

**Election Assistance Commission Roundtable Discussion
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How Effective Design Can Remove Barriers for Voters

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Recommendations for accessible ballot design, including accessible voting procedures and polling locations

Non-Visual Access to Ballots for Voters Who Are Blind or Vision Impaired

Voters who are blind or vision impaired may choose non-visual access as their preferred voting method. Best practice requires the following:

- Easy navigation through voting machine instructions, ballot contests, ballot review and casting the ballot is critical. The option to repeat a line, skip a line or move from name to name, contest to contest, etc., must be instantaneous and must not require the voter to listen to the remainder of the line or contest.
- Volume levels should be adjustable “on the fly” so as not to interrupt the selection process.
- Voter should be able to move freely from contest to contest and not be required to listen to all the instructions and text.
- All of the text of each contest must be present and readable if the voter chooses to listen to it.
- At the beginning of the ballot, the voter should be informed of the total number of contests.
- Each contest should be described as it is presented.
- As contests are selected, the total number of candidates and the maximum number of candidates to vote for must be announced.
- As candidates are selected, the total number selected should be announced.
- A voter should have the ability to decide to cast votes, skip to another contest, or "under vote" the contest at any time.
- A review function must be available and the voter must have the opportunity to decide whether to listen to the review or cast their vote immediately.
- During the review process, it should be possible to move freely between contests and to have a chance to change a previous selection.
- If no user input is provided to the voting terminal for more than twenty seconds, an instruction should be given regarding the choice to be made.

- The system should not move on to another selection or action until an item is completed.
- If a voter does not take any action for several minutes, the machine should indicate that the voting process is about to terminate with no ballot cast.

The above recommendations are included on the Purchasing an Accessible Voting Machine Web page of the NFB HAVA Web site. The page may be found at http://www.nfb.org/nfb/purchasing_voting_machine.asp?SnID=717457233.

Regarding DAISY format--the DAISY standards and EPUB3 standards are scheduled to be merged in the fall of 2011. Application of the DAISY standard should be delayed until after the merger.

At a minimum, Web-based ballots should conform to WCAG version 2, level AA.

Voters who have low vision may require other accessibility options, including:

- Large high contrast print and the ability to reverse colors, such as white letters on a black background, should be selectable.
- Good lighting is important for poll worker, as well as voter with disability (but prevent glare).

Voters with other disabilities require the following:

- Set standards for noise levels – benefits poll worker as well as voters with disabilities
- Sign in desk should prompt voter to select their choice of accessible or regular voting system.
- Poll worker needs to know how the accessible voting system operates in order to teach the voter with a disability.
- Machines should be placed to ensure privacy and room for a wheelchair to maneuver.
- Where there are long lines of people waiting to vote, an option should be available for those who need to sit.