

# Best Practices for Official Voter Guides

## How to Use Layout and Visual Presentation



## Webinar 2

Live webcast: Monday, April 27, 2015

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# Welcome

## Introduction of Trainers

To better serve California's diverse voters, voter information must be more accessible in design and delivery.

- Aim to make voter information more effective and inviting.
- Provide trainings, webinars, and other technical assistance in implementing recommendations.
- Identify impediments to adopt best practices including regulatory, legislative, and financial barriers.

**"To raise voter confidence and increase participation, we must learn how voters get information and how to implement best practices for voter guides."**

# In today's webinar...

Top tips for employing design and layout to make voter information guides easy to use:

## Layout and navigation

Building a road map, and guiding readers along the way

## Icons and illustration

Making information easy to recognize, identify, and use

## Typography

Making text as legible and easy-to-read as possible

# Layout and navigation

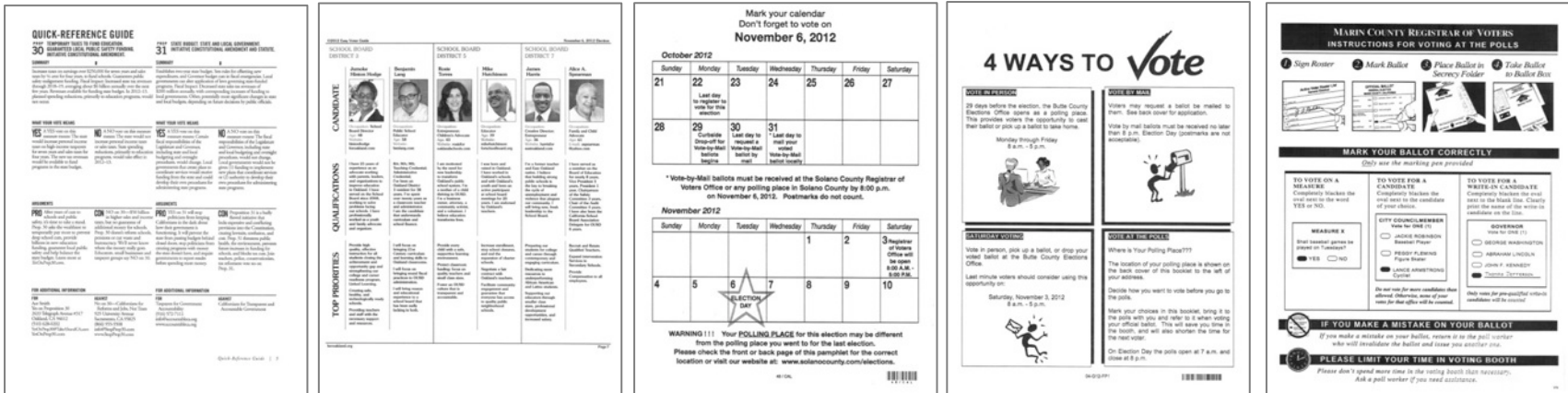
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Give the reader a roadmap, and guide them along the way

# Be consistent

- Year-to-year consistency builds familiarity and trust
- Consistency in layout and use of design elements assists in ease-of-use and clarity

# Use layout to convey content



- Layout can communicate the type of content on a page
- Layout can differentiate page types from one another

# Help readers find their way

<b>What's in this guide?</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3 ways to vote</b>	<b>3</b>
Voter Bill of Rights	2
How to vote by mail	4
How to vote early in person	5
How to vote in person at the polls	6
Accessibility and language voting assistance	7
<b>What's on the ballot for this election?</b>	<b>8</b>
Who are the candidates?	9
Local ballot measures: E	10
Local ballot measures: F	11
Paid candidate statements	12
Practice ballot	20

Ballot Type 2 - CCD-20140711

General Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

- A clear and concise table of contents acts as a roadmap for the guide
- Organize information in an easy-to-follow path



# Show readers where they are

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## Local ballot measures: E

### Argument in favor of Measure E

Diablo Valley College, Franklin College, Los Medanos College, and the San Ramon and Brentwood education centers are essential safety nets providing affordable education and job training to over 55,000 students locally – many of whom cannot afford four year colleges and universities. YES on E ensures OUR local students have the opportunity to continue their education and be ready to compete in today's competitive job market!

Local community college students are the backbone of our Franklin County workforce. YES on E updates classrooms and labs to maintain high quality career training programs in fields including healthcare, sciences, technology, and public safety.

