

## Fueling Election Success through Design Thinking

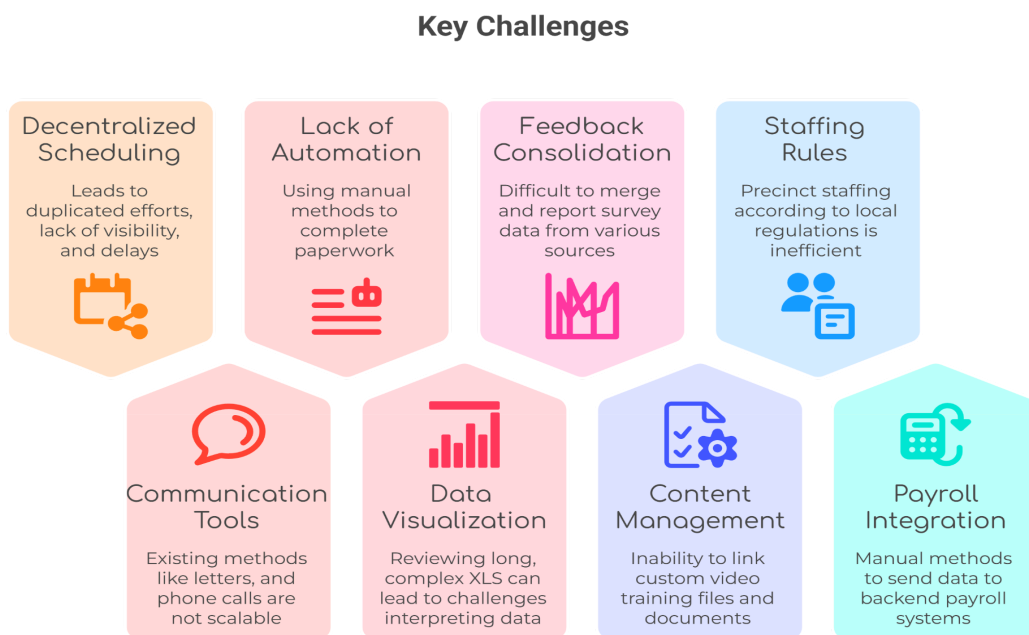
Across the nation, election offices are grappling with growing complexity in managing poll workers, training delivery, communications, and compliance—often under tight timelines and limited resources. One of the most logistically demanding aspects of election administration is poll worker coordination and polling location management, where outdated, paper-based processes and fragmented workflows create inefficiencies, communication gaps, and administrative burden.

Design thinking, a problem-solving approach rooted in empathy, iteration, and user-focused innovation—offers a powerful lens through which to reimagine election operations. Rather than enforcing rigid top-down solutions, this approach emphasizes listening to election teams, understanding their daily challenges, and co-creating flexible digital strategies that meet real needs.

This issue paper outlines eight high-impact opportunities to improve election workflows using a design-thinking approach. These recommendations are tool-agnostic, scalable, and configurable to fit the unique needs of any jurisdiction—without requiring a complete system overhaul.

### Opportunity Areas Inspired by Design Thinking

Each of the following opportunities addresses a core problem experienced by election officials and poll workers, reframed through empathy, clarity, and actionable innovation.



#### Authors

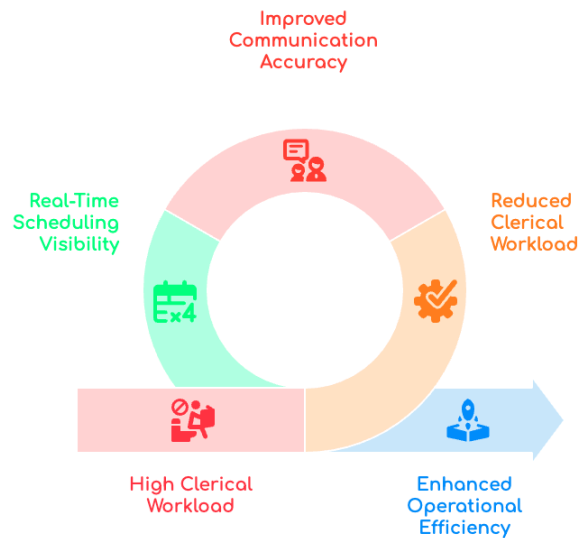
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## 1. Decentralized Scheduling and Communication

**Challenge:** Coordination is fragmented, with clerks often serving as intermediaries between workers and administrators.

**Design Insight:** Election workers need autonomy, visibility, and self-service tools to feel empowered.

**Solution:** Create a centralized portal where workers can indicate availability, enroll in training, watch videos, view FAQs, and track assignments

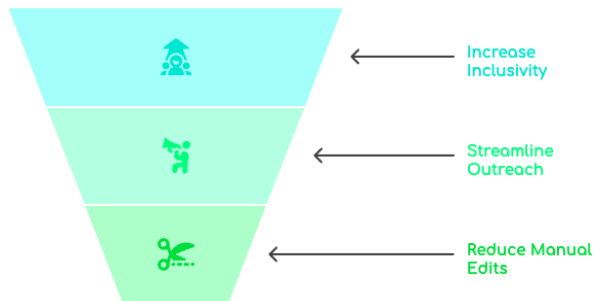


## 2. Lack of Multi-Lingual, Configurable Communication Tools

**Challenge:** Manual, static communications hinder outreach—especially to diverse communities.

**Design Insight:** Inclusion and clarity begin with language access and visual simplicity.

**Solution:** Enable configurable templates for multilingual emails, badges, training certificates, landing pages, and FAQs

