

LAKE COUNTY VOTER EXPERIENCE EVENT 2026



LakeCounty

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County Clerk

LAKE COUNTY VOTER EXPERIENCE EVENT FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

OVERVIEW

Individuals with disabilities may face barriers at polling places due to limited awareness of accessible voting options or uncertainty about which option best meets their individual needs. To uphold the provisions and spirit of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Lake County Clerk's Office partnered with the Lake County Center for Independent Living to host an interactive Voter Experience Event designed specifically for young adults.

The event provided participants with a hands-on opportunity to practice voting in a mock election using official voting equipment. This experience allowed participants to explore multiple accessible voting options and identify the method that best supports their independence, confidence, and ability to successfully cast a ballot on Election Day.

ORGANIZATIONS THAT ATTENDED

- Mundelein High School/ D120 Transitions Center
- Antioch Lakes Transition Center
- Grant Community High School Transition Program
- Zion-Benton Transition Center
- Waukegan High School PLACCE
- Little City
- Round Lake Area Schools Transition Center

New Voters Registered: 11



CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

The Voter Experience Event was intentionally designed to move beyond traditional written voter education. Instead, it created a welcoming, supportive environment where young adults with disabilities could walk through the voting process step by step, ask questions, and learn at their own pace.

Participants practiced voting using real equipment and received direct support from trained election staff. This hands-on approach helped demystify the voting process, reinforced voters' rights, and empowered participants to feel confident and independent when participating in future elections. By simulating Election Day in a low-pressure setting, the program reduced anxiety and increased familiarity with voting procedures.

COST EFFECTIVENESS

The event was conducted using existing voting equipment, staff expertise, and community spaces, making it a highly cost-effective initiative. Materials and demonstrations were integrated into normal election operations and did not require significant additional spending.



By leveraging resources already available, the Lake County Clerk's Office delivered meaningful, accessible voter education while maintaining fiscal responsibility.

REPLICABILITY

This program can be easily replicated by other election offices because it relies on equipment, staff, and procedures commonly available in most jurisdictions. The event format is flexible and can be adapted to meet local needs by adjusting outreach efforts, accessibility supports, or partnerships with schools and disability service organizations.

This adaptability allows election offices of varying sizes to empower voters with disabilities while achieving similar positive outcomes.



SUSTAINABILITY

The Voter Experience Event is sustainable and can continue each election cycle without major new investments. It builds on existing staff roles, voting equipment, and partnerships with community organizations that serve individuals with disabilities.



As interest grows, the program can be expanded to reach additional communities, ensuring ongoing opportunities to empower new voters and improve accessibility over time.

ALIGNMENT WITH CATEGORY REQUIREMENTS

This program aligns strongly with the award category by improving voter education and access for a population that often experiences barriers to participation. By providing clear information, direct interaction with voting equipment, and individualized support in an accessible setting, the event enabled participants to better understand the voting process and participate with confidence.



IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR VOTERS AND ELECTION OFFICIALS

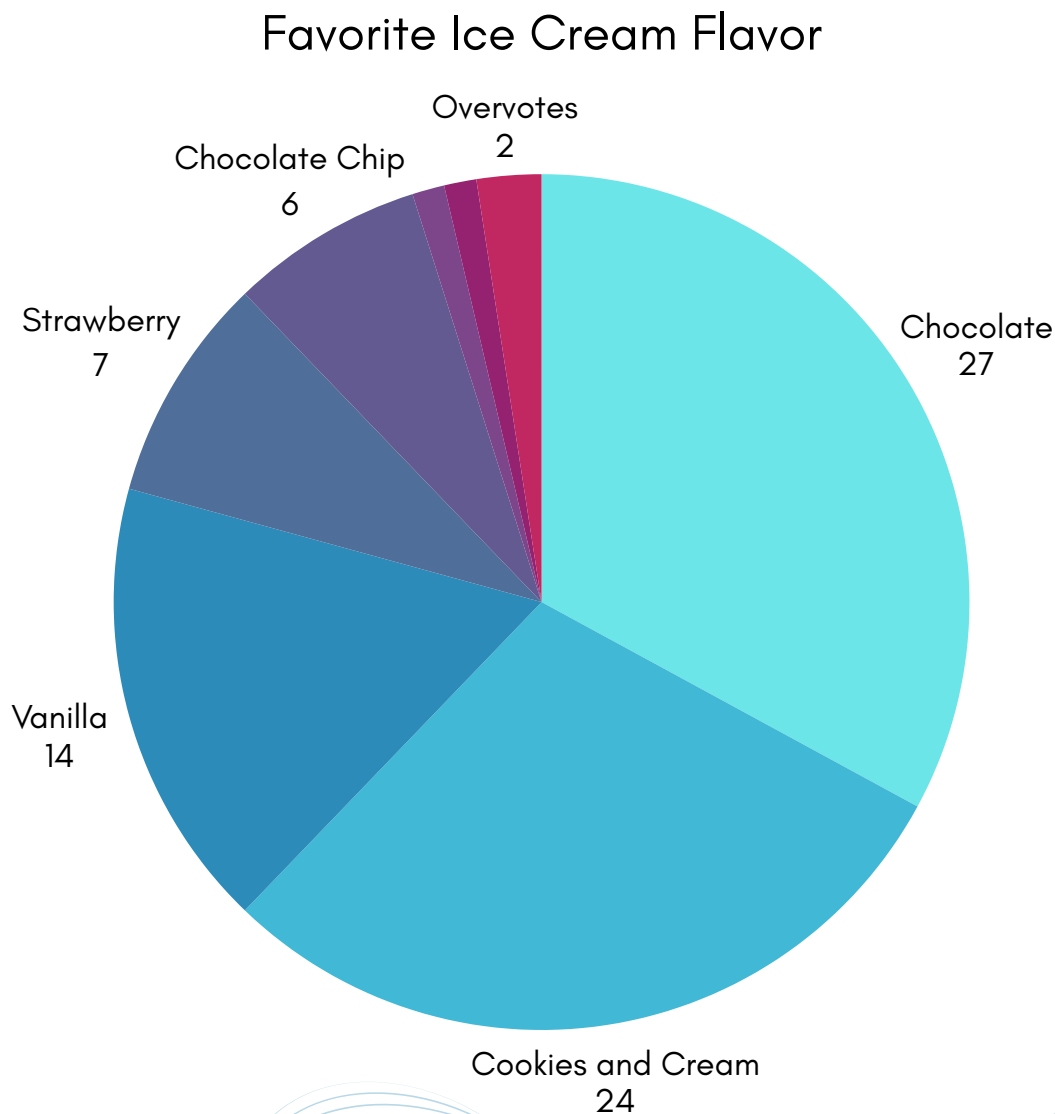
The Voter Experience Event increased participants' understanding of voting procedures and boosted confidence ahead of Election Day. Participant feedback demonstrated improved comfort with voting equipment and greater awareness of accessible options.