YES on E improves our colleges, helping students prepare for 21st century jobs and careers or transfer to 4-year universities.

YES on E updates facilities and classrooms for science, technology, and training programs in nursing, dental hygiene, and health administration.

YES on E makes college buildings, classrooms, and facilities accessible to people with disabilities.

YES on E updates and maintains technology for modern, hands-on career training. Too many core academic classes are currently conducted in overcrowded, deteriorating facilities.

YES on E monies will be managed with the highest levels of accountability, consistent with practices that have saved local taxpayers \$14.5 million recently.

YES on E funds are legally required to be spent in Franklin County to improve our local community colleges. An Independent Oversight Committee and regular audits will ensure the monies are spent as promised, consistent with our College's prudent, fiscally responsible practices.

YES on E is supported by a broad coalition of local employers, educators, students and community leaders.

Please join us. For questions or to volunteer, please visit [www.OURColleges2014.com](http://www.OURColleges2014.com).

**Linda Best**, Fmr. CEO, East Bay Leadership Council (Retired)

**J. Dale Hudson**, Former Chair, Community College District Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee

**Cynthia Egan**, 2013 Franklin County Teacher of the Year (San Ramon Valley USD)

**Jim Russey**, Fmr. Local Fire Captain (Retired)

### Argument against Measure E

Bonds are an expensive form of debt. As with a home mortgage, bonds are repaid with interest, over time. Since 2002, District voters have approved bonds totaling \$406.5 million that will cost taxpayers OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS.

Now the District is asking for \$450 million in NEW DEBT that will cost taxpayers ANOTHER BILLION DOLLARS. This bond is TOO BIG and TOO EXPENSIVE, especially given today's taxpayer burdens.

Residents OPPOSE this bond because:

- Many people are unemployed, underemployed, or financially stretched and CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY MORE.

- As compensation for District employees has grown, resources for care of buildings and grounds have become scarce. BORROWING MONEY to repair neglected buildings is FINANCIALLY IRRESPONSIBLE.

- Numerous government agencies are asking for new taxes and bond debt because RISING PENSION COSTS CROWD OUT OTHER SPENDING. Residents are being nickel-and-dimed to death.

- District construction policies reduce competition. WITHOUT WIDE COMPETITION, work is done by the "FAVORED FEW" at HIGHER COST.

The District SAYS it wants a community partnership, but REFUSES to make changes or RESPOND to public concerns. We believe that success comes when we work together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Residents expect and deserve to get the best value for every tax dollar.

Vote NO on Measure E!

Franklin Taxpayers Association  
**Alex Aliferis**, Executive Director



## Local ballot measures: E

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### Reply to argument in favor of Measure E

Until District construction contracts use COMPETITIVE BIDDING, taxpayers should REJECT NEW BONDS. Without competition, contractors have less incentive to deliver QUALITY WORK at a REASONABLE PRICE. Residents oppose this bond because:

- The tax rate statement MISLEADS VOTERS by understating the TRUE COST, which will likely exceed \$1 BILLION.

- Every year the District LIVES BEYOND ITS MEANS, spending more than its income. This downhill trend continues because of GROWING SALARIES, PENSIONS AND HEALTH CARE COSTS.

- The District fails to care for its campuses by doing regular maintenance and upkeep. Taxpayers shouldn't have to pay for ROUTINE MAINTENANCE using BORROWED MONEY with EXPENSIVE INTEREST COSTS.

- Many people CAN'T AFFORD TO DOUBLE their community college TAX BILL.

Vote NO to tell District officials you expect HONESTY about bond costs, GOOD STEWARDSHIP of finances and schools, and SOLID VALUE for your tax dollars.

### Reply to argument against Measure E

YOUR taxpayer dollars have been spent responsibly, improving classrooms and funding critical upgrades at Franklin Community Colleges. YES on E is a fiscally responsible plan supported by Community Leaders, Educators, Independent Citizens' Bond Oversight Representatives and Major Employers because it is vital to our area's economy.

**FACT:** Diablo Valley College, Franklin College, Los Medanos College, San Ramon Campus, and Brentwood Center provide essential education and job training – keeping our economy moving forward and local workforce strong.

**FACT:** 55,000 local students rely on Franklin Community Colleges each year for affordable education and job training. YES on E improves academic facilities to help students prepare for 21st century careers and transfer to 4-year universities, and updates classrooms/labs to support job training in important fields including healthcare, sciences, technology, and public safety.

