



League of Women Voters of Texas

2022 Primary Election

County Website Review

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Table of Contents

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Introduction | 3 |
| Texas Secretary of State | 3 |
| Methods | 5 |
| Overall Results | 5 |
| Counties Rated Outstanding | 6 |
| Website security | 7 |
| Easy for voters to find election and voting information | 8 |
| Voting and election information is up-to-date and accurate | 9 |
| Help for special categories of voters | 10 |
| Voter ID | 11 |
| Languages Voters Use | 12 |
| VOTE411.org, The League's Nonpartisan Voters Guide | 13 |
| A Selection of Outstanding County Election Websites | 14 |
| Web Posting Requirements for County Websites | 15 |
| 2022 Suggested Best Practices for County Election Websites | 17 |
| County Election Website Checklist | 21 |

2022 Primary Election County Website Review

The League of Women Voters of Texas conducted its eighth survey of Texas county election websites in February 2022 in preparation for the March 2022 Primary Election. Based on a set of criteria, the League awards points based on the election information that is included on each county's website. . The League commends the 56 websites we rated as "outstanding" and the 36 websites we rated "very good". The League offers our congratulations to those counties and celebrates all the counties, large and small, which meet the needs of their voters.

Texas held the first 2022 primary election in the nation under the additional stress of a new, massive election bill, [Senate Bill 1](#), which created even more challenges for the Secretary of State, county election officials and voters in Texas.

It is critical that the Secretary of State collaborate with counties well before the November General Election to address the obstacles voters faced in the primaries. Ensuring a safe and secure election while providing voters with the information they need to participate fully in our democracy should be a priority for the Texas Legislature, the Texas Secretary of State and county election officials. The League of Women Voters of Texas will continue to support voter education and provide useful information to encourage voters to participate in our elections.

Previous and current county website reviews can be found on the League's [County Election webpage](#).

Introduction

The League of Women Voters of Texas' mission is Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy. The League of Women Voters is one of America's oldest and most trusted civic nonprofit organizations. Formed in 1919, the Texas League represents more than 13,500 grassroots advocates and 34 local Leagues across the state. The League never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. The League aims to achieve a free and fair democracy; increase participation in government; expand voter participation in Texas; and create a League that is diverse, equitable and inclusive. This county election website review was performed for the March 2022 Primary Election.

The purposes of the League's review include:

1. To rate how well county websites provide their citizens with up-to-date, useful and accessible information on how, when and where to vote and participate in our democracy
2. To provide county election officials with best practices and resources
3. To provide recommendations for the Texas Secretary of State's voter education website: votetexas.gov

Texas Secretary of State

The League of Women Voters focused our review on the voting by mail information provided due to the major impact of SB 1 on voters 65 and older and voters with disabilities. We will provide a thorough review of other voter education provided by the Secretary of State at a later date.

In January, applications for an annual ballot by mail began to be filled out by voters 65 and older and voters with

disabilities. Thankfully, the Application for a Ballot by Mail (ABBM) was updated, but eligibility and instructions for the new application were not updated. On February 6th, more than a month after voters 65 and over and voters with disabilities began to fill out their annual applications, VoteTexas.gov was finally updated. The Texas Secretary of State made major updates to [votetexas.gov](https://www.votetexas.gov) website in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) and their mobile version in ([English mobile](#) / [Spanish mobile](#)).

Voting and election education is provided by the Secretary of State on these websites: [VoteTexas.gov](https://www.vote-texas.gov), sos.state.tx.us, and [texas.gov](https://www.texas.gov). Voter tools are offered on [MyVoterPortal](#) on several different platforms.

