How to use the toolkit:

Communicating Election and Post-Voting Processes

Customizable Signs, Pocket Guides and Handouts

Introduction

Use this toolkit to create signs, pocket guides, and handouts about pre- and post-voting processes to educate observers and the public. Election officials in any size jurisdiction can adapt this toolkit to fit their observer and voter education needs.

This toolkit is a top-level explanation of election processes for voters who are seeing this information for the first time. It divides election processes into 12 general steps, each with a broad top level description and more detailed question and answers.
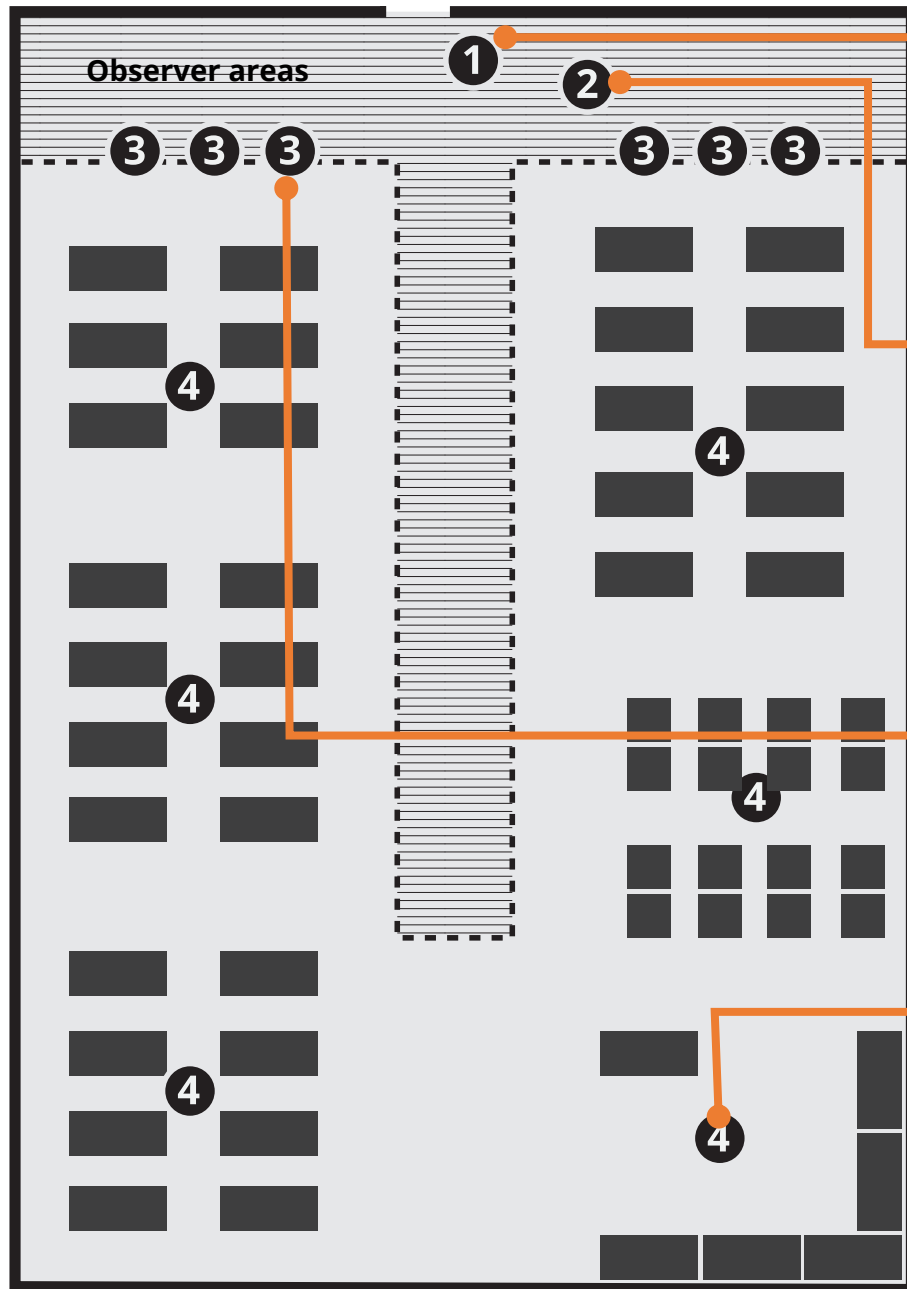
This toolkit has been tested with election officials across the country. Before using any of the materials, you'll need to review them and make sure they match the procedures in your state and jurisdiction.