**FACT:** YES on E continues to invest in our local community colleges and will do so consistent with practices that recently saved local taxpayers \$14.5 million through a bond refunding.

**FACT:** By law, no funds can go toward administrator

- Use a clear, easy-to-read heading for each page
- Use running headings to connect parts of a section

# Use design to guide the voter

**3 ways to vote**

**Vote by mail**

Request a vote-by-mail ballot by **October 29**.  
Return it by mail, drop it off at one of the secure ballot drop-off locations, or deliver it on **November 6** to any polling place.  
Vote-by-mail ballots must be received at the elections office or a polling place by 8pm on **November 6**.  
For more details, see **Page 4**.

**Vote early in person**

You may vote early at the elections office, or at the voting centers listed on page 5.  
**October 7 until November 5**  
**Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm**  
Franklin County Elections Department  
4321 Franklin Avenue  
Franklin, CA  
For more details, see **Page 5**.

**Vote at the polling place**

Ballots are open on Election Day:  
**November 6, from 7am to 8pm**  
The location of your polling place is printed on the back cover of this guide.  
Or, you can look up your polling place:  
• On the web: [www.franklinvotes.org](http://www.franklinvotes.org)  
• Using the automated phone service: 1-222-555-1216  
For more details, see **Page 6**.

**How to vote by mail**

You can vote by mail before Election Day.  
To vote by mail, you have to request a ballot. Then you can mark the ballot and return it by mail, drop it off at any polling place.

**How to get your ballot**

You can request a ballot by:  
• Go to [www.franklinvotes.org](http://www.franklinvotes.org)  
• Send a letter to the Registrar at 4321 Franklin Avenue  
After you apply to receive a ballot, you can:  
• Place your ballot in the envelope and return it by mail.  
• Return your ballot to any polling place on Election Day, November 6.

**How to vote early in person**

You can vote in person before Election Day, from **October 7 through November 5**.  
You may vote at any of the locations shown below from **October 7 until November 5**.  
Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm.  
You do not need to make an appointment to vote at any early voting location.

**Early voting locations**

**How to vote in person at the polling place**


Polling places are open from 7am to 8pm on **Tuesday, November 6**.  
To find your polling place:  
• On the front cover of this booklet.  
• [www.franklinvotes.org/myvote](http://www.franklinvotes.org/myvote)  
• Automated service: 1-222-555-1216

**At the polling place:**  
If you have questions, ask a poll worker.  
Some poll workers at this polling place speak Spanish. They have special ballots for Spanish speakers.  
Anyone can use the alternate [accessible] voting system to mark their ballot. That system will read the ballot to you in English, Spanish, or Chinese.

**1. Sign roster**  
**2. Mark ballot**  
**3. Place ballot in secrecy folder**  
**4. Drop ballot in ballot box**


Ballot Type 2 - CCD-20140711  
General Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

# Include a practice ballot

20  **Practice Ballot**

Review this ballot to get ready to vote at the polling place. Mark it as practice and take it with you. (This is not a real ballot, but it has all of the items you can vote on.)

(Front)



**Official Ballot**  
Consolidated Statewide General Election  
Franklin County, California  
Tuesday, November 06, 2012

**Boleta Oficial**  
Consolidado Estatal Elección General  
Condado de Franklin, California  
Martes, 06 de noviembre 2012

**Instructions to voters**  
• To vote for a candidate, completely fill in the oval next to the name of the candidate. If you are voting for more than one candidate, you must mark every oval. If you do not mark every oval, your ballot will be rejected.  
• To vote for a measure, completely connect the arrow next to YES or NO.  
• To vote for a candidate whose name is in Spanish, completely fill in the oval next to the name of the candidate. If you are voting for more than one candidate, you must mark every oval. If you do not mark every oval, your ballot will be rejected.

**Instructions to voters**  
• To vote for a candidate, completely fill in the oval next to the name of the candidate. If you are voting for more than one candidate, you must mark every oval. If you do not mark every oval, your ballot will be rejected.  
• To vote for a measure, completely connect the arrow next to YES or NO.  
• To vote for a candidate whose name is in Spanish, completely fill in the oval next to the name of the candidate. If you are voting for more than one candidate, you must mark every oval. If you do not mark every oval, your ballot will be rejected.