Recommendations

1. We encourage the Secretary of State to follow the best practices provided on page 16.
2. Align the mobile view of [votetexas.gov](https://www.votetexas.gov) with the desktop view for consistency, ease of use and accuracy.
 - a. The [mobile version](#) does not provide the same detailed information for voting by mail as the desktop version of votetexas.gov. Voters who use their phones are left in the dark on important voting information.
3. [Voting by Mail](#)
 - a. Simplify. Use plain language to make it easier for voters to read and understand.
 - b. Simple step-by-step bullets are easier to read than long paragraphs.
 - c. Bolded instructions are distracting and do not belong on this page. They belong on the application page.
 - d. There is no information on how to cure a Ballot By Mail.
4. [Application for a Ballot by Mail](#)
 - a. Add simple step-by-step instructions for filling out the application
 - b. Add a video.
 - c. Consider combining.
5. [Application for a Ballot by Mail](#) (on the votetexas.gov website)
 - a. Simplify.
 - b. There are way too many words on this page which adds to confusion.
 - c. Add a video.
 - d. Consider combining.
6. [Completing and Mailing your Carrier Envelope](#)
 - a. Simplify
 - b. Add a video about the process.
7. [Track my ballot](#) (page)
 - a. Simplify. Two sets of Instructions for using the Track My Ballot tool are provided, which adds to the confusion.
 - b. Simple bullets are easier to read than long paragraphs.
 - c. Add information about curing your ballot.
 - d. Add short video and a graphic.
8. Track My Ballot tool
 - a. Inputting your address is not intuitive.
 - b. Add a video about the process (League example here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rfTIPFizgzc>).

9. While voting by mail is offered as an option on the [Voters with Disabilities](#) and the [Military and Overseas voter](#) pages, there is no information anywhere on votetexas.gov for student voters. High school and college student voters are the future of our democracy. Please provide an official web page for students that can be shared with high schools and colleges.

Methods

Beginning the second week of February 2022, an online survey of the 254 Texas county election websites was conducted. League volunteers evaluated the 254 county election websites based on a set of election information criteria. The items reviewed were derived from the [Center for Civic Designs Designing election department websites](#) and [Election Tool.s](#) which offers free, practical resources for election officials. We also considered information that needed to be added to county election websites due to the new Texas election laws, SB 1 and House Bill 1382.

Each of the items reviewed was rated on a weighted scale of yes/no or on a predetermined definition of value. One item, related to the presence/absence of a link to the League's nonpartisan Voters Guide [VOTE411.org](#), provided the opportunity for 5 bonus points. Following completion of the survey, the data were reviewed to detect and correct duplicate entries, anomalies, contradictions, and inconsistencies.

Note: The following two counties still have websites that are not official: Kent and Throckmorton counties. These counties were found to have a presence on the Texas Online Directory, which appears official with a ".us" URL, but is not an official website.

Overall Results

The highest possible score for all items = 125

[A spreadsheet with all results](#)

Overall Evaluation Rating

| Raw Score | Rating | Counties | Percent |
|-----------|--------------|----------|---------|
| 90-100+ | Outstanding | 56 | 22% |
| 80-89 | Very good | 36 | 14% |
| 60-79 | Good | 62 | 24% |
| 49-59 | Fair | 18 | 7% |
| 39-48 | Bare minimum | 34 | 13% |
| <39 | Inadequate | 48 | 18% |

Discussion:

Counties rated outstanding or very good in the 2020 Texas primaries (22%) continued to offer excellent voter education for their voters. Unfortunately, counties rated bare minimum and inadequate ([31% in the 2020](#)

[Election Website Review](#) continued to offer consistently poor service to their voters during the 2022 primary election.

Counties Rated Outstanding

Find [all county scores here](#):

NOTE: Counties may notify the League at lwvtexas@lwvtexas.org of updates to their website after the completion of this survey. The League will update the score as needed. Thus, counties which qualify for “outstanding” after the review will be added to the list!

| | | |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Anderson | 57,922 | http://www.co.anderson.tx.us/ |
| Angelina | 86,395 | https://www.angelinacounty.net/ |
| Bandera | 20,851 | https://www.banderacounty.org/ |
| Bastrop | 97,216 | https://www.bastropvotes.org |
| Bell | 370,647 | https://www.bellcountytexas.com |
| Bexar | 2,009,324 | https://www.bexar.org |
| Blanco | 11,374 | https://www.co.blanco.tx.us |
| Bowie | 92,893 | https://www.co.bowie.tx.us |
| Brazoria | 372,031 | https://www.brazoriacountytx.gov |
| Burnet | 49,130 | burnetcountyelections.com |
| Caldwell | 45,883 | https://www.co.caldwell.tx.us/page/caldwell.ElectionsOffice |
| Cameron | 421,017 | https://www.cameroncountytexas.gov/elections/ |
| Colorado | 20,557 | https://www.co.colorado.tx.us/ |
| Comal | 161,501 | https://www.co.comal.tx.us/ |
| Dallas | 2,613,539 | https://www.dallascountytexas.org/ |
| Denton | 906,422 | https://www.dentoncounty.gov |
| Ector | 165,171 | https://www.co.ector.tx.us/ |
| El Paso | 865,657 | https://co.ellis.tx.us/ |
| Ellis | 192,455 | https://www.epcounty.com/ |
| Fayette | 24,435 | https://www.co.fayette.tx.us/page/fayette.Elections |
| Fort Bend | 822,779 | https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov |
| Garza | 5,816 | https://www.garzacounty.net/page/homepage |
| Gillespie | 26,725 | https://www.gillespiecounty.org/page/election_info |
| Guadalupe | 172,706 | https://www.co.guadalupe.tx.us |
| Harris | 4,731,145 | https://www.harrisvotes.org/ |

