



# Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections

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# Background

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- HAVA 241(b)(2) and 302(b) mandate that EAC study ballot designs for elections for Federal Office.
  - Based on research from May 2006-January 2007, EAC released "*Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections*" in July 2007.
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# Background

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- Study based on 10 research events
    - Observed 4 rural and urban primary elections in Nebraska and New Jersey
    - Conducted field interviews with voters, poll workers and administrators
    - Consulted with experts
      - LEOs, 20 literacy instructors, manufacturers
    - Conducted 54 usability evaluations in 7 states, with more than 44 representative voters
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# Planning Election Design Changes

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- Election Official needs to:
    - Establish a baseline for future improvements by evaluating current election & getting voter feedback before & after election
    - Establish an approval process for election design changes
    - Estimate the value & impact of design changes
    - Emphasize voter needs over administrative & vendor requirements
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# Planning Election Design Changes

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- Election Official needs to consult with:
    - A Simple Language Expert – someone who can edit language content for low-literacy voters
    - A Designer – someone familiar with poll worker practices who will oversee ballot design process
    - A Usability Expert – someone who will ensure that the voting process is clear and easy to understand
    - A Translator – someone to translate content for non-English speakers
    - A Cultural Expert – someone who will check ballot materials for cultural relevance
    - A Policy Advisor – someone who can help jurisdiction navigate legal & PR issues pertaining to ballot design changes
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# Critical Design Elements

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- Language and Content:
    - Use clear, simple language
    - Use one (maximum two) languages per ballot
    - Provide summaries for long ballot measures
    - When transliterating names, consultation with a language expert is recommended in order to avoid overtly positive or negative meanings in sound-based characters
  
  - Text Use and Size:
    - Use a minimum of 12 point san-serif font, with 2 point line spacing, left-aligned, upper and lower case letters
    - The Univers type font is common, consistent, and readable
    - Use only 40-60 characters per line
    - All candidates in a contest should be given the same amount of vertical space. If a candidate's name must break onto a second line, the vertical space for all candidates should be changed to match
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# Critical Design Elements

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- Color:
    - Use just one color for instructions on optical scan ballots
    - Cyan is recommended
    - Titles in white against colored background are easiest to read
    - Use colors to emphasize important info
    - If color can not be used, change all colored areas to 10% black
  
  - Icons and Graphics:
    - Using instructive symbols like  or , , or  can be helpful to less literate voters
    - Political party icons are often confusing to voters
    - Illustrative diagrams should accurately reflect the ballot type & voting equipment
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# Printing HAVA-Mandated Signs

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- ❑ HAVA mandates several items be posted at polling place
  - ❑ Fabrication time varies
    - 7-14 days: Voter's Bill of Rights; Sample Ballots (for doors, walls, and tabletops); Voting Instructions (for booths); Precinct Identification & Polling Place Information
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# Printing HAVA-Mandated Signs

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- 5-6 days: Special Voting Rules; Voting Instructions
  - 2-3 days: 'Vote Here' Banner; Vote by Touchscreen; Return Ballot
  - Immediate: 'Vote Here' Door Sign; Election Official Stickers; Accessible Entrance Door Signs
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## Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

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### □ Optical Scan Ballots

- Include page number out of total pages in multipage ballots, ie page '2 of 5'
  - Selections should be marked into an oval to the left of candidate names
  - When ballots are in more than one language, print English name of language, ie 'Cantonese' or 'Mandarin'
  - Ballots should have 40-60 characters per line and use at least 12 point font
  - Embedding ballot instructions in ballots supports greater focus and autonomy for users
  - Ballot instructions should be self-contained and separated from contest data
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## Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

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- ❑ Principles for both Full Face DRE & Rolling DRE machines:
    - Ensure that screen settings for language choices, text size, contrast & audio support are readily available and easy to change
    - Ensure that voters can easily review and change their votes at any point in the ballot
    - Use upper and lowercase sans serif type at a minimum size of 25 points
    - Avoid using center alignment, all capital letters, or multiple fonts
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## Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

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### Full Face DRE

- Consideration should be given to candidate name order being rotated from precinct to precinct, so that all candidates will be listed first in roughly an equal number of precincts
  - Information about the specific election (ie, date, county) should be placed above the left column of every ballot page.
  - Including instructive phrases like 'Vote for 1 pair' or 'Vote for up to 5' at the top of ballot sections is a recommended best practice
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## Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

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### Rolling DRE Ballot

- First, present voters with the choice of their preferred language before they begin voting
  - Direct voters next to a welcome screen which allows them to: a) begin voting, b) learn how to use the ballot, c) see a list of the questions, d) change screen settings
  - Allow voters to use a “skip” button if they wish to first vote in a different contest
  - When a voter makes a choice, their choice should be highlighted and a checkmark should appear.
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## Ballot Design Principles for Different Machine Types

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### Rolling DRE Ballot

- 'Vote counters' should be located on the left hand side which alert the voter to the number of votes remaining in a given contest. Ex) Voter has 5 votes for city council, he/she selects one, vote counter should read '4'
  - For lengthy candidate lists, a brightly colored bar should appear at the bottom of the screen which reads 'touch here to see additional candidates'
  - Before submitting their ballot, voters should be able to visit a 'review screen' from which they can print their selections
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