**President and Vice President of the United States**  
Presidente y Vicepresidente de los Estados Unidos  
Vote for 1  
Voto por 1

**U.S. Senator**  
Senador de EEUU  
Vote for 1  
Voto por 1

**Member of the Assembly, 4th District**  
Miembro de la Asamblea, Distrito 4  
Vote for 1  
Voto por 1

**Ballot Type 2 - CCD 20140713**

- Present a sample ballot in a way that voters easily understand what it is and how to use it

Questions?

# Icons and illustrations

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Make information easy to  
recognize, identify, and use

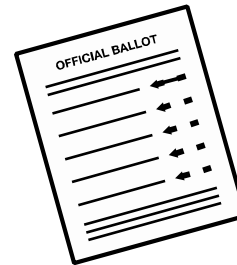
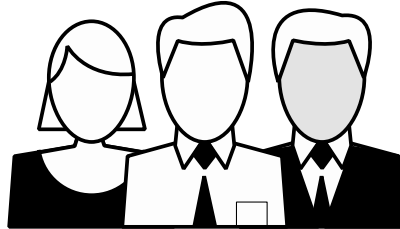
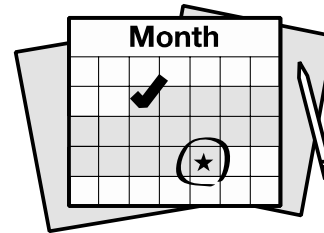
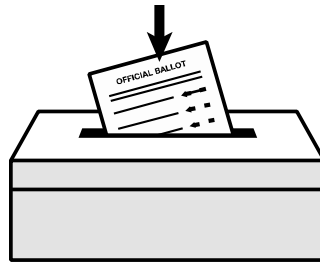
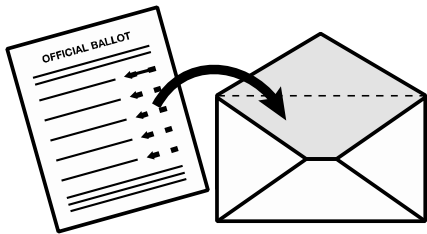
# Make the information visual



- Visual elements help guide readers through the content
- Icons or other images signal the type of content next to them

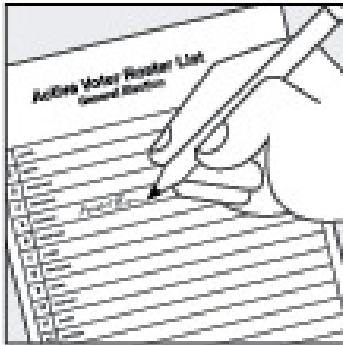
Icons and illustrations; <http://civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/>

# Make the information visual

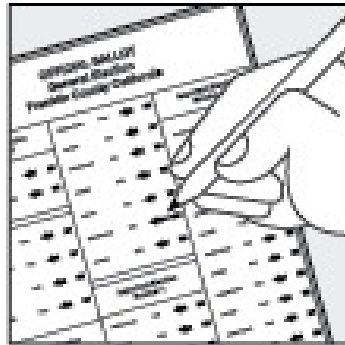


- Useful images and icons are precise and relevant to the content, not decorative

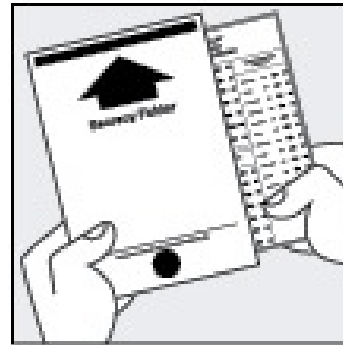
# Use accurate instructional illustrations



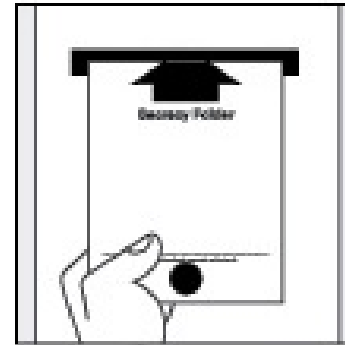
1. Sign roster



2. Mark ballot



3. Place ballot in secrecy folder.



4. Take ballot to ballot box

- Visual instructions help low-literacy *and* general-population voters
- Illustrations must be accurate in their details to avoid misleading voters
- Photo images are not recommended



Questions?

