Vol. 08

Guiding voters through the polling place

Field-researched, critical election design techniques to help ensure that every vote is cast as voters intend

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About the Field Guide series

There have been excellent ballot design guidelines around since mid-2007 when the U.S. Election Assistance Commission published AIGA Design For Democracy's work in its report, *Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections*. Everyone involved in that project quickly figured out that, as juicy as the design specs were in that report, they needed to be boiled down to essentials that local election officials could easily act on within the constraints they had. *Field Guides To Ensuring Voter Intent* were inspired by that need.

— Dana Chisnell, *Field Guides Editor*
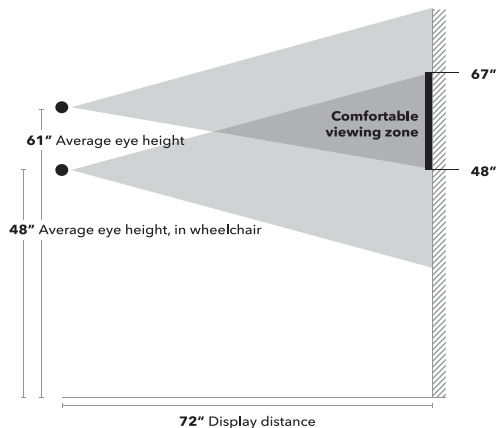
About this Field Guide

Hurricane Sandy, which struck the East Coast just before Election Day in 2012, delivered lessons and opportunities. Election officials proved just how resourceful they could be as polling places disappeared under water or were without power. The many success stories that came out of that election pointed to a few themes, one of which was about helping voters find their polling places and then make their way to voting within them. The guidelines in this Field Guide come from AIGA Design For Democracy's excellent work in *Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections.*

To learn more about the research behind this guide and download examples, go to civicdesigning.org.

The importance of guiding voters in the polling place

Polling places can be confusing, especially during peak times when there are a lot of voters waiting to vote.

Clear, easy to find, easy to read signs can help voters move through the process smoothly, keeping lines moving and minimizing waiting time.

61" Average eye height

Comfortable viewing zone

67"

48"

48" Average eye height, in wheelchair

72" Display distance

No. 01

Make signs easy to read.

Hang signs at eye level for most voters.

Make sure that signs are visible from around the room. Are they behind poll workers?

- Identify precinct, district, or wards clearly.

- Show voters where to line up.

- Make it easy for voters to find the scanner after marking their ballot.
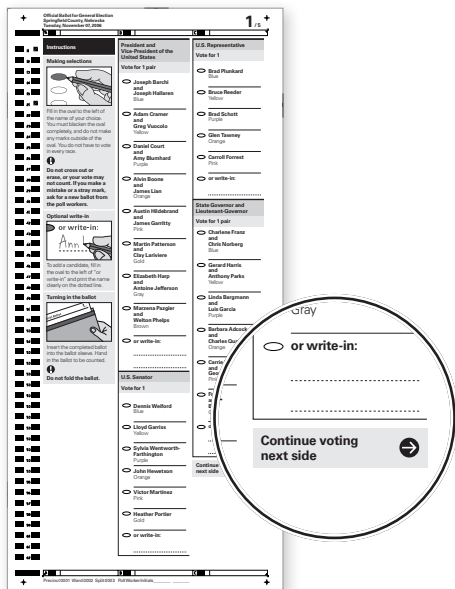
No. 02
Show traffic patterns.

Make it easy for voters to navigate the polling place.

Where do they start? Do they have to go to several tables?

Where is the voting system for people with disabilities?

General information
Información general

First-time voters: How to vote	Electores que votan por primera vez: Cómo votar
1. Give your name to the poll worker.	1. Diga su nombre al trabajador electoral.
2. Sign your name in the register. If you are unable to write, the poll worker can help you make a mark.	2. Firme su nombre en el registro. Si no puede escribir, el trabajador electoral puede ayudarle a hacer la papeleta.
3. Mark your ballot in the polling booth.	3. Emita su papeleta dentro de la caseta electoral.
4. Fold your ballot so that your marks are not seen.	4. Doble la papeleta de modo que su voto no sea visible.
5. Put your ballot in the envelope or sleeve so that the poll worker's initials show.	5. Deposite la papeleta en el sobre o funda de modo que las iniciales del trabajador electoral queden a la vista.
6. Return the ballot in the envelope or sleeve to the poll worker. The poll worker will put the ballot in the ballot box.	6. Devuelva el sobre o funda al trabajador electoral. El trabajador electoral depositará la papeleta en la urna.
Notice to physically disabled voters	**Aviso a electores con discapacidades físicas**
If you cannot read, or if you need help to mark your ballot because of disability, a relative or friend can help you.	Si no puede leer, o si necesita asistencia para marcar su papeleta debido a una discapacidad, un familiar o amigo puede ayudarle.
If you know someone who cannot enter the polling station because of a disability, tell the poll worker. The ballot may be taken to the voter, either to a more convenient place in the building or to the voter's car parked within one block.	Si conoce a alguien que no pueda ingresar a la caseta electoral debido a una discapacidad, dígaselo al trabajador electoral. La papeleta puede ser entregada al elector para que emita su voto, ya sea en un lugar más conveniente dentro del edificio donde se encuentra la caseta electoral, o llevarla al automóvil del elector, si éste se encuentra en un perímetro de una cuadra.
Acts of fraud or misrepresentation	**Actos fraudulentos o de falsedad**
It is a felony to commit an election falsification. That includes:	Es un delito grave cometer falsificación electoral, lo que incluye:
• Pretending to be a voter.	• Pretender ser un elector.
• Falsely swearing to be a member of a political party.	• Declarar falsamente ser miembro de un partido político.
• Interfering with the polling place.	• Interferir con el centro de votación.
• Voting more than once each election, and more.	• Votar más de una vez en cada elección, entre otros casos.
For a complete list of the Nebraska's Voting Violations and Penalties, please ask a poll worker.	Para obtener una lista completa de las Violaciones y Penalidades Electorales de Nebraska, por favor solicítela a un trabajador electoral.
Smoking is not permitted in the polling place.	