How to use this toolkit
Table of Contents

Customizable Templates for Small Election Offices

1: Process Poster

The color coded Process Poster greets observers at the entrance to the office.

2: Pocket Guides and Handouts

Election Officials keep these year round to hand out to observers and interested voters.

3: Wall Signs

Wall signs are placed around the room. The signs are color coded to match the process poster at the entrance.

Customizable Templates for Large Election Offices

Observer areas

1: Process Poster

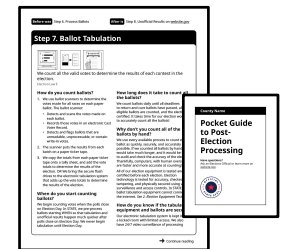The color coded Process Poster greets observers at the entrance to the facility.
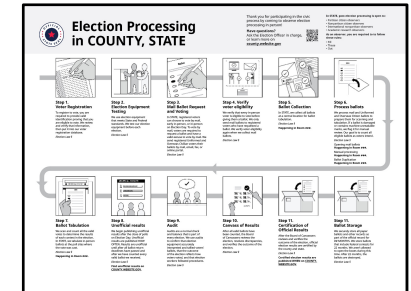
2: Wall Signs

Wall signs are placed in the observer area. The signs are color coded to match the process poster and the large overhead signs.

3: Pocket Guides and Handouts

Lead Election Officials have pocket guides and handouts to give to observers.

4: Overhead Signs

Large overhead signs hang over each processing area. This helps observers connect information to processing areas, because they can only access certain areas of the facility.

Template Overview

File Structure

📦 EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TOOLKIT

    📄 EAC-Communicating Election Processes-Central Language Document.docx

    📄 EAC-Communicating Election Processes-Glossary.docx

    📦 EAC-Communicating Election Processes-Illustrations.zip

- _AI.zip
- _PNGs.zip
- _SVGs.zip
- _TIFFs.zip

    📦 EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-Powerpoint-Word.zip

- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-Powerpoint-Process Poster-18x24in.pptx
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-Powerpoint-Pocket Guide.pptx
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-Powerpoint-Overhead Sign
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-Powerpoint-Handout
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-Powerpoint-Door Sign

    📦 EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-Indesign.zip

- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-InDesign-Process Poster-18x24in
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-InDesign-Pocket Guide
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-InDesign-Overhead Sign
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-InDesign-Handout
- EAC-Communicating Election Processes-TEMPLATE-InDesign-Door Sign

Illustrations (TIFF, PNG, SVG, and AI)

The set includes illustrations for each election step defined in the toolkit. Some steps have a single illustration panel, and other steps have multiple illustration panels.

The illustrations are already placed into many of the templates.

Uses

- Included in templates.
- Website FAQ pages.
- Other educational materials your office develops.

Tips

- If you translate the toolkit into other languages, remember to translate the illustration text too.
- If you need to make a significant change to an illustration, you will need Adobe Illustrator software to edit the .ai source files.

File Options

The illustrations are in English and Spanish. To translate the illustrations into different languages, you'll need to edit them in the AI files.

The illustrations folder has several subfolders with different file types. Each image file type is suited for a particular purpose:

- **TIFF files** are ideal for large-size documents. They can be scaled large without pixilation or distortion.
- **PNG files** are ideal for web publishing. They are also useful in print documents when you need a transparent background.
- **SVG files** are ideal for web publishing. They can be scaled up and down without losing resolution.
- **AI files** should be used if you need to make significant changes to the original image.

