application in person or by mail.
• Return your ballot as soon as possible. There are different deadlines if you return your mail ballot by mail, drop box, or in person.
• Track your ballot at VoteOhio.gov

Are you new to voting in the mainland US?
Voting in Ohio is very similar to voting in Puerto Rico. Some differences to be aware of are:
• Election Day is not a holiday. If needed you have the right to time off from work to vote.
• In Ohio, you need to show an ID to vote in person. But, not an electoral voting card.
• All registered voters have the choice to vote by mail.
• In Ohio, you can't vote if you are incarcerated with a felony conviction. You can vote if you are in jail for a non-felony offense.

Have a felony conviction?
You can vote if you are...
• In jail for a non-felony offense.
• Previously convicted of a felony and are no longer incarcerated.

Have in-person accessibility needs?
If you have a disability and can't physically enter a polling place, you must be allowed to vote.

Have questions? Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at clevelandvotes.com or (216) 443-8683
Need a photo ID? Get free voter ID support from voteriders.org/ohio
Experiencing a problem? Contact Election Protection at 866ourvote.org or 866-687-8683

This flyer uses illustrations of a ballot box, a calendar, and vote by mail envelope to support messages detailing 3 methods of voting.

7. Use imagery that shows the voting process. (Continued)

Recommendation: Imagery

Considerations

When deciding where and how to use imagery, consider the following:

- Voters with disabilities may use screen readers to access digital content. Add alt text explaining how the image related to the text or message so they can “see the images with their ears.”
- Adding images will take up more space on your materials. You may need to make a trade off to include less text in order to include images, but the positive impacts make it worth it!

? Why follow this recommendation?

Most voters we spoke with found illustrations and images of the voting process helpful in understanding the different voting methods available. Imagery helped voters to understand topics immediately and effectively.

La próxima elección de Ohio es la elección primaria el 19 de marzo de 2024

Ohio's next election is the Presidential Primary March 19, 2024

En Ohio, ¡tenemos 3 maneras de votar!
Todos los electores inscritos pueden elegir votar anticipadamente, el Día de la Elección o por correo.

En persona el Día de la Elección, el 19 de marzo

- Las urnas están abiertas de 6:30 AM a 7:30 PM
- Escanee el código QR para buscar su lugar de votación en línea en VoteOhio.gov
- Para votar en persona, debe exhibir una identificación con foto

Vote temprano en persona del 21 de febrero al 17 de marzo

- Puede votar anticipadamente en persona en su Junta Electoral o Centro de Votación Anticipada local.
- Escanee el código QR para encontrar su lugar y horario de votación anticipada en: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
- Para votar en persona, debe exhibir una identificación con foto

Vote por correo

- Solicite una boleta por correo antes del 12 de marzo. Puede solicitarla hoy mismo. ¡No se demore!
- Escanee el código QR para imprimir el formulario en VoteOhio.gov
- Devuelva su solicitud en persona o por correo.
- Devuelva su boleta lo antes posible. Hay diferentes plazos si devuelve su boleta por correo, buzón o en persona.
- Revise su papeleta en VoteOhio.gov

¿Tiene alguna duda?
Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at clevelandvotes.com or (216) 443-8683

Obtenga ayuda gratuita
para el carné de votante en voteriders.org/ohio

¿Tiene algún problema?
Póngase en contacto con Protección Electoral en 866ourvote.org o 888-839-8682

This flyer uses illustrations to offer examples of people voting using 3 methods: in-person voting, early voting, and vote by mail.

8. Use imagery of diverse groups of people participating in democracy.

Recommendation: Imagery

About this recommendation

American voters want to see themselves reflected in the big picture of U.S. elections. When using photographs in your materials, aim to show diverse groups that reflect a small snapshot of the diversity across the country to invoke a sense of unity and belonging.