The event also benefited election officials by providing valuable insight into the barriers voters with disabilities face at polling locations. Feedback from participants has informed procedural adjustments, helping create a more welcoming and accessible voting environment for future elections. This proactive approach supports smoother Election Day operations and a more positive experience for all voters.

MOCK ELECTION RESULTS

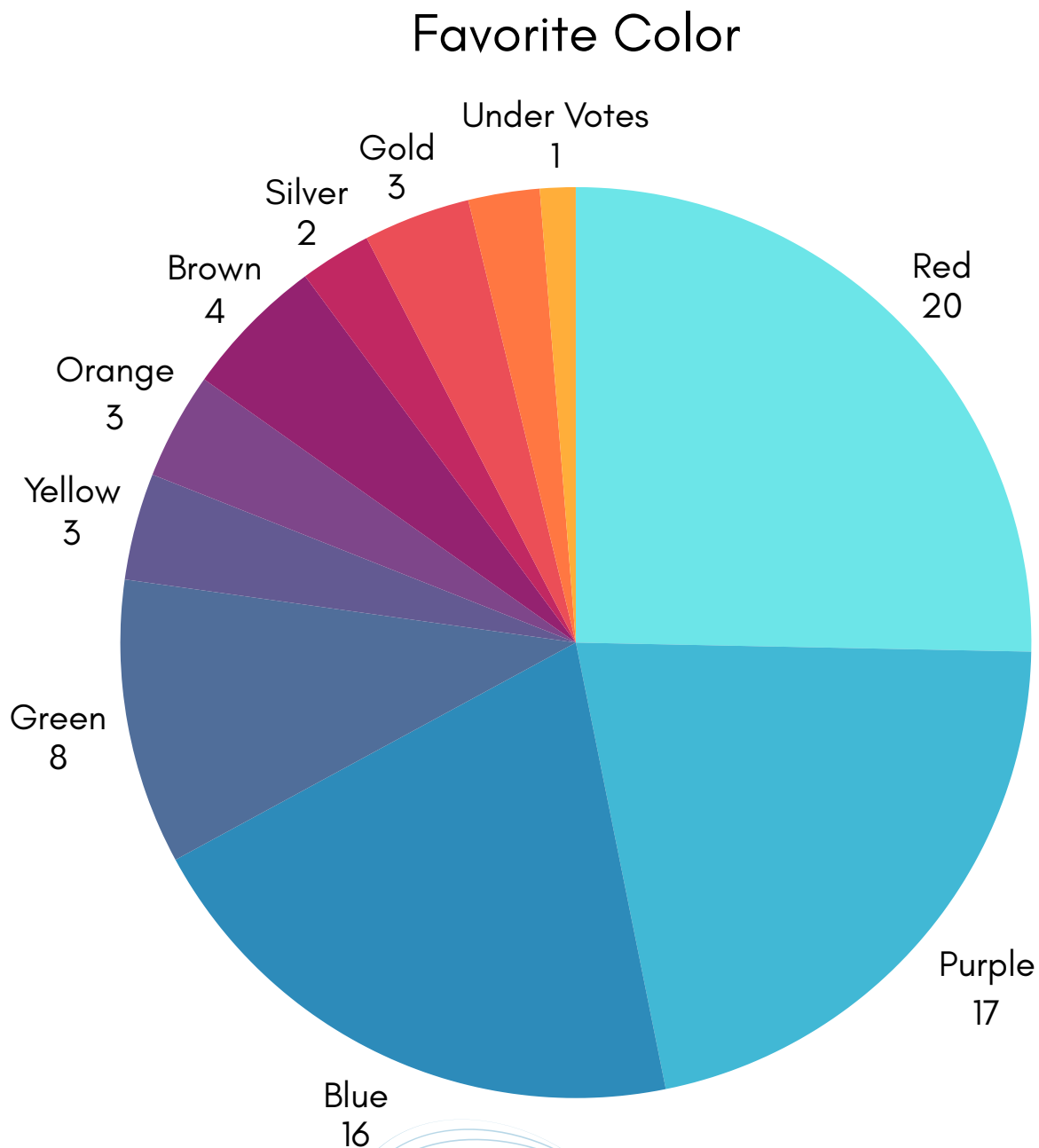
These results demonstrate participants' successful engagement with the voting process, including navigating ballot choices, understanding selections, and experiencing overvote and undervote scenarios in a supportive learning environment.