Overhead Sign (8.5 x 11in)

Identifies what process steps are happening in a room by title and illustration.

Uses

- Tape to walls or tables.
- Put on stanchions.
- Scale up and print at a larger size to hang overhead in large facilities.

Printing Notes

Print at 100% scale.

Tips

- You may choose to scale up the Overhead Signs. Follow the guidelines in Field Guide to Ensuring Voter Intent [Vol 8: Guiding voters through the polling place](#) (Center for Civic Design) to make sure your signs can be read at a distance. Increase type by 1.75 inches for every 50 feet of viewing distance.
- Un-highlight all text after editing it.

Layout Options
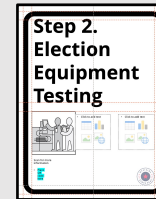
TEMPLATE-Overhead Sign-Vertical-Light Ink.pptx
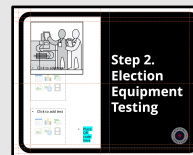- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10
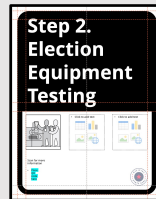
TEMPLATE-Overhead Sign-Vertical-Heavy Ink.pptx
- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10

TEMPLATE-Overhead Sign-Horizontal-Light Ink.pptx
- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10

TEMPLATE-Overhead Sign-Horizontal-Heavy Ink.pptx
- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10

TEMPLATE-Overhead Sign.indd

Door Sign (8.5 x 11 in)

Identifies what process steps are happening in a room by title and illustration.

Includes a short explanation of the step, context of the steps before and after, and directs observers to more information.

Uses

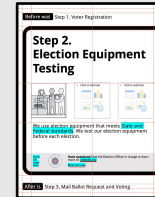- Tape to walls or tables.
- Put on stanchions.

Printing Notes
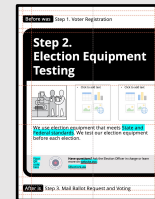
Print at 100% scale.

Tips

- If you include information that might change between elections, write the election type and year on the sign.
- Un-highlight all text after editing it.
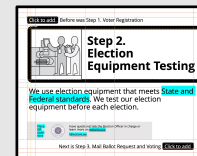
Layout Options

TEMPLATE-Door Sign-Vertical-Light Ink.pptx
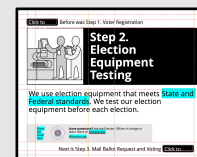- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10

TEMPLATE-Door Sign-Vertical-Heavy Ink.pptx
- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10

TEMPLATE-Door Sign-Horizontal-Light Ink.pptx
- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10

TEMPLATE-Door Sign-Horizontal-Heavy Ink.pptx
- Pre-built out for Steps 2, 5, 6, 6B, 7, 8, 9, 10

TEMPLATE-Door Sign.indd

Process Poster (18 x 24 in)

Poster to provide an overview of the full election process.

Uses

- Use at the entrance to your elections office to provide an overview of the process to voters.
- Use at the entrance to your facility to provide an overview of the process and give room numbers to observers.
- Share on your website or social media.

Printing Notes

You will need a large format printer. If you don't have one in your office, think about what other county departments might, like GIS staff or a local library.

Tips

- You may choose to scale up the Process Poster. Follow the guidelines in Field Guide to Ensuring Voter Intent Vol 8: Guiding voters through the polling place (Center for Civic Design) to make sure your signs can be read at a distance. Increase type by 1.75 in for every 50 ft of viewing distance.
- If you include information that might change between elections, write the election type and year on the poster.
- Un-highlight all text after editing it.
- If you rearrange steps, don't forget to rearrange the illustrations too.