Use imagery that genuinely represents your community and depicts diverse groups. When choosing imagery of diverse groups, make sure to go beyond simply checking off boxes to show that every identity is represented. A superficial gesture of inclusion without understanding the community represented can be perceived as tokenism, which harms underrepresented communities. Don't try to show all aspects of diversity in a single image, as this may come across as inauthentic box-checking.

Why follow this recommendation?

Across communities people desire to see themselves and their community represented in voting communication materials. The majority of our research participants preferred images of racially and ethnically diverse groups of people, as it is usually a more accurate representation of their community and makes the information feel more credible.



Are you ready to vote in Ohio?
¿Está preparado para votar?

To vote in the March 19 Primary Election, you must register by February 20.
Check your voter registration, or register to vote at VoteOhio.gov

In person on Election Day, March 19

- Polls are open from 6:30am – 7:30pm
- Scan the QR code to look up your polling place online at VoteOhio.gov
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote early in person from February 21 - March 17

- You can vote early in person at your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
- Scan the QR code to find your early voting location and hours at: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote by mail

1. Request a mail ballot by March 12. You can request it as early as today. Don't delay!
 - a. Scan the QR code to print the form on VoteOhio.gov.
 - b. Return your application in person or by mail.
2. Return your ballot as soon as possible. There are different deadlines if you return your mail ballot by mail, drop box, or in person.
3. Track your ballot at VoteOhio.gov

Have in-person accessibility needs?
If you have a disability and can't physically enter a polling place, you must be allowed to vote.

Have a felony conviction?
You can vote if you are...

- In jail for a non-felony offense.
- Previously convicted of a felony and are no longer incarcerated.

Are you new to voting in the mainland US?
Voting in Ohio is very similar to voting in Puerto Rico. Some differences to be aware of are:

- Election Day is not a holiday. If needed you have the right to time off from work to vote.
- In Ohio, you need to show an ID to vote in person. But, not an electoral voting card.
- All registered voters have the choice to vote by mail.
- In Ohio, you can't vote if you are incarcerated with a felony conviction. You can vote if you are in jail for a non-felony offense.

Have questions? Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at clevelandvotes.com or (216) 443-8683
Need a photo ID? Get free voter ID support from voteriders.org/ohio
Experiencing a problem? Contact Election Protection at 866ourvote.org or 866-687-8683

In our research, this image of a racially and ethnically diverse group of younger voters evoked a sense of welcome. But, participants noticed the lack of age diversity in the image.

We heard that images like this one represented unity and made them feel more united on the issues.

8. Use imagery of diverse groups of people participating in democracy. *(Continued)*

Recommendation: Imagery

Considerations

When choosing images for your voter education materials, consider the following:

What is your relationship with your audience?

Are you and your outreach volunteers and staff representative of your audience?

- For BIPOC-led organizations working in BIPOC communities that have a relationship with their community whose outreach focus is for underrepresented communities, the use of imagery of diverse communities can be seen as an invitation and create a sense of belonging.
- For white-led organizations working in BIPOC communities, the use of images that only include singular racial or ethnic communities could be perceived as tokenism.

What might the viewer's perspective and potential emotional reaction be?

Personal biases, cultural backgrounds, age, and individual experiences influence how images impact us.

How are elements arranged in the photo?

Photo composition can affect how people respond to images. Use imagery with people facing the camera to invoke a sense of welcome.

It's often easier and faster to find illustrations of people engaged in the voting process than to find photos of real people.

Due to various laws regarding photography and voting around polls, it is more difficult to find images of people engaged in the act of voting. Graphic illustrations of people also allow for some flexibility in the interpretation of who is represented. They can represent various ethnicities and races and give people “a place to put themselves” in the imagery.

9. When using cultural imagery to engage specific audiences, assess your relationship with your audience first.

Recommendation: Imagery

About this recommendation

Assess your organization's relationship with your audience.