| | | |
|--------------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hays | 241,067 | https://hayscountytexas.com/ |
| Hood | 61,598 | https://www.co.hockley.tx.us/ |
| Jefferson | 256,526 | https://www.jeffersonelections.com/ |
| Johnson | 179,927 | https://www.johnsoncountytexas.org/ |
| Kaufman | 145,310 | https://www.kaufmancounty.net |
| Kendall | 44,279 | https://www.co.kendall.tx.us |
| Lubbock | 310,639 | https://www.votelubbock.org/ |
| McLennan | 260,579 | https://www.co.mclennan.tx.us/ |
| Midland | 169,983 | https://www.co.midland.tx.us/ |
| Montague | 19,965 | https://www.co.montague.tx.us/ |
| Montgomery | 620,443 | https://www.mctx.org/ |
| Moore | 21,358 | https://www.co.moore.tx.us/ |
| Nacogdoches | 64,653 | https://www.co.nacogdoches.tx.us/index.asp |
| Newton | 12,217 | https://www.co.newton.tx.us/ |
| Panola | 22,491 | https://www.co.panola.tx.us/ |
| Parker | 148,222 | https://www.parkercountytexas.com/ |
| Roberts | 827 | https://www.co.roberts.tx.us/ |
| San Patricio | 68,755 | https://www.co.san-patricio.tx.us |
| Sherman | 2,782 | https://www.co.sherman.tx.us |
| Smith | 233,479 | https://www.smith-county.com |
| Tarrant | 2,110,640 | https://www.tarrantcounty.com/en/elections.html |
| Terry | 11,831 | https://www.co.terry.tx.us/ |
| Walker | 76,400 | https://www.co.walker.tx.us/ |
| Waller | 56,794 | https://www.co.waller.tx.us/ |
| Washington | 35,805 | http://www.co.washington.tx.us/ |
| Webb | 267,114 | https://www.webbcountytexas.gov/ElectionsAdministration/ |
| Wharton | 41,570 | http://www.co.wharton.tx.us/ |
| Williamson | 609,017 | https://www.wilco.org/ |
| Winkler | 7,791 | http://www.co.winkler.tx.us/ |
| Wood | 44,843 | https://www.mywoodcounty.com |

1. Website security

Points - 5 points if the website is labeled “secure.” Secure websites have “https” and a lock before the URL. Not secure has an “http” and no lock.

Points - 5 points if the website is “.gov”

| County Websites URL labels | Counties | Percent |
|-----------------------------------|----------|---------|
| URL label “not secure” | 10 | 4 % |
| URL label has a lock for "secure" | 244 | 96 % |
| URL verified with “.gov” | 17 | 7 % |

Discussion:

The League applauds the counties that use a verified .gov URL - Denton, Fort Bend, Cameron, Brazoria, Val Verde, Galveston, Travis, Collin, Tom Green, Aransas, Grimes, Atascosa, Randall, Burleson, Foard, Parmer.

To avoid voter confusion, best practice is for counties to use an official .gov website. Voters will easily be able to know they are on the official county website. 237 county websites have less desirable URLs, ending in “.com” “.net” “.org” or “.tx.us”.

Example: Fort Bend County uses an official .gov website at <https://www.fortbendcountytexas.gov/>.

This website appears official but is not: <https://fortbendcounty.com/>.

Example: Collin County uses an official .gov website at <https://www.collincountytexas.gov/>

This website appears official, but is not: <https://www.collincountytexasvotes.com/>.

Example: Tarrant County does **not** use a .gov website. <https://www.tarrantcounty.com/en/elections.html>

This website appears official, but is not: <https://www.tarrantvotes.com/>

Example: Dallas County does **not** use a .gov website: <https://www.dallascountytexasvotes.org/>

This website appears official, but it is not: <https://www.votedallas.org/>

Counties are encouraged to:

- Use a government-verified [DotGov](https://www.dotgov.gov/) domain so voters will feel confident they are at the right website.
- Ensure the URL has a lock with HTTPS for security.

