

from the desk of...



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VoteHillsborough.org

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Civic Engagement involved in our community

Civic engagement means different things to different people. Joining your neighborhood association, volunteering at your child's school, promoting a cause, and signing a petition are just some of the ways you can be civically engaged.

Voting, is, of course, the form of civic engagement I'm most focused on. But they all tie together. All forms of civic engagement allow us to establish roots in our community, and thereby strengthen it. Participating should make you feel good.

In our office, we go out in the community as often as possible, so that we may help our engaged citizens register to vote and get information about elections and voting.

We partner with Hillsborough County Public Schools and hold voter registration drives at all public high schools (and a lot of private schools, too). We register college students at our local campuses. We set up tables at local festivals.

We attend meetings and events, large and small, to explain what it takes to put on elections, help people register to vote, and inform voters about where and when they can vote. We would be happy to attend your event. All you have to do is ask!



the flip side

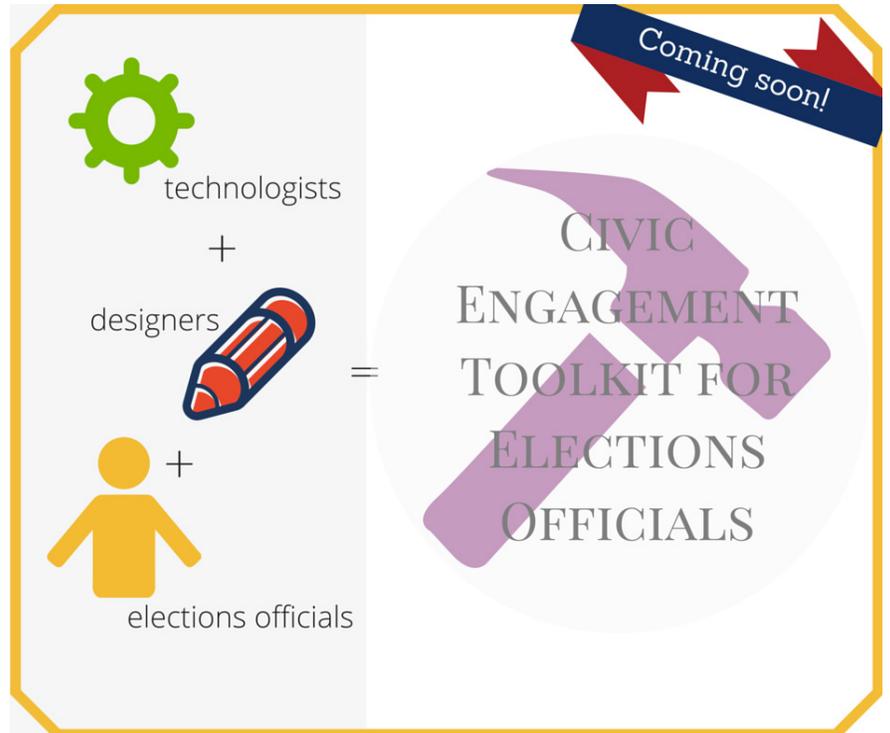


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ELECTION GEEKS

I spent a couple days in July with a bunch of "election geeks," and it was great. The event brought together the winners of the Knight Foundation's News Challenge on Elections, and we were on one of the winning teams. It's terrific to see that all across the country there are smart, hard-working people who are passionate about elections.

Our News Challenge team is a mix of technologists from the Center for Technology and Civic Life, designers from the Center for Civic Design, and elections officials from Inyo County, California; Suburban Cook County, Illinois; and (obviously) Hillsborough County, Florida.



We came together with the idea of creating an online toolkit that elections officials can use to communicate more effectively with voters and improve the management of polling places. Now that the project has been approved, we are seeking input from more elections officials to help us gather, create and test tools.



Our team = 127 years of local government experience

Some examples:

- ★ step-by-step instructions for creating an elections website (did you know that 1 out of 3 counties don't have one?)
- ★ icons to help voters navigate a voter guide, sample ballot or website more easily
- ★ a calculator to identify the right level of staffing and equipment to minimize lines at a polling place

In Florida, our elections offices already collaborate and share best practices on a regular basis. Now, with the help of some elections-savvy technologists and designers, we have the opportunity to learn and to improve elections on a national level.

the last word

Next month, on September 22nd, we will be celebrating National Voter Registration Day. Contact Jeff Ziegler, ziegler@hcsoe.org or (813) 574-1286 if you'd like us to host a voter registration drive for your organization on that day.