1. **Understand who you are.** Are you and your outreach volunteers and staff representative of your audience?
2. **Understand who your audience is.** The impact of culturally significant imagery depends on who is sharing the information.
 - If your organizer group has different identities than your audience, using cultural imagery to engage specific audiences can make voters feel targeted and singled out, instead of included.
 - Avoid using imagery that you don't have a cultural understanding of.
3. **Show your materials to people from your audience, and ask them for feedback.** You never know what imagery might mean to different members of your audience. Do research into the context of imagery you're selecting and adding to your voter education materials.

¡CLEVELAND BORICUAS!
¿Está preparado para votar?
La próxima elección de Ohio es la elección primaria el 19 de marzo de 2024

¡Tenemos 3 maneras de votar!
Todos los electores inscritos pueden elegir votar anticipadamente, el Día de la Elección o por correo.

En persona el Día de la Elección, el 19 de marzo

- Las urnas están abiertas de 6:30 AM a 7:30 PM
- Escanee el código QR para buscar su lugar de votación en línea en VoteOhio.gov
- Para votar en persona, debe exhibir una identificación con foto

Vote temprano en persona del 21 de febrero al 17 de marzo

- Puede votar anticipadamente en persona en su Junta Electoral o Centro de Votación Anticipada local.
- Escanee el código QR para encontrar su lugar y horario de votación anticipada en: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
- Para votar en persona, debe exhibir una identificación con foto

Vote por correo

- Solicite una boleta por correo antes del 12 de marzo. Puede solicitarla hoy mismo. ¡No se demore!
 - Escanee el código QR para imprimir el formulario en VoteOhio.gov
 - Devuelva su solicitud en persona o por correo.
- Devuelva su boleta lo antes posible. Hay diferentes plazos si devuelve su boleta por correo, buzón o en persona.
- Revise su papeleta en VoteOhio.gov

¿Tiene una condena por delito grave?
Puede votar si está...

- En la cárcel por un delito no grave.
- Anteriormente condenado por un delito grave y ya no está encarcelado.

¿Necesita accesibilidad en persona?
Si tiene una discapacidad y no puede entrar físicamente en un centro de votación, se le tiene que permitir votar.

¿Tiene alguna duda? Cuyahoga County Board of Elections at clevelandvotes.com or (216) 443-8683
Obtenga ayuda gratuita para el carné de votante en voteriders.org/ohio
¿Tiene algún problema? Póngase en contacto con Protección Electoral en 866ourvote.org o 888-839-8682

? Why follow this recommendation?

The use of the Puerto Rican flag on GOTV materials evoked a strong sense of pride and identity for Puerto Rican research participants. But, it also made them suspicious of why Puerto Ricans were singled out, instead of the larger Latino population in Ohio.

Recommendations

Color

10. Use color as a tool to direct the viewer's attention while they navigate complex information.

Recommendation: Color

About this recommendation

Color and white space work together in designs to capture and focus people's attention. White space (the absence of color and text) helps information stand out by giving it space.

Color is an effective technique to visually support the structure, hierarchy, or importance of information.

? Why follow this recommendation?

Our findings reveal that participants overwhelmingly preferred colorful flyers over black and white ones, as an excessive amount of text tended to be overwhelming. Color, combined with good information design, aids in focusing on essential information, allowing them to skim the material quickly. The use of color blocks highlights information and supports the readability and comprehension of information.

Ohio's next election is
November 7, 2023

To vote in the November 7 Election, you must register by October 10.
Check your voter registration, or register to vote at VoteOhio.gov

In Ohio, we have 3 ways to vote!
All registered voters can choose to vote early, on Election Day, or by mail.