2. Easy for voters to find election and voting information

Points - 5 points if a simple, recognizable word like “election” or “voting” is on the home page, or if “election” or “voting” is on a dropdown found on the homepage.

| Election webpage easy to find | Counties | Percent |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Provides a simple recognizable word like “election” or “voting” on the home page or “election” or “voting” on a dropdown found on the homepage. | 204 | 80 % |
| Does not provide a simple recognizable word like “election” or “voting” on the home page or “election” or “voting” on a dropdown found on the homepage. | 50 | 20 % |

Discussion:

Since 2016, 50 counties have continued to make it difficult for voters by not providing a simple word like “Election” or “Voting” in the menu or menu dropdown. Voters in those counties continue to be left with either minimal voting or election information or voters have to search for how to register to vote on the “Tax Assessor Collector” page or search for Election Notices on the “County Clerk” page.

Counties are encouraged to:

- Provide the word “election” or “voting” in the menu or menu dropdown.

3. Voting and election information is up-to-date and accurate

Points - 7.5 points for each item listed

| Item found on website | Counties | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Contact information for County Election Office | 220 | 87% |
| Early voting and election day dates, hours, locations | 212 | 83% |
| Sample ballots | 211 | 83% |
| Register to vote | 183 | 72% |
| Update your voter registration online voter | 112 | 44% |
| Volunteer Deputy Registrars (VDRs) | 67 | 26% |
| Vote by Mail | 120 | 47% |
| Vote by Mail tracker | 74 | 29% |
| Election clerk, poll worker, poll watcher, or election judge training | 93 | 36% |
| Voting equipment testing often called tabulation | 103 | 41% |

Discussion

The new 2021 election law mandated a new application for ballot by mail and voter registration application. It also allowed voters access to a new vote by mail tracker tool and created updates to training for election workers, poll watchers, etc. These new requirements, processes and options allow citizens to participate in our democracy.

NOTE: 5 counties provided links to out of date Applications for a Ballot by Mail. Multiple counties linked to out of date voter registration applications.

Counties are encouraged to:

- Use links from the Secretary of State's website when available to provide specific resources for voters:
 - My Voter Portal [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Voter registration information [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Update your voter registration [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Vote by mail [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Track my Ballot [English](#) [Spanish](#)

4. Help for special categories of voters

Points - 5 points for each category in this list

| Specific information provided for the following categories of voters | Counties | Percent |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Military and overseas | 104 | 41 % |
| Voters with special needs/disabled | 87 | 34 % |
| Student voters | 34 | 13 % |

Discussion

Voters with special needs/disabled desire to vote should be supported and facilitated. The Military and overseas voters need extra information to vote in elections. High school and college student voters are the future of our democracy. Please welcome them to your website by providing information they need to vote.

Counties are encouraged to:

- [Voters With Special Needs](#)
- [Military and Overseas Voters](#)

The Secretary of State's office does not have adequate information dedicated to young voters, student voters, or high school voters, so counties are encouraged to provide their own information or include links to other nonpartisan sources.

- The League's nonpartisan voter education website VOTE411.org provides a [First Time Voter](#) page.
- Campus Votes Project <https://www.campusvoteproject.org/stateguides/Texas>

Additionally:

- [The Americans with Disabilities Act](#) prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities. Information needs to be presented in an accessible format. Links to PDFs, for example, are not an accessible format according to [Chapter 5, Website Accessibility Under Title II of the ADA](#).
- While posting the “Notice of Voting Order” fulfills the needs of the election law, that language does not clearly denote information for voters with disabilities. Counties should provide voters with disabilities with a clear, specific title and link to relevant information.

5. Voter ID

Points - 5 points if any accurate voter ID information provided

| Item | Counties | Percent |
|-----------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| Provides voter ID information | 164 | 65 % |
| Does not provide voter ID information | 88 | 35 % |
| Provide voter ID information in Spanish | 93 | 37 % |

Discussion

Many voters have questions about what documents they need to bring to the polls to be able to vote. This is one of the essential pieces of information that can either facilitate or hinder the voting experience. Many county websites just link to a PDF of the voter id requirements. PDFs are hard to read on a mobile device, are limited in scope, and do not meet the needs of voters with disabilities per the ADA.

