



# National Federation of the Blind 2020 Blind and Low- Vision Voter Survey

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# Background

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- ▶ First survey following 2008 general election
- ▶ We also conducted surveys following the 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 general elections



# 2020 Blind Voter Survey

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- ▶ Two separate surveys for 2020 general election
  - ▶ In-person voters
  - ▶ Absentee/by-mail voters
- ▶ Total of 524 blind and low-vision voters completed the survey
  - ▶ 333 completed in-person survey
  - ▶ 191 completed absentee/by-mail survey
- ▶ 64% of survey participants voted at their polling place
- ▶ 36% of survey participants voted absentee



# Results of 2020 In-Person Blind Voter Survey

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- ▶ Were you offered or did you request an accessible voting machine?
  - ▶ In 2020, 92% answered yes
  - ▶ Highest value: 92% in 2020 and 2016
  - ▶ Lowest value: 63% in 2008



# Results of 2020 In-Person Blind Voter Survey

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- ▶ Was the accessible BMD up and running when you arrived at the polls?
  - ▶ In 2020, 68% answered yes
  - ▶ Only a slight improvement from the 66% reported in the 2016 and 2018 surveys
  - ▶ Highest value: 87% in 2008
  - ▶ Lowest value: 63% in 2012



# Results of 2020 In-Person Blind Voter Survey

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- ▶ Did poll workers have problems setting up or activating the accessible voting machine?
  - ▶ 24% answered yes in 2020
  - ▶ Highest percentage that responded yes was 33% in 2018, 2016, and 2012
  - ▶ Lowest value: 19% in 2008



# Results of 2020 In-Person Blind Voter Survey

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- ▶ Were you able to vote privately and independently using an accessible voting machine?
  - ▶ 77% said yes in 2020
  - ▶ Highest reported value: 86% in 2008 and 85% in 2016
  - ▶ Lowest value: 75% in 2012 and 2018



# Results of 2020 In-Person Blind Voter Survey

- ▶ Percentage of blind and low-vision voters who voted at the polls with assistance:
  - ▶ 2020: 25%
  - ▶ 2018: 29%
  - ▶ 2016: 17%
  - ▶ 2014: 21%
  - ▶ 2012: 32%
  - ▶ 2008: 37%



# Results of 2020 Absentee/By-Mail Blind Voter Survey

- ▶ Methods used to mark absentee ballot:
  - ▶ 37% marked paper ballot with assistance
  - ▶ 35% used an accessible electronic ballot delivery system to privately and independently mark their ballot
  - ▶ 20% independently hand marked a paper ballot
  - ▶ 8% used a Braille ballot or plastic template



# Results of 2020 Absentee/By-Mail Blind Voter Survey

- ▶ Reasons for choosing to use an electronic ballot delivery system:
  - ▶ To avoid risk of exposure to COVID-19 at the polling place: 42%
  - ▶ Paper ballot is inaccessible to me: 40%
  - ▶ I wanted to try it: 24%
  - ▶ I voted in an all vote by mail state: 6%



# Results of 2020 Absentee/By-Mail Blind Voter Survey

- ▶ Reasons for choosing to use a traditional paper ballot:
  - ▶ To avoid exposure to COVID-19 at the polls: 49%
  - ▶ I used a paper ballot for previous election(s): 28%
  - ▶ There is not an accessible way to vote absentee in my state: 18%



# Results of 2020 Absentee/By-Mail Blind Voter Survey

- ▶ Access technology used to mark absentee/by-mail ballot:
  - ▶ Screen reader: 35%
  - ▶ CCTV: 7%
  - ▶ Screen magnification: 5%
  - ▶ Refreshable Braille display: 3%
  - ▶ Other technology (hand-held magnifier, smartphone magnifier app): 13%
  - ▶ Did not use access technology to mark ballot: 48%



# Results of 2020 Absentee/By-Mail Blind Voter Survey

- ▶ 85% of survey respondents who used an electronic ballot delivery system said they found it easy to use
  - ▶ 7% said they encountered problems when printing the ballot or that printing the ballot was difficult