Accessible Communications

According to the EAC and Rutgers University report Disability and Voting Accessibility in the 2020 Elections, 19.3% of hearing impaired, 23.5% of vision impaired, and 30% of voters with a cognitive impairment reported having difficulty voting in person at a polling place or elections office.

These voters reported difficulty reading or seeing the ballot, communicating with poll workers or other officials at the polling place, and writing on the ballot. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires state and local governments, including election officials, to communicate with people with disabilities effectively. Election communications must be as clear and understandable to people with disabilities as those without disabilities.

Election officials must communicate information so that voters with disabilities that impact their hearing, seeing, speaking, reading, writing, or comprehension can understand. Some election officials are required by Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) to produce materials in languages other than English. Recognizing the intersection of language access and disability ensures that election officials produce materials accessible to all voters when meeting Section 203 requirements.

Among voters:

- **19.3%** with a hearing impairment
- **20.5%** with a visual impairment
- **30.0%** with a cognitive impairment

Reported having **difficulty voting in person**

Case Study: Boone County, Missouri

In 2020, the elections office produced several videos to inform underrepresented voters about their options for casting a ballot. One popular video featured a deaf interpreter using American Sign Language to share important information about in-person voting and other election resources. The elections office harnessed community relationships to promote the videos.

Case Study: Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition

Wisconsin Disability Vote Coalition produced outreach materials designed to address the needs of voters with disabilities who are Spanish speakers. Their multimedia resources are accessible and include Spanish language captioning. In addition, they produced a 508 compliant Know Your Rights Factsheet. For more information about their resources, visit https://disabilityvote.org/.

For more information about voting access for limited English proficient voters, visit:
https://www.eac.gov/language-access-resources

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Media Accessibility Checklist

Election officials communicate with the public through various forms of media including video, audio, and graphics. Each form of media has different accessibility requirements. The following checklist will define the required accessibility features for common types of election messaging outreach.

Completed	Media Type	Accessibility Features	Resources
☐	▶ Video	**CC** Captions **abc** Transcripts 💬 Descriptions	https://www.digitalgov.gov/2014/06/30/508-accessible-videos-how-to-caption-videos/ https://www.section508.gov/create/synchronized-media/ https://www.digitalgov.gov/2014/06/30/508-accessible-videos-how-to-make-audio-descriptions/
☐	🔊 Audio	**abc** Transcripts	https://www.section508.gov/create/synchronized-media/
☐	🖼 Graphics	**Alt** Alt-text	https://www.section508.gov/create/
☐	🌐 Websites	♿ Sec. 508 Compliance	https://www.section508.gov/test/web-software/

Definitions

- **Alt-text:** Written description of an image.
- **Caption:** Text version of speech and non-speech audio information synchronized with audio.
- **Description:** Text or audio that provides context for essential visual information.
- **Section 508 Compliance:** https://www.access-board.gov/ict/#E101-general
- **Transcript:** Text version of speech and non-speech audio information that includes visual information.

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