Unfortunately, the Secretary of State’s [Voter ID page](#) is not written in plain language, for example, using the word “impediment” 24 times, which can be intimidating for voters.

Counties are encouraged to:

- Use simple images from the Secretary of State’s [Ready Check Vote](#) campaign or embeddable tools.

6. Texas Secretary of State

Points - 5 points - Yes; 0 points - No

| County links to the www.votetexas.gov or https://www.sos.state.tx.us/ | Counties | Percent |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| No SOS link provided | 76 | 30 % |
| Link to SOS provided | 178 | 70 % |

Discussion

Counties can provide clearly defined links on their websites to other government sites that will help voters find the information that they need.

“The Secretary serves as Chief Election Officer for Texas, assisting county election officials and ensuring the uniform application and interpretation of election laws throughout Texas.”

<https://www.sos.state.tx.us/about/index.shtml>

Counties are encouraged to:

- Provide a simple link to VoteTexas.gov
- Use [tools or embeddable images](#) to promote votetexas.gov

7. Languages Voters Use

Points - 5 points - Spanish or other; Sufficient voter information is provided in Spanish for a voter to participate in the election. 0 points -English only

| Languages voters use | Counties | Percent |
|----------------------|----------|---------|
| Spanish | 160 | 63 % |
| English only | 94 | 37 % |

Discussion

As stated in a [Texas Secretary of State Advisory No. 2019-10](#):

“Pursuant to state and federal law, all election materials prepared for voters in English must also be provided in Spanish, and any other required minority languages. The bilingual requirement applies to instruction posters, ballots, official affidavits and other forms requiring voter’s signature, early voting materials, and all other election information provided to voters in English.” Tex. Elec. Code § 272.005, 52 U.S.C. 10303(f)(4) and 52 U.S.C. 10503.

Counties are encouraged to:

- Provide links to votetexas.gov website in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- For example, use this simple list.
 - [VoteTexas.gov English](#) [Spanish](#)

- My Voter Portal [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Voter registration information [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Update your voter registration [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Vote by mail [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Track my Ballot [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Voter ID information [English](#) [Spanish](#)

8. [VOTE411.org](#), The League's Nonpartisan Voters Guide

Points - 5 points - Yes; 0 points - No

| Links to VOTE411.org or LWVTexas.org or local League | Counties | Percent |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|---------|
| No link provided | 206 | 81 % |
| Provides a link | 48 | 19 % |

Discussion

Voters often ask for information about candidates and explanations of what is on the ballot. It is easy for voters to compare candidates and find explanations for what is on the ballot with the League's Voters Guide at [VOTE411.org](#).

The League of Women Voters of Texas is a nonpartisan organization. Our mission is empowering voters, defending democracy. The League never supports or opposes political parties or candidates. We provide a nonpartisan *Voters Guide* at [VOTE411.org](#) for statewide elections and local elections if there is a local League in the community . All candidates are invited to answer questions. Answers are unedited. The *Voters Guide* is available by early voting for statewide elections.

Counties are encouraged to:

- Provide [VOTE411.org](#), which only provides the Leagues of Women Voters nonpartisan *Voters Guide*.
- We don't recommend posting LWVTexas.org because more than the *Voters Guide* is available.

A Selection of Outstanding County Election Websites

Counties large and small can provide valuable election websites for their citizens to get the information they need to vote in every election.

El Paso County

"The site is enthusiastic about educating and encouraging voters to vote."

County election website: <https://epcountyvotes.com/>

Created by: [A Hello Amigo Website](#)

Elections administrator: Lisa Wise

Census as in 2020: 865,657

Dallas County

"This is the most comprehensive and appealing website I've seen. It clearly explains every step to voters and uses graphics effectively."

County website: <https://www.dallascountyvotes.org/>

Created by: unknown

Elections administrator: Michael Scarpello

Census as in 2020: 2,613,539

Bastrop County

"Easy to navigate. The care that is given to this website shows the county cares about voters!"

County website: <https://www.bastropvotes.org/>

Created by: unknown

Elections administrator: Kristin Miles

Census as in 2020: 97,216

Tarrant County

"Election Security is prominent and includes an animated video from US Election Assistance about each step in the process and how it is secure."

