Educating voters about their options

COVID-19 and Election Administration: Approaches for Election Officials
June 4, 2020
Housekeeping

- Be gracious about work-from-home setups
- **Restart Zoom** if needed
- Slides **and captioned recordings** will be available on the registration page
- Use the **chat panel** to say hello, chat with other attendees, and ask questions
Today’s objectives

- Clearly *communicate changes* with voters using principles of plain language and design
- Proactively answer *voter’s top questions* online and over the phone
- Explain expanded options for casting a ballot, including their history of security and reliability
Today’s agenda

● Introduction (5 minutes)
● Effective communication (10 minutes)
● Answer voters’ top questions (10 minutes)
● Communication channels (10 minutes)
● Q&A (20 minutes)
● Wrapping up and course survey (5 minutes)
Hello, there!

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Harnessing the promise of technology to modernize the American voting experience

@helloCTCL
www.techandciviclife.org
Federal resources

- Set of documents provide guidance for state, local, tribal, and territorial election officials

- Written by the Joint COVID-19 Working Group
  - Cyber Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)
  - Elections Infrastructure Government Coordinating Council (GCC)
  - Elections Infrastructure Sector Coordinating Council’s (SCC)

- https://www.cisa.gov/protect2020
How can I provide information clearly?

Principles of effective communication
Acknowledge voter’s fears, but offer voters a sense of clarity and calm messages.
3 in 4 voters support no excuse absentee voting
Plain language

• Write in the positive
• Use active rather than passive voice
• Address the reader directly
• Use short words, short sentences, and short sections
• Use the words voters will be looking for, and avoid jargon
Plain design

• Include white space to make content manageable
• Use menus and headings effectively
• Use lists where appropriate
• Use a sans serif font that is at least 12 point size
• Use strong contrast between text color and background
This election, more people will be voting absentee than ever before.
Voters in our county have had the option to vote over the mail for decades. This fall, we’re planning for lots of folks to choose the mail option.
How can my office proactively manage questions?

Managing voters’ top questions
Top questions from voters
1. What is on the ballot?
2. How do I get an absentee ballot, and when is it due?
3. Where do I vote?
4. Who is in office now?
5. How do I register to vote?

Top question from non-voters
1. How do I participate in an election?
Questions about increased mail balloting

- General questions
- Receiving a mail ballot
- Marking and returning a ballot
- Independent and accessible voting
- Tabulating vote by mail ballots

If I make a mistake marking my ballot, can I correct the mistake on my existing ballot, or do I need to request a new ballot?

How do you verify the ballot is coming from the voter authorized to vote it? (e.g., signature verification, copy of voter identification or proof of residence?)

How does an increase in absentee mail ballots affect the counting of ballots and results reporting?
We know you have worries about putting your ballot in the mail. That's why we have ballot boxes! We want EVERY ballot to make it to us so we have many options to return your ballot.

Available Today - June 2nd at our office or the McFaul Activity Center!
#VoteByMail #VoteByDropBox #FastFreeEasySafe

BALLOT DROP BOXES

FAST & FREE

Picked up 3x daily

Drive-Up Option

SAFE & SECURE

24/7 surveillance

Handled by BOE Staff
Respond to voter concerns

Michael Joiner: So, what would prevent some nefarious persons from slipping hundreds of “anonymous” ballots into the system? What controls are in place, and where are they?

Rachael Millner-Bawgus: I will never mail in my vote! I will stand in line ty very much! Fraud happens!

Harford County Board of Elections (Cliff Gelnett): We encourage you to become an election judge and see how the process works behind the scenes! It may change your view! https://harfordvotes.info/become-an-election-judge/
Manage expectations for Election Day

Seneca County Board of Elections was live.
April 28

The Election Night live stream is brought to you by the Seneca County Board of Elections. Stay tuned for a look inside how the election is conducted. We'll also have results available during the stream as soon as we have them.

BROADCAST WILL BEGIN SHORTLY
Our mission: to help our customers and encourage their trust in government

Effective communication is key to our mission – we try to anticipate our customers’ information needs, and provide the same information consistently
We focused on communicating with voters after the passage of **Proposal 18-3**, which dramatically changed voter registration and voting by mail.
How we are engaging our voters

- Simple visual graphics
- Verified accounts on Facebook and Twitter
- Sharing our materials with colleagues
Final Thoughts:

• There is A LOT of national information, but there is a real need for local information:
  o Social media (especially Facebook) is a great way to reach your voters with the information they need
  o Infographic software (Visme, Canva, etc.) is worth the investment!
How should you conduct outreach?

Communication channels
Outreach tools

- Social media
- State and local election websites
- Television, news and media
- Email
- Inserts in utility bills or government mailings
- Direct mail
- Your staff and elections
Who can help you get the word out?