In person on Election Day, November 7

- Polls are open from 6:30am – 7:30pm
- Scan the QR code to look up your polling place online at VoteOhio.gov
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote early in person from Oct 11 – Nov 5

- You can vote early in person at your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
- Scan the QR code to find your early voting location and hours at: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote by mail

- Request a mail ballot by October 31. You can request it as early as today. Don't delay!
 - Scan the QR code to print the form on VoteOhio.gov.
 - Return your application in person or by mail.
- Return your ballot as soon as possible by mail, drop box, or in person.
- Track your ballot at VoteOhio.gov

Have in-person accessibility needs? If you have a disability and can't physically enter a polling place, you must be allowed to vote.	Have a felony conviction? You can vote if you are... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In jail for a non-felony offense.• Previously convicted of a felony and are no longer incarcerated.	Are you a college student? Out of state students in Ohio have the right to vote in Ohio elections. You can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Register at your Ohio address• Vote in person using your passport or military ID• Or, vote by mail using the last 4 digits of your SSN.
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? **Have questions?** Find your local Board of Elections at VoteOhio.gov
? **Need a photo ID?** Get free voter ID support from voteriders.org/ohio
? **Experiencing a problem?** Contact Election Protection at 866ourvote.org or 866-687-8683

Importance: Color can highlight key information that you want to call out (ex. Date of election)

Hierarchy: Color can group like information (ex. 3 ways to vote)

Structure: Color can separate chunks of information (ex. callouts)

10. Use color as a tool to direct the viewer's attention while they navigate complex information. (Continued)

Recommendation: Color

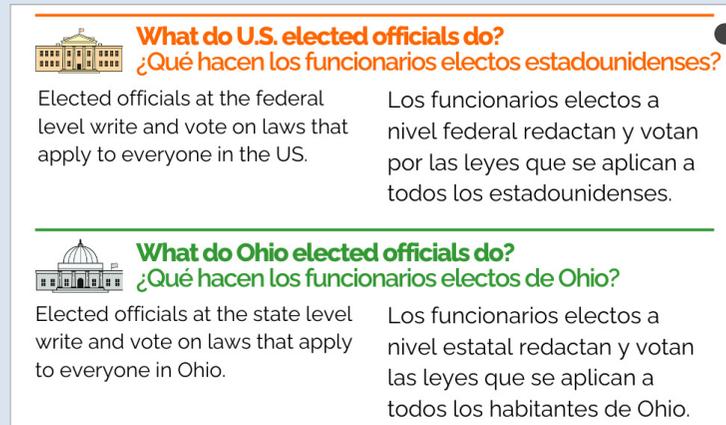
About this recommendation

Never rely on color as the only way to communicate because not everyone can see color the same way or at all. Instead, use color to support, not replace, written or verbal information.

When you use color to communicate meaning, combine it with text, shape, imagery, and/or weight for added emphasis.

Considerations

- Pay attention to the balance of color on your voter education materials.
 - When using bright colors, use them sparingly in small color blocks or for callouts.
 - Too much color can be perceived as untrustworthy and risk being interpreted as an advertisement or propaganda material.
- Avoid large areas of color as they can be overwhelming for readers.
- There are many different types of color blindness experienced by an estimated 13 million people in the United States. Every person experiences color in slightly different ways.



This infographic uses color to highlight key information. The title 'What do U.S. elected officials do?' is in bold orange, and the Spanish translation '¿Qué hacen los funcionarios electos estadounidenses?' is also in orange. The text below is in black. A green horizontal line separates the two sections. The second section title 'What do Ohio elected officials do?' is in bold green, and the Spanish translation '¿Qué hacen los funcionarios electos de Ohio?' is also in green. The text below is in black. Icons of a federal building and an Ohio statehouse are used to represent the different levels of government.