County website:

<http://www.tarrantcounty.com/en/elections>

Created by: unknown

Elections administrator: Heider Garcia

Census as in 2020: 2,110,640

Web Posting Requirements for County Websites

- **Secretary of State's May 7, 2022 Advisory**
<https://www.sos.texas.gov/elections/laws/advisory2021-23.shtml# 3. Notice of>
- **Secretary of State's Oct. 4, 2019 Advisory**
<https://www.sos.texas.gov/elections/laws/advisory2019-19.shtml>

House Bill 1382 (Bucy):

- **Ballot by Mail Tracker:** Requires the Secretary of State to provide an online tool on the Secretary of State's website that enables a person who has submitted an application for a ballot by mail to track the location and status of the person's application and ballot.
 - For each carrier envelope containing a mail ballot, the ballot by mail tracker must assign or record a serially numbered and sequentially issued barcode or tracking number unique to each envelope.
 - **NOTE:** The mail ballot tracker will only be available for elections in which the county election officer is the early voting clerk.
- **Effective Date:** January 1, 2022
- **Statutes Affected:** Election Code §§ 86.015; 87.121

Senate Bill 1116 (Bettencourt): Provides new web posting requirements related to election and candidate information.

- **Candidate and Polling Place Information on County, City, and School District Websites:** Not later than the 21st day before election day, a county that holds an election or provides election services for an election must post certain information related to its upcoming elections.
 - The date of the election;
 - The location of each polling place;
 - Each candidate for an elected office on the ballot; and
 - Each measure on the ballot.
- A city or independent school district that holds an election and maintains an Internet website must also post this same election information on its website even if the county is posting this data.
- **Effective Date:** September 1, 2021
- **Statutes Affected:** Election Code §§ 4.009, 65.016

Senate Bill 1116 (Bettencourt): Provides new web posting requirements related to election and candidate information.

- **Election Results Information on County, City, and School District Websites:** A county that holds an election or provides election services for an election for a public entity must post certain information on their website.
- A city or independent school district that holds an election and maintains an Internet website must also post certain information on its website related to election results even if the county is posting such

information.

- Information should be posted as soon as practicable after the election and must be accessible without having to make more than two selections or view more than two network locations after accessing the home page of the county, city or school district, whichever is applicable.
- Required information on websites:
 - the results of each election;
 - the total number of votes cast;
 - the total number of votes cast for each candidate or for or against each measure;
 - the total number of votes cast by personal appearance on election day;
 - the total number of votes cast by personal appearance or mail during the early voting period; and
 - the total number of counted and uncounted provisional ballots cast.
- Effective Date: September 1, 2021
- Statutes Affected: Election Code §§ 4.009, 65.016

Thanks to the volunteers

Thanks to all the wonderful League volunteers who helped review all 254 county websites: Grace Chimene, Karen Kelly, Nicole Frazier, Maddie Venn, Mary Venn, Aubrie Jacobson, Janis Richardson, Dorothy Marchand, Susan Schultz, Carol Martin, Katharina Koholka, Elisabeth Macnamara, Jaci Elliott. The League is an all volunteer grassroots organization. Your dedication to Empowering Voters. Defending Democracy in Texas is greatly appreciated!

2022 Suggested Best Practices for County Election Websites

Texas Secretary of State [Internet Posting Requirements for Political Subdivisions](#) (2019), [Advisory](#) (5/2021)

1. Website security!

- Apply for an official county website!
 - Use a government-verified [DotGov](#) domain so voters will feel confident they are at the right website and don't mistakenly rely on information from an unofficial website
- Required annual [county cybersecurity training](#)
 - The [Texas Department of Information Resources \(DIR\)](#) has published a list of cybersecurity training programs for use by state and local government employees.
- Follow [Texas Secretary of State Election Security Best Practices \(April 2020\)](#). Counties were required to complete the mandated [Texas Secretary of State's Election Security Analysis \(ESA\)](#).
- Take action to get an encrypted county website (HTTPS). <https://letsencrypt.org/>
 - Apply for "https://" and a "lock" will appear on your URL.
- Follow [domain security best practices](#) of the U.S. General Services Administration
 - LWVTX and the TX SOS aim to get 100% of counties signed up for the [EI-ISAC](#)
 - Apply for the free [DMARC](#) domain-based message authentication and reporting
 - Use the [DMARC and email authentication](#) best practices from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).
 - Sign up for a network and vulnerability scanning service for government organizations called "[Cyber Hygiene](#)" operated by the DHS.
 - Join MS-ISAC, the [Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#). MS-ISAC has been [designated by DHS](#) as the cybersecurity information sharing center for state, local, tribal, and territorial governments, and works to help ensure the resiliency of government systems.