# Typography

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Make text as legible and easy-to-read as possible

# Make the text big enough

- Pages with small, tightly packed text are difficult to read
- Readers are more likely to read sections in larger type, and read the text more accurately
- In print, try to make the text size at least 12 points

# Use upper- and lowercase letters

- Lowercase letters are more legible than all capital letters because they are easier to recognize

**KATHY M. FLANAGAN**



**Kathy M. Flanagan**



# Avoid centered type

- Left-aligned type is more legible than centered type, which forces the eye to stop reading in order to find the start of the next line

# Pick one sans-serif font

- Switching between fonts can require the eye to stop reading and adjust, or can unintentionally imply a change in content
- Sans-serif fonts are easier to read for shorter-length content like a voter information guide

# Pick one sans-serif font

The prototype guide uses ClearView ADA from Terminal Design

- Helvetica: Official Voter Guide
- Arial: Official Voter Guide
- Univers: Official Voter Guide
- Verdana: Official Voter Guide
- ClearView: Official Voter Guide

<http://www.terminaldesign.com/fonts/clearviewada-complete-family/>

Questions?



# Resources

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To help you create or revise your  
voter guides

# See all the webinars

- 1. What are the Best Practices for Developing and Reviewing Voter Guides?**  
Monday, April 27, 11:00am-12:00pm
- 2. How to Use Layout and Visual Presentation in Voter Guides**  
Monday, April 27, 1:30pm-2:30pm
- 3. How to Use Voter Guides to Close the Civic Literacy Gap**  
Friday, May 1, 11:00am-12:00pm
- 4. How to Use Plain Language in Voter Guides**  
Friday, May 1, 1:30pm-2:30pm

Sign up or view the archived webinars: <http://cavotes.org/>

# HOW VOTERS GET INFORMATION



★ Best Practices Manual for Official Voter  
Information Guides in California ★

**2015**

This project is supported by a grant  
from The James Irvine Foundation.  
Our project on how voters get  
information is in collaboration with  
the Center for Civic Design and the  
Future of California Elections.



LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF CALIFORNIA  
EDUCATION FUND

Download the  
manual from

<https://cavotes.org/download-best-practices-manual>

# Use the checklist

Ask yourself these questions when creating or revising your voter guide, so it has the answers voters need.

## VOTER GUIDE RECOMMENDATION CHECKLIST



Use this checklist of our recommendations when creating or reviewing a voter guide.

### Include the right information at the appropriate level of detail

- ☐ Is the information organized by activity or task?
- ☐ Does the cover page include the following information?
  - County name and seal (or other official insignia)
  - Name or type of election
  - Date of election day and times the polls are open
  - Polling place information
  - How to contact the election office
  - Languages offered
- ☐ Is it clear how the county and state guides are different and connected?
- ☐ Are the headings written as questions or active instructions?
- ☐ Are the plain language principles incorporated? This includes
  - Writing short sentences
  - Using short, simple, everyday words
  - Writing in active voice and writing in the positive
  - Keeping paragraphs short
  - Separating paragraphs by a space, so that each one stands out on the page
- ☐ Are there definitions and descriptions for election terms and processes?

### Organize information in an easy-to-follow path

- ☐ Is there a table of contents?
- ☐ Are there questions, quasi-questions, or instructions as headings?
- ☐ Does each page have a clear topic?
- ☐ Are there visual elements to make each section easy to see?
- ☐ Is the voter information organized to include both an overview and details?

# Download additional materials

## Report and recommendations

- Sample voter guide pages illustrating the recommendations
- Icons and illustrations from the prototype voter guide

## Preliminary reports and presentations

- Landscape analysis from the 2014 primary election

## Research protocol materials

- Voter demographic questionnaire forms
- Sample pages and prototypes tested

<http://civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/>



## League of Women Voters of California Education Fund

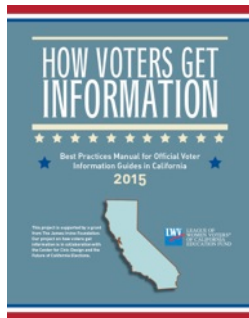
[cavotes.org](http://cavotes.org) | [easyvoterguide.org](http://easyvoterguide.org) | [smartvoter.org](http://smartvoter.org)



## Center for Civic Design

[civicdesign.org](http://civicdesign.org) | [@civicdesign](https://twitter.com/civicdesign)

[civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/](http://civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/)



## How Voters Get Information

Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information  
Guides in California

<https://cavotes.org/download-best-practices-manual>