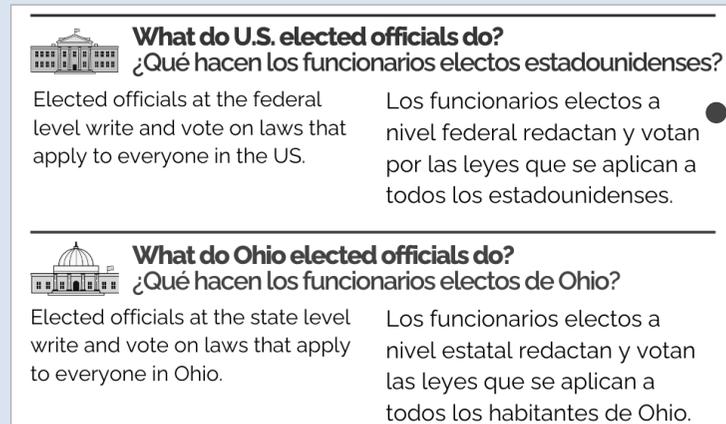
What do U.S. elected officials do?
¿Qué hacen los funcionarios electos estadounidenses?

Elected officials at the federal level write and vote on laws that apply to everyone in the US. Los funcionarios electos a nivel federal redactan y votan por las leyes que se aplican a todos los estadounidenses.

What do Ohio elected officials do?
¿Qué hacen los funcionarios electos de Ohio?

Elected officials at the state level write and vote on laws that apply to everyone in Ohio. Los funcionarios electos a nivel estatal redactan y votan las leyes que se aplican a todos los habitantes de Ohio.

In addition to color, these layouts use divider lines, bold text, and icons to help readers navigate hierarchy and structure.



This infographic is identical to the one above but without the color highlights. The titles are in black, and the text is also in black. The icons and divider lines remain the same.

What do U.S. elected officials do?
¿Qué hacen los funcionarios electos estadounidenses?

Elected officials at the federal level write and vote on laws that apply to everyone in the US. Los funcionarios electos a nivel federal redactan y votan por las leyes que se aplican a todos los estadounidenses.

What do Ohio elected officials do?
¿Qué hacen los funcionarios electos de Ohio?

Elected officials at the state level write and vote on laws that apply to everyone in Ohio. Los funcionarios electos a nivel estatal redactan y votan las leyes que se aplican a todos los habitantes de Ohio.

Without color, readers can still navigate the information using other visual cues, like the illustrations.

11. Research the cultural context of color before choosing color combinations to use.

Recommendation: Color

About this recommendation

Color choices on voter education materials play a huge part in representing the seriousness and importance of voting while balancing being visually appealing and accessible to all.

Across cultures colors carry different meaning and symbolism. It's important to do research on colors and color combinations you use in your voter education materials because they may have different historical contexts.

Since misuse can be offensive, avoid using culturally significant color palettes without understanding their cultural impact.

You have 3 ways to vote!
All registered voters can choose to vote early, on Election Day, or by mail.

At the polls on Election Day, November 7

- Polls are open on Election Day, November 7, 2023 from 6:30am – 7:30pm
- Scan the QR code to look up your polling place online at VoteOhio.gov
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Early in person from October 11–November 5

- You can vote early in person at your local Board of Elections or Early Vote Center.
- Scan the QR code to find your early voting location and times at: ohiosos.gov/elections/voters/toolkit/early-voting
- To vote in person, you must show a photo ID

Vote by Mail

- Request a mail ballot by October 31. You can request it as early as today. Don't delay!
- Scan the QR code to print the form on VoteOhio.gov
 - Return your application in person or by mail.
- Return your ballot as soon as possible by mail, drop box, or in person.
- Track your ballot at VoteOhio.gov

Have questions? Find your local Board of Elections at VoteOhio.gov

Need a photo ID? Get free voter ID support from voteriders.org/ohio

Experiencing a problem? Contact Election Protection at 866ourvote.org or 866-687-8683

For example, the colors red, green and black have historically been used together by the Pan-African movement to represent the unity of people of African descent worldwide. Using these colors on voter education materials without this context, puts you at risk of being perceived as co-opting or appropriating culture.

11. Research the cultural context of color before choosing color combinations to use. *(Continued)*

Recommendation: Color

Considerations

What is your relationship with your audience?