Resources:

- [Texas Department of Information Resources](#) provides the Texas Cybersecurity Strategic Plan.
- [DotGov best practices](#) Domain management to ensure a safe experience for your organization and your users.

2. Mobile friendly!

- Select a website design that works for all devices.
- Put the most important information at the top of the page.
- Use a phone to regularly test the election web page.
- Avoid using PDFs, which are hard to view on a phone. Instead, place the information directly on the web page or use a Word or Google document.
- Ensure voters can complete common tasks, such as:
 - Finding important election dates
 - Registering to vote & updating voter registration
 - Applying to vote by mail & tracking vote by mail
 - Finding polling locations and times.

3. Easy for voters to find election and voting information!

- Make "Elections" or "Voting" a link on your homepage.

- Follow the [Center for Civics Design Field Guide for Designing Election Department Websites](#).
 - Help voters find your website.
 - Connect your website to other government sites (i.e., the Texas Secretary of State and www.votetexas.org).
 - Answer questions, such as “What’s on the ballot?” Show an example.
 - Group navigation to answer voters’ questions.
 - Help visitors know what site they are on and what will be covered there.
 - Write links that use words voters use and that helps voters know where they will end up.
 - Put the most important information in the main menu or the center section of the page.
 - Help voters find ballot information, especially if sample ballots are within a widget.
 - Use words that voters use in links, headings, and graphics.
 - Help voters see at a glance what each chunk of information is about.
- Use words or icons voters commonly use! Review and use the Center for Civics Design Field Guide for [Writing Instructions Voters Understand](#) and [Creating Accessible Online Information](#).
 - The [Center for Civics Design](#) suggests election officials use words that voters commonly use in links, headings, and graphics.
- If your county needs a website or a new election website, consider a free [Election Website Template](#) provided by electiontools.org.
- Plainlanguage.gov - Plain language makes it easier for the public to read, understand, and use government communications.

4. Voting and election information are up to date and accurate!

- Avoid election jargon; use plain words voters understand.
- At the top of the page, provide contact information for election officials: name, address, phone, and email.
- PDFs are not recommended by the ADA. Move voter information directly onto the webpage.
- Use links from the Secretary of State’s website to provide specific resources for voters:
 - My Voter Portal [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Voter registration information [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Update your voter registration [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Vote by mail [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Track my Ballot [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - Voter ID information [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - [Military/Overseas Voters](#)
 - [Student Voters](#)
 - [Voters With Special Needs](#)
 - [Election day results](#)
- Counties are responsible for certifying VDRs and should provide information about how to become a certified voter deputy registrar, along with other available training.
- Similarly, counties should provide clear information on recruiting and training election workers.
- Take advantage of training offered by the Texas Secretary of State and Texas Association of Counties regarding new election laws and how to comply.

Resources:

Texas Secretary of State: <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/index.html>

Texas Association of Counties: [Lists of Requirements for County Websites](#)

5. Help for special categories of voters!

- **Voters with disabilities**
 - Provide website accessibility
 - U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division *Disability Rights Section* [Accessibility of State and Local Government Websites to People with Disabilities](#)
 - Review [Chapter 5. Website Accessibility Under Title II of the ADA \(HTML\)](#) | [\(PDF\)](#)
 - Use HTML format on an accessible website to ensure that the website is accessible for voters with disabilities.
 - Do not use PDFs to provide information to voters! PDFs are not accessible by voters with low vision and are not the best practice for mobile phones.
 - Use words voters commonly use!
 - Use words such as “Voters with Disabilities” or “Voters with Special Needs.”
 - Replace the title “Notice of Voting Order” with “Information for Voters with Disabilities” and an explanation of their rights.
- **Military and overseas voters**
 - Provide a link to [Federal Voting Assistance Program](#) voting assistance for service members, their families, and overseas citizens.
- **Student voters**
 - High school and college student voters are the future of our democracy. Please welcome them to your website by providing information they need to vote. The Secretary of State's office does not have adequate information dedicated to young voters, student voters, or high school voters, so counties are encouraged to provide their own information or include links to other nonpartisan sources.
 - The League's nonpartisan voter education website VOTE411.org provides a [First Time Voter](#) page.
 - Campus Votes Project <https://www.campusvoteproject.org/stateguides/Texas>