Layout Options
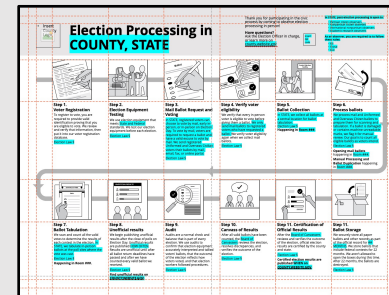
TEMPLATE-Process Poster-18x24in.pptx
- Pre-built out with illustrations and text
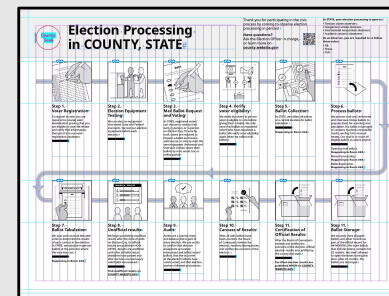
TEMPLATE-Process Poster.indd
- Pre-built out with illustrations and text

Pocket Guide (8.5 x 11 in)

Double-sided handout, folded into quarters to create a pocket-sized guide that provides an overview of the full election process.

Uses

- Keep some copies in your office year round.
- Post on your website or social media.
- Share with local news media.
- Share directly with political parties.
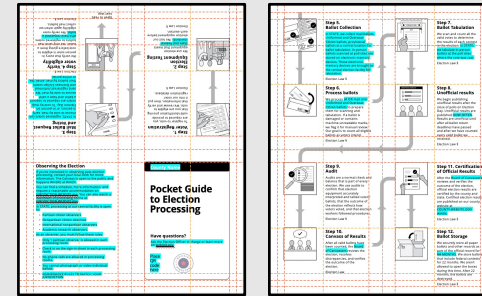- Share with local non-profits.
- Share with local schools.

Printing Notes

Print double-sided at 100%, binding on the long edge.

Tips

- If you use the Pocket Guide year-round, make sure to remove any specific dates to keep the pocket guide evergreen.
- Un-highlight all text after editing it.
- If you rearrange steps, don't forget to rearrange the illustrations too.

Layout Options

TEMPLATE-Pocket Guide.pptx
- Pre-built out with all illustrations and text
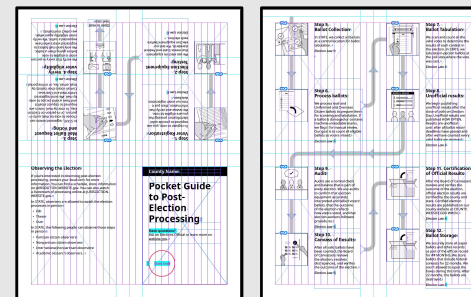
TEMPLATE-Pocket Guide-VF.indd
- Pre-built out with all illustrations and text

Handout (8.5 x 11 in)

Printable double-sided handout to give more information about individual steps of the post-election process.
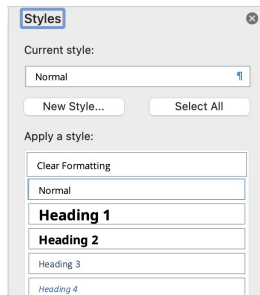
Uses

- Post on your website or social media.
- Share with local news media.
- Share with political parties directly as supplemental observer training materials.

Printing Notes

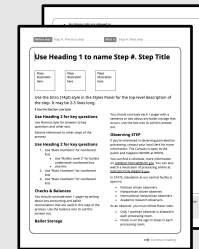Print double-sided at 100%, binding on the long edge.

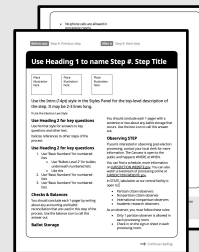## Tips

- Use the Styles Panel to format your text.

- If you include information that might change between elections, write the election type and year on the handout.
- Un-highlight all text after editing it.