The impact of a culturally significant color palette depends on who is sharing the information. For example, if the source is a familiar organization that primarily works with Black or Latino communities, using a Red/Green/Black Pan-African flag, or Black Liberation, color palette could foster a sense of community. But, if the source is a wider government office or non-Black led organization, people may be more skeptical and distrustful of its color choice.

1. **Understand who you are.**
2. **Understand who your audience is.** Assess your relationship with your audience. Are you and your outreach volunteers and staff representative of your audience? The impact of culturally significant color palettes depends on who is sharing the information.
 - If your organizer group has different identities than your audience, using cultural color palettes to engage specific audiences could make voters feel targeted and singled out, instead of included.
3. **Show your materials to people from your audience, and ask them for feedback.** You never know what imagery might mean to different members of your audience. Do research into the context of imagery you're selecting and adding to your voter education materials.

What is your audience's age?

Overly political imagery and traditional red, white, and blue colors can be intimidating for younger college students and voters who are new to politics. Instead, use bright and colorful schemes.

? Why follow this recommendation?

In addition to being visually appealing, our relationship to color is connected to our cultural and social contexts. The perception of color palettes and cultural significance depends on who is sharing the information. In our research, participants recalled instances of cultural imagery and color palettes being culturally appropriated and co-opted in marketing and product sales. As a result, people were skeptical of who put out the information as it felt untrustworthy.

Recommendations

Bonus

12. Design separate voter education materials about Vote By Mail processes.

About this recommendation

Voting by mail (called absentee voting in Ohio) adds terminology and steps that have to be explained to voters.

Trying to summarize vote by mail information on the same handout as other voter education means critical details get left out. Design voter education materials that focus on vote by mail for people who want to vote using that method.

? Why follow this recommendation?

Our research participants experience vote by mail information gaps including:

- Not being aware of the option to vote by mail
- Believing that vote by mail was only reserved under special circumstances
- Missing vote by mail deadlines
- Many participants, some of whom are avid voters, did not know what a Ballot Dropbox was. They conflate Dropbox with mailbox.

13. Get feedback on your materials to understand your audience better

About this recommendation

Understanding the needs of your audience is crucial. As a community-based organization (CBO), you hold a unique position of trust and authority within your community. When presenting voter education information to your audience, it's important to remember that mindsets around voting and motivations to vote are not always what you see on the surface.

It's important to continuously get feedback from your community on the materials you create, even if you identify as a part of the community you are designing for. The insights may surprise you!

Conduct usability testing within your community. At its essence, usability testing is a simple technique: watch and listen to people as they use a design as they usually would. Then, use those insights to improve your design.

Usability testing is a tool for learning where people interacting with a design – such as a voter education toolkit – encounter frustration and translate what they see and hear to make a better design that will eliminate those frustrations. Just like designing, you don't need to be a researcher to do testing!

Methods of Usability Testing

- **Testing in the office:** quick usability feedback from colleagues. If you're in the early stages of designing your materials, this approach is a fast way to get a second opinion.
- **Testing out of the office:** catch real users in the field. If you have drafts or prototypes that are close to complete, use this approach to test how people use them.
- **Testing in the conference room:** thorough, structured testing with real users. If you have solid, revised materials, this approach allows you to run a structured test with real users who you've scheduled ahead of time.
- **Testing by video conference:** thorough, structured testing—remotely. Use this instead of testing in the conference room if you want to include real users from across your jurisdiction or make it easier for them to participate.

How do I begin?

[!\[\]\(56585c7ab8768f2ad5d7a55fd30584b3_img.jpg\) Center for Civic Design: Usability Testing](#)

[!\[\]\(422c27341a8956ddd0f356d697046fbd_img.jpg\) How to adapt usability testing to fit the needs of your project](#)

Thank you!

For questions and to learn more find us:

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Civic Designing

Practical tips and civic design research

Civic Design Irregulars

News for friends interested in civic design

Find all resources listed in this toolkit at

bit.ly/CCDOhioToolkit



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