- Individuals
- Community organizations
- Institutions
Individuals

- What connections do people in your office have?
- What community leaders can you reach out to?
Local organizations and groups

- What organizations are active in your community?
- What groups have experience with outreach?
Institutions

- What are institutions that many voters are interacting with?
- What new target audience can you reach with a new institution?
Now in tens of thousands of Philly food boxes: Absentee ballot applications

by Jonathan Lai, Updated: May 18, 2020
vote.minneapolismn.gov
Common questions about voting by mail

How it works

- It's my first time voting by mail. What should I know?
- Who can witness my ballot?
- Does my ballot have to be returned by Election Day or just postmarked by then?
- Do I need to pay for postage when I mail back my ballot?
- Can I drop off my ballot at my polling place on Election Day?

Will my vote count?

- I heard mail ballots only count in close races. Is that true?
- Can I check to see that my mail ballot was counted?
- What laws are in place to make voting by mail secure?
- What happens after I return my ballot?
Stay at home. Vote by mail.

Make a plan, and apply online today for your ballot!

We will mail your ballot to you about 6 weeks before Election Day.

Get More Likes, Comments and Shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

Performance for Your Post
23,227 People Reached
1,239 Readings, Comments & Shares

Tweet Analytics

Impressions: 10,881
Total engagements: 1,185
Link clicks: 468
Detail expands: 356
Media engagements: 175
Retweets: 88
Three ways to vote

**Vote by mail**

Return your completed ballot by Election Day. It will not count if it is received after Election Day. Completed ballots may be returned by mail or delivery service (such as FedEx or UPS). You can also return your ballot in person no later than 3 p.m. on Election Day to City Hall (350 S Fifth St Room 201) or to the Downtown Early Vote Center (217 S Third St). You can drop off ballots for up to three other voters.

If you do not or cannot return your ballot by Election Day, go to your polling place and vote. You will receive a new ballot — you cannot submit your absentee ballot at your polling place.

**Vote early in-person**

You can vote before Election Day at any Minneapolis Early Vote Center. Early Vote Centers are not open for voting on Election Day.

**Hours**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>October 31</th>
<th>November 1</th>
<th>November 2</th>
<th>November 3</th>
<th>November 4</th>
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<td>7 a.m. - 6 p.m.</td>
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<td>12 p.m. - 5 p.m.</td>
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**Locations**

- Downtown Early Vote Center
  - 217 S Third St
- North Early Vote Center
  - 2100 Plymouth Ave N (Urban League)
- East Early Vote Center
  - 1800 University Ave SE
- South Early Vote Center
  - 810 31st St W (Regents Assembly Church)

**Vote on Election Day at your polling place**

Election Day is Tuesday, November 6, and polls are open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. You must vote at your assigned polling place. Because polling places can change from year to year, check before you vote.

Find where you vote at [pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us](http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us)

311 (outside Minneapolis dial 612-673-3000)
Community radio
Community organizations

Nonprofit VOTE

NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

VOTE EARLY 2020
DISCUSSION
Share your thoughts

● What resonate with you from today’s webinar? (Any “ah-ha” moments)?
● What are your next steps?
● What questions do you have about what we covered today?
● What questions do you have about what we didn’t cover today?
As more questions come up...

- Reach out to CTCL
  - We’ll help out, or
  - We’ll find someone for you who can
We’ve covered a lot of ground

WRAPPING UP
Today’s resources

- CTCL Communicating Trusted Election Information
  techandciviclife.org/course/trusted-info
- Pocket voter guide template
  electiontools.org/tool/pocket-voter-guide
- Voter outreach graphics
  electiontools.org/tool/voter-outreach-graphics
- Vote Early Day
  voteearlyday.org
Timeline considerations, 152 days out

- Pursue community partnerships now
- Get your social media accounts verified
- Focus communications on deadlines
- Encourage voters to take action before deadlines
What 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.
See you soon!

- Supporting election officials (Thursday, May 21)
- Planning 2020 workload and resource allocation (Tuesday, May 26)
- Ensuring access, equity, and inclusion (Thursday, May 28)
- Educating voters about their options (Thursday, June 4)
- Maintaining voter lists (Tuesday, June 9)
- Managing mail ballot request forms (Thursday, June 11)
- Organizing ballot dropoff locations (Tuesday, June 16)
- Streamlining the inbound ballot process (Thursday, June 18)
- Verifying and curing signatures (Tuesday, June 23)
- Recruiting and training election workers (Thursday, June 25)
- Implementing public health guidelines for voting locations (Tuesday, June 30)

techandciviclife.org/covid-19-webinars/
Thanks!

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