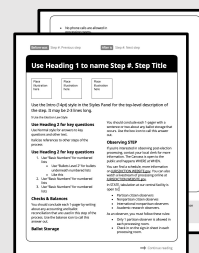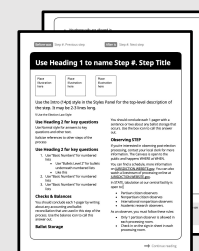**Layout Options**

TEMPLATE-Handout-Light Ink.docx

TEMPLATE-Handout-Heavy Ink.docx

TEMPLATE-Handout-Heavy Ink.indd

TEMPLATE-Handout-Heavy Ink.indd

How to customize and use the templates

- Editing the templates
- Central Language Document
- Glossary
- Writing using Plain Language
- Translating the writing
- Adding your branding
- Adding color coding
- Adding or editing QR codes

Editing the Templates

1. Are you making evergreen or date-specific signs and handouts? If you're making evergreen handouts and signs, remove all dates from them.

2. Review and edit the language to match your jurisdiction. Template language that may change based on your state and jurisdiction is highlighted in blue.

3. Add your branding.

4. Add color coding.

5. Add or edit the QR codes.

What do I do if elements of the template fall out of place?

Hit Reset in Powerpoint to re-align them.
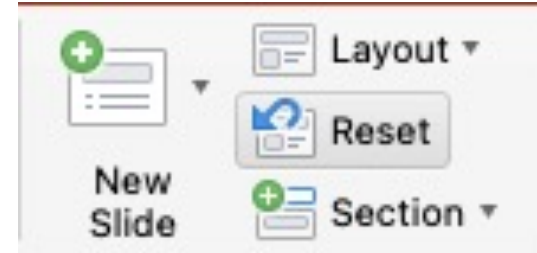
Central Language Document

Use the Central Language Document when creating materials that educate observers and voters on election and post-voting processes.

- Review and edit all the blue and orange highlights, which indicate words that may change between jurisdictions.
  - Blue highlights change across states. We recommend filling them out at the state level before passing the template package on to localities.
  - Orange highlights may change across jurisdictions. Fill these out at the jurisdiction level.
  - Some highlights are in ALL CAPS, like your STATE name. When making your edits, use Sentence Case.
  - Delete text that doesn't apply to you.
- If needed, rearrange the order of steps to match your procedures.
- Add citations to your election law. Citing laws for specific policies directs observers and voters who want to learn more to accurate information.
- Think about common questions you get from voters and proactively add in the answers. For example, if observers often ask about automatic signature verification, explain how it works in the verify voter eligibility handout.

Glossary

The glossary defines the election vocabulary used in this toolkit.

It matches definitions in the [EAC's Glossary of Election Terminology](#).

Communicating Election and Post-Voting Processes Toolkit — Glossary

Based on EAC's Glossary of Terms

A
  Audit
  Audit Trail

B
  Ballot
  Ballot Drop Box
  Ballot Envelope
  Ballot Scanner
  Barcode
  Batch
  Batch-fed scanner
  Board (Election)
  Board of Canvassers
  Board of Elections

C
  Canvass
  Canvass Report
  Cast
  Cast Vote Record
  Central Absentee Precinct
  Certification of Official Election Results
  Certified Election Results
  Chain of Custody
  Challenged Ballot
  Chief Election Officer
  Contest
  Count
  Counted Ballot
  Cure
  Cured Ballot

D
  Damaged Ballot
  Defective Ballot
  Drop Box
  Duplicate Ballot (Ballot Remake)

E
  Election Board
  Election Equipment
  Election Law
  Election Results (Election Returns)

Communicating Election and Post-Voting Processes Toolkit | Glossary | 1

Writing using Plain Language

The purpose of this toolkit is to give the correct depth of information to answer voters' questions without confusing them by adding too much detail.

The toolkit explains election processes in simple steps using plain language. It includes space to write citations and link information for voters who want to read more.

Why plain language?

- Plain language makes your writing accessible, understandable, and logical to navigate.

- Research shows that using plain language increases trust.

- Too much information can counterintuitively lead people to understand less.

If you write more in the templates, follow these plain language tips:

- Keep numbers (1, 2, 15, 120, etc) as numbers instead of spelling them out.

- Resist the urge to include everything. Instead, include a QR code or link to send voters to your website for more information.