Resources

- [LWVTexas Voters with Disabilities.](#)
- [LWV Texas Student Voters](#)
- [LWV Texas First Time Voters](#)
- [LWV Civics Education](#) resources for high school educators
- [The Americans with Disabilities Act and Other Federal Laws Protecting the Rights of Voters with Disabilities](#)
- [Creating accessible online information from the Center for Civic Design](#)
- [18F Accessibility Guide](#) (includes recommended testing tools as well)
- [U.S. Web Design System Accessibility Design Principles](#)
- [Texas Disability Rights Resources for People with Disabilities](#)

6. Voter ID!

- List the voter ID information directly on the website and provide links for more details.
- Provide a link to the Secretary of State's page for [Voter ID Requirements](#)

- If using a PDF or image, let voters know what they will see when they click on the link.

7. Texas Secretary of State!

- Use a link or an embeddable code promoting www.votetexas.gov
<https://www.votetexas.gov/resources/promoting-votetexas-gov.html>
- Let voters know what they will find if they go to www.votetexas.gov or <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/>

8. Languages voters use!

- Provide a link to the Texas Secretary of State Spanish language website www.votetexas.gov/es/
- Review and use the Center for Civic Design Field Guide [Planning Language Access](#)

Resources

Federal Register, [Voting Rights Act Amendments of 2006, Determinations Under Section 203](#), A Notice by the Census Bureau on 12/08/2021

9. Nonpartisan Voters Guide!

- “The League of Women Voters of Texas nonpartisan Voters Guide is available before early voting for statewide elections”. Link to VOTE411.org [English](#) [Spanish](#)

10. Share Verified Websites and Social Media Accounts

- Counties with social media should place their official county social media links on their county website.
- State Website - sos.state.tx.us
- Elections Website - VoteTexas.gov
- Facebook (English) - facebook.com/txsecretary
- Facebook (Spanish) - facebook.com/txsecretaria
- YouTube - [Texas Secretary of State](#)
- Instagram - [@texassecretary](#)
- State Twitter - [@TXsecofstate](#)
- Elections Twitter - [@VoteTexas](#)
- List county official websites and verified social media accounts
- Secretary of State’s Toll-free number: 800.252.VOTE(8683) email: elections@sos.texas.gov

County Election Website Checklist

- ☐ **Is the website secure?**
 - ☐ Official .gov website which has been verified as belonging to an official government organization in the United States
 - ☐ Use HTTPS. A lock () or https:// means you've safely connected
- ☐ **Is the election information so easy to find that voters can't possibly miss it?**
 - ☐ A limited number of clicks to find election information
 - ☐ Election information on its own page, not on the County Clerk or Tax Assessor page
 - ☐ Plain, recognizable words and icons: Elections, Voting, Register to Vote, Vote by Mail
- ☐ **Is the following information provided, up-to-date, and accurate?**
 - ☐ Contact information for county election office
 - ☐ Dates, hours, locations for early voting & Election Day
 - ☐ Sample ballots
 - ☐ My Voter Portal [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - ☐ Voter registration information [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - ☐ Update your voter registration [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - ☐ Vote by Mail [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - ☐ Ballot tracker [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - ☐ Voter ID information [English](#) [Spanish](#)
 - ☐ Volunteer Deputy Registrar
 - ☐ Details on election worker recruitment and training
 - ☐ Information on precinct boundary changes and signature verification committees
 - ☐ Schedules of public observation of election equipment accuracy testing
 - ☐ Election results, including required information on votes cast and provisional ballots
- ☐ **Is voter information provided for voters who are:**
 - ☐ [Military and overseas voters](#)
 - ☐ High school/student voters
 - ☐ [Voters with disabilities](#)
- ☐ **Are links to Texas Secretary of State election-related sites provided?**
 - ☐ [VoteTexas.gov](#) [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- ☐ **Is there a link to the League of Women Voters nonpartisan Voters Guide?**
 - ☐ [VOTE411.org](#) [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- ☐ **Learn more about best practices for election websites at:**
 - ☐ LWVTexas.org <https://lwvtexas.org/find-your-county-election-website>
 - ☐ Texas Association of Counties [website content tips & legal requirements for Texas websites](#)
 - ☐ [Civic Design](#) provides useful guidelines to make information easier for the public to understand and use
 - ☐ Texas Secretary of State [Internet Posting Requirements for Political Subdivisions](#) (2019), [Advisory](#) (5/2021)