A total of 85 voters participated in the mock election, casting ballots across several fun, nonpartisan questions designed to simulate the voting process:



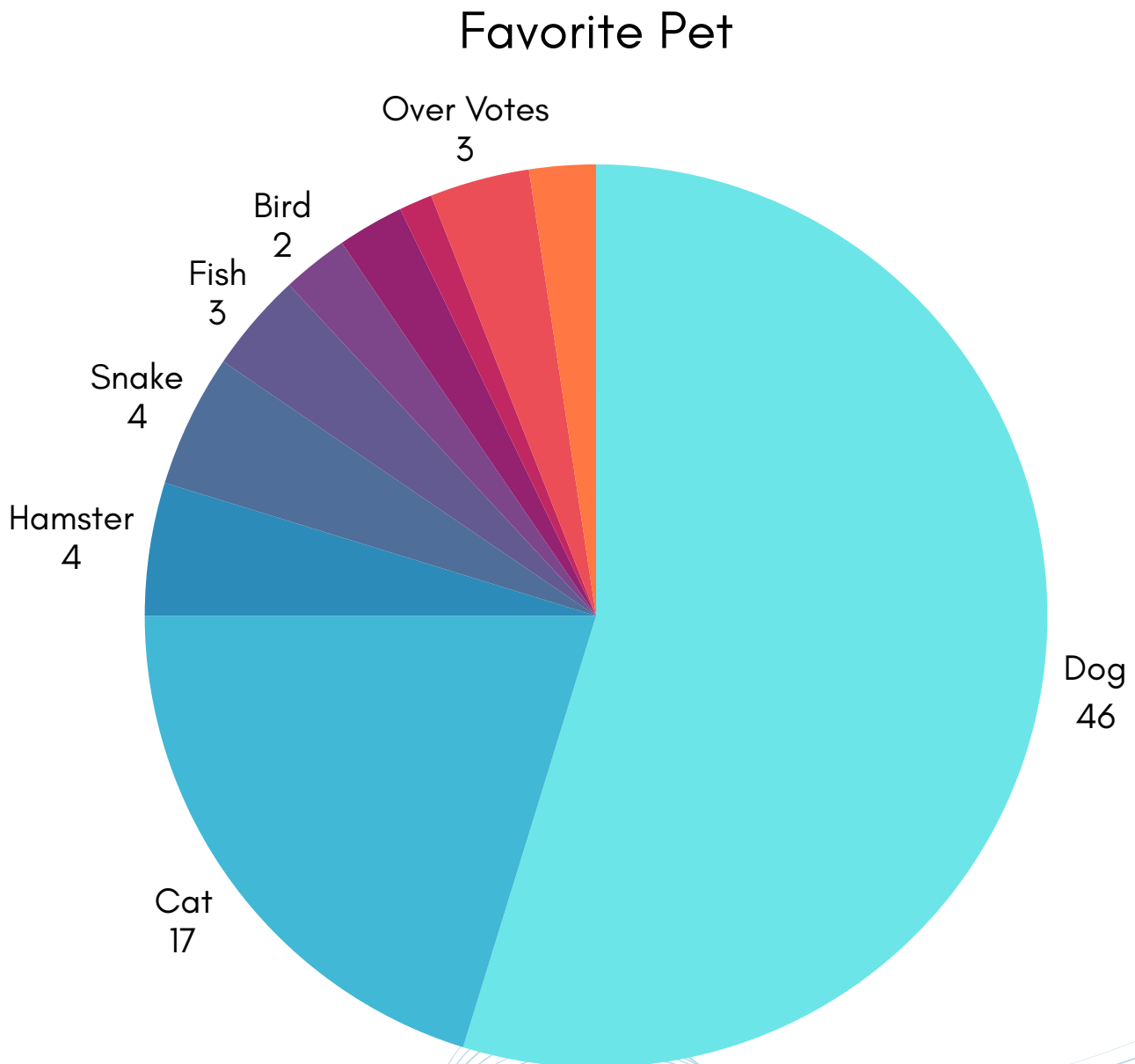
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Favorite Part of a Vacation