- Write in active voice most of the time. It's the easiest type of sentence to understand (You must follow these rules). Sometimes this toolkit is written in passive voice to emphasize the object that we are talking about (Valid ballots are prepared).

- Write in sentence case, not ALL CAPS.

Plain Language Resources:

- Field Guide to Ensuring Voter Intent [Vol 1: Writing instructions voters understand](Center for Civic Design)

- Field Guide to Ensuring Voter Intent [Vol 4: Effective poll worker materials](Center for Civic Design)

Translating the writing

This toolkit is written in English. But, you may need to translate it to meet language requirements in your district.

- This toolkit is written in plain language to facilitate the translation process. The templates are designed with enough space to accommodate text expansion from translation because some languages are just longer than others. Read this Digital.gov article about the simple ways to prepare English documents for translation into multiple languages.
- The glossary defines the election vocabulary used in this toolkit. It matches definitions in the EAC's Glossary of Election Terminology. The EAC has translated this glossary into the 20 languages listed here.
- Work with a qualified translator in your community. Read this Digital.gov article about avoiding automated translation.

Adding your branding

You can add your county branding to the templates by adding a seal, logo, or typography.

County Seal or Logo

All the templates include a box to put your county's seal or logo. Drag and drop a PNG file of your seal or logo into the labeled box. Use a PNG file so that the area around the seal or logo is transparent.

Typography

All the templates are set up using the typeface Noto Sans. If your county or elections office uses a specific typeface, you can change the template styles to match.

Adding color coding

The templates are in black and white. Consider adding color coding to the signs to help observers and voters navigate large facilities and better understand the process.

How do I add color coding into the toolkit?

Method 1:

If you have access to color printing,
add color coding by changing the borders
and filled in areas of the signs and handouts.
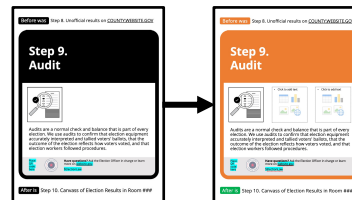
Method 2:

If you do not have access to color printing,
add color coding by printing on colored paper.

Tips

- Use color consistently. You may already use color coding. For example, if you have color coded mail trays, you could use the same color coding in these signs and handouts. Consistent color coding helps people draw connections between the information they are reading and the processes happening in front of them.

- Use color coding with other wayfinding techniques. Numbering and color coding simultaneously help voters identify where they are in a process.

Resources

The [Center for Civic Design's Election Design Color Palette](#) colors meet accessibility requirements for both headlines and body text in print and digital applications.

Color coding is used in hospitals, museums, and educational institutions to help people navigate to their intended location.

Adding or editing QR codes

The purpose of this toolkit is to explain election processes in simple steps. But, some observers and voters may want to know more. You can create a QR code that directs them to a website that provides more information. That way you can keep the information on your poster simple and clear.

Adding a QR code in Powerpoint

1. Decide which website you want the QR code to link to.
2. Make a QR code. There are many online generators to make QR codes like Bitly and TinyURL. Your IT department might also make one for you.
3. Drag and drop the QR code into the labeled box in the templates.
4. Test it out to make sure it links to the correct location!

Adding a QR code in InDesign

1. Decide which website you want the QR code to link to.
2. Right-click on the existing QR code in the file, and navigate to Edit QR code.
3. Paste your new link and click save. This automatically updates the QR code.
4. Test it out to make sure it links to the correct location!
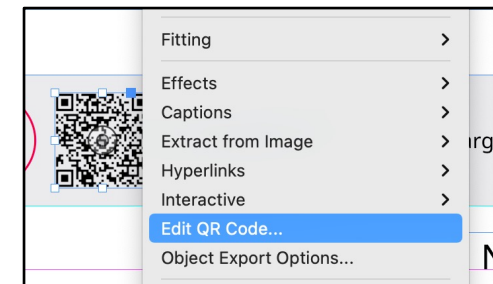
Make a QR code in InDesign Step 2
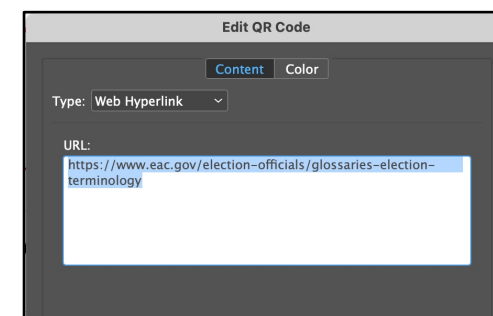
Make a QR code in InDesign Step 3