Use **blue** for general information.

CMYK value
90%, 45%, 0%, 0%

RGB value
0000FF

Voting instructions

① **Record your vote**

Fill in the oval completely using the pen or pencil provided. Do not use an X or ✓.

② **Review your ballot**

Before you place your ballot into the ballot box or scanner, double-check your votes.

Some races allow votes for more than one person; the number appears just below the name of the office. Make sure you do not mark more votes than that number. You may choose to vote for fewer, or you can skip any race.

If a ballot contains too many votes in one race, votes for that race will not be counted. The other correct races will be counted.

❶ **If you make a mistake:**

If you make a mistake, do not cross out or erase. Write "VOID" across the ballot and ask your poll-worker for a new ballot.

Use **red** for voting instructions or ballot information.

CMYK value
0%, 95%, 100%, 0%

RGB value
FF0000

No. 03

Use color to identify types of information.

Color and contrast help people quickly identify the purpose and content of signs.

Combine color with text or shape for accessibility.

Continue voting next side
instruction is placed at the end of the
last column on the page.

No. 04

Be clear about actions voters must take.

For voting, make diagrams accurate to your voting system. Close-up line drawings are better than photographs.

Use icons, arrows, or symbols for meaning, not decoration.

Before   Voter Assistance Table

After   Register and get provisional
               ballots here

Before   Cell phones are forbidden

After   Please respect other voters: use your
               cell phone outside the polling place.

Before   No electioneering within 100 feet of
               the polling place

After   You may not show, wear, or hand out
               anything to support a candidate or
               ballot question within 100 feet of the
               polling place.

No. 05

Provide clear information about behavior in the polling place.

Write in active voice.

Tell voters what to do. Avoid negative (don't do) when possible.

Before   It is unlawful to remove any ballots from the voting place. Punishable by up to 6 months in jail. #25-2430

After   **Do not remove any ballots from the polling place.** It is against the law, and you can be punished by up to 6 months in jail.
State Law 25-2430

No. 06
Communicate laws and regulations appropriately.

Write a heading or sentence to summarize the law. If possible, paraphrase in plain language.

Include the source of the law so others can look it up.

Work with your counsel to get legal review early.

Voting instructions

Instrucciones para votar

| **Voting instructions** | Instrucciones para votar |

Show all languages in parallel: the two languages side-by-side or stacked. Use one image for both languages.

No. 07

Make it easy to read all languages.

Make it easy to compare the information between languages.

Limit signs to 2 languages.*
One should be English.

* English + 2 Asian languages may also work.

Examples   Review your ballot.

You must fill in the oval for your vote to count.

Please limit voting time to 5 minutes.

Put your phone away. Cell phones are not allowed in the polling place.

No. 08

Write in plain language.

Write short sentences.

Use simple words.

Think of the voter as "you."

Write in the positive.

Use numbers on step-by-step instructions.

Keep paragraphs short.

The Election Assistance Commission publishes icons like these in camera-ready formats. Request yours (along with *Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections*, which has lots of other resources) at http://tinyurl.com/eacdesigns.

No. 09
Use icons to reinforce instructions.

Use informational icons such as arrows and exclamation points to draw attention to important information or to help voters quickly scan dense information.

Type should be sized up 1.75 inches
for every 50 feet of viewing distance.

8.75″

5.25″

1.75″ A

50 ft   150 ft   300 ft
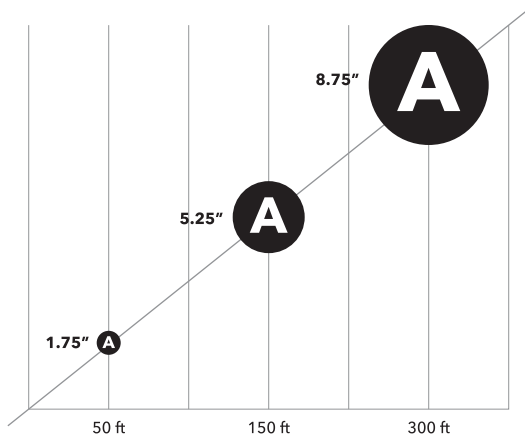
No. 10
Make the text easy to read.

Use a font large enough to be seen from a distance.

Use upper- and lowercase.

Use sans-serif fonts.

Use white space to separate items on the same sign or poster.

Tip

Check that signs and posters are
easy to find and read.

Can voters:

☐ find the information they need?

☐ find the correct place to sign in?

☐ understand how to navigate through the
    polling place?

☐ read all signs easily?

☐ read information in all languages provided at
    the polling place?

☐ understand what is allowed (and not
    allowed) in the polling place?

Notes

Notes

Who made this Guide possible?

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Advisors

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