



Recommendations

Our findings from the community listening sessions led us to recommendations in five key areas.

1. Distribution Timeline

- a. Time the distribution of the voter guide with vote by mail ballot drop dates, or mail these materials together so the voter guide is received in a timely manner.
- b. Produce all languages and formats sooner and make those available by the same date as the English printed guide. Language minorities and disabled communities expressed the greatest challenges with getting accessible materials in a timely manner.

2. Plain Language

- a. Adopt plain language guidelines from the Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN) <http://www.plainlanguage.gov/>
- b. Require staff training on plain language standards for those involved in producing material for the voter guide (except proponents, opponents, and candidates?).
- c. Utilize visuals and icons throughout the guide to help voters easily reference and/or comprehend important and/or complex material. While all voters can benefit from this given our increasingly visual culture, voters with certain disabilities and limited-English voters would benefit tremendously from the additional cues.

3. Language Access

- a. Create a Language Access Advisory Committee (LAAC) to aid the SOS in understanding and better serving voters who are limited-English proficient.
- b. Improve outreach and education to limited-English communities regarding the availability of language accessible materials.
- c. Put all translated voter guides on public display at the same time as the English guide for the public to help identify translation errors and make recommendations for changes prior to the distribution of the guides.
- d. Adopt new practices for creating alternate language voter guides that are more linguistically and culturally relevant rather than the current word for word translations.

4. Voter Guide Format & Targeting

- a. Add an option on the voter registration card for voters to select their preferred voter guide format and language.
- b. Improve availability and accessibility of formats for disability communities by focusing on a consumer-based approach (i.e. get rid of cassette return programs and make sure all voters have access to accessible materials in a timely manner; systems and procedures for requesting formats should be user-friendly).
- c. Use information about a voter's preferred language and format to target distribution of materials to voters. By making the preferred format available to the voter at the outset, each voter will have a maximum amount of time to peruse the information and make an informed decision; voters with disabilities and limited-English proficiency should not have to request materials separately or at a later time if they have indicated a preference.
- d. Develop a Disability Access Advisory Group (similar to language access advisory group) to advise SOS.
- e. Conduct a study and receive community input to identify new formats that are needed. For example, voters who receive their guides by mail can receive a PDF link, but this is not an accessible format for voters using screen readers. An html version would be better.
- f. Through VoteCal and/or an online voter lookup tool or voter profile tool, allow voters to make changes to their preferences.

5. Hire a tech consultant or create a Deputy Secretary of Technology

- a. Considering the broad range of technology related projects currently underway at the SOS department, a Deputy Secretary of Technology could help with current and future projects such as VoteCal, voter lookup tools, an online interactive voter guide, mobile voter guides, etc.