Examples of how to adapt the toolkit to fit your needs

Examples of how to adapt the toolkit to fit your needs

Example Jurisdiction A

- • A small jurisdiction.
- • No staff designers.
- • Uses their elections office for post-election processes.
- • Can only print black and white in-house.
- • Essentially no budget for printing education materials externally.

Example Jurisdiction A used this toolkit to:

- • Edit the **Central Text Document** to match their procedures.
- • Consistently use the toolkit language to train election workers, explain processes to voters, on the jurisdiction website, on jurisdiction social media, and with local news media.
- • Put up the **Process Map Poster** in their office during the election.
- • Print black and white **Pocket Guides** to have in their office year round for people who have questions.
- • Hand out copies of the **Pocket Guides** when they run programming at local middle and high schools.

Example Jurisdiction B

- Medium size jurisdiction.
- No staff designers.
- Uses their election office and 3 municipal conference rooms for post-election processes.
- 3 ways to vote jurisdiction without in-house design.
- Can print color + black and white in-house.
- Small budget for printing education materials externally.
- Existing color palette to color code different steps of mail ballot processing.

Example Jurisdiction B used this toolkit to:

- Edit the **Central Text Document** to match their procedures.
- Consistently use the toolkit language to train election workers, explain processes to voters, on the jurisdiction website, on jurisdiction social media, and with local news media.
- Put up the **Process Map Poster** in their office during the election.
- Print black and white **Pocket Guides** to have in their office year round for people who have questions.
- Put up **Door Signs** to label which steps happen in which room. Though they have some budget money for external printing, they decide to print these signs in the office. They print in black and white on colored paper to match the color coding they already use for mail ballot processing.
- Print **Handouts** for process steps they get asked a lot of questions about, like Ballot Duplication.

Examples of how to adapt the toolkit to fit your needs

Example Jurisdiction C

- Large jurisdiction.
- All vote by mail state.
- Dedicated warehouse facility for post-election processing, with one large room and some separate closed off rooms for some steps.
- Budget for printing education materials externally.
- 1 designer on staff.
- Existing color palette to color code post-election processing steps.

Example Jurisdiction C used this toolkit to:

- Develop **consistent color coding** for different steps of the process. The color coding is used on signs, handouts, shirts for election workers, and buttons for election workers. This lets observers and staff easily see which election workers are doing which step of the process.
- Edit the **Central Text Document** to match their procedures.
- Consistently use the toolkit language to train election workers, explain processes to voters, on the jurisdiction website, on jurisdiction social media, and with local news media.
- Put up the **Process Map Poster** at the entrance to their facility during the election.
- Print **Pocket Guides** to have in their office year round for people who have questions.
- Put up **Door Signs** to label where each step happens in the facility.
- Print **Handouts** for each process step that are available for observers entering the facility. They also shared these handouts ahead of time with political party staff to share with their partisan observers.

Contributors

About the U.S. Election Assistance Commission

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission (EAC) was established by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA). EAC is an independent, bipartisan commission charged with developing guidance to meet HAVA requirements, adopting voluntary voting system guidelines, and serving as a national clearinghouse of information on election administration. EAC also accredits testing laboratories and certifies voting systems, as well as audits the use of HAVA funds.

About the Center for Civic Design

The Center for Civic Design believes democracy is a design problem. We do research to understand the voter journey and how to invite everyone to participate. And, we work with election offices and advocacy groups across the country to make the forms, notices, ballots, and election information easier to use, so they help more people vote.