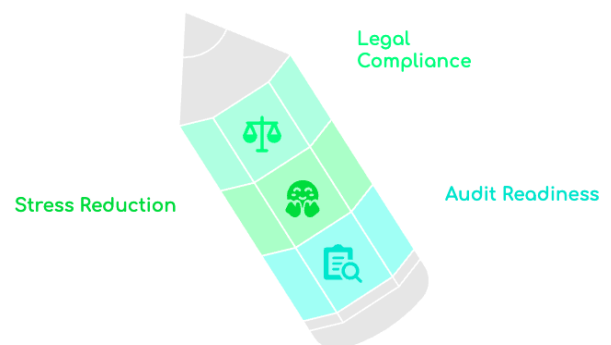


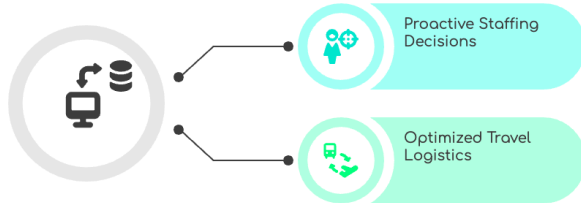
## 3. Precinct Checklist and Oath Acknowledgment Automation

**Challenge:** Paper checklists and manual oath tracking are time-consuming and error-prone.

**Design Insight:** Real-time visibility and accountability foster confidence and accuracy.

**Solution:** Implement automated digital checklists with live status updates and oath acknowledgments for easier tracking and compliance.



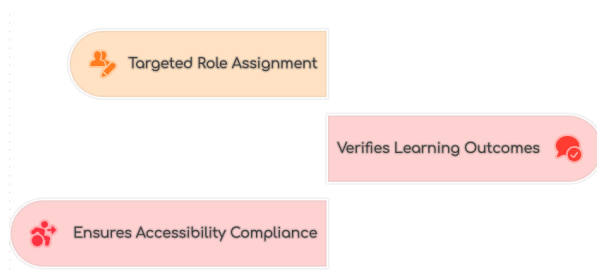


### 5. Election Worker Feedback & Survey Consolidation

**Challenge:** Poll worker feedback is collected inconsistently, limiting its usefulness.

**Design Insight:** Continuous feedback loops are essential to iteration and improvement.

**Solution:** Embed QR-code-based surveys linked to worker profiles to collect structured, analyzable insights at every stage of the process.



### 4. Precinct Preparedness Visualization

**Challenge:** Election staff often lack visibility into precinct readiness until issues arise.

**Design Insight:** Visual feedback enables rapid decision-making and improves preparedness.

**Solution:** Use map-based dashboards with color-coded staffing indicators and proximity-based assignment suggestion



### 6. Training Content Management & Quantitative Assessment

**Challenge:** Inconsistent training content and lack of assessments reduce effectiveness.

**Design Insight:** Workers want to feel confident and prepared—measured learning builds trust.

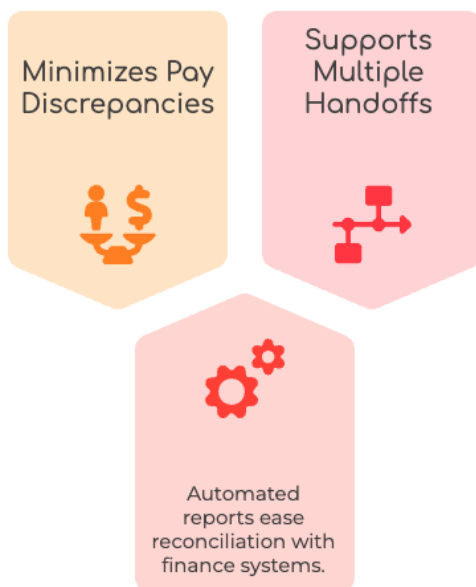
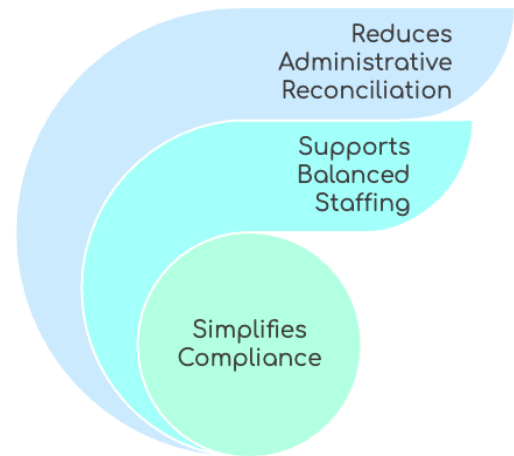
**Solution:** Curate jurisdiction-specific video training (e.g., accessibility awareness), track completion, and administer role-based assessments.

### 7. Configurable Staffing Rules by Precinct size and Party Affiliation

**Challenge:** Manually ensuring compliance with party and role-based quotas is difficult at scale.

**Design Insight:** Predefined, automated rules reduce bias and increase fairness.

**Solution:** Allow election teams to set staffing rules in advance—including minimum party representation and staff count by precinct size.



### 8. Integrated Payroll Calculations & Handoff

**Challenge:** Payroll processing is time-consuming and error-prone.

**Design Insight:** Back-office processes should be seamless, traceable, and low-touch.

**Solution:** Automate payroll calculation and export using attendance data, role, and pay rate—supporting common formats like CHIPS or vendor-specific schemas.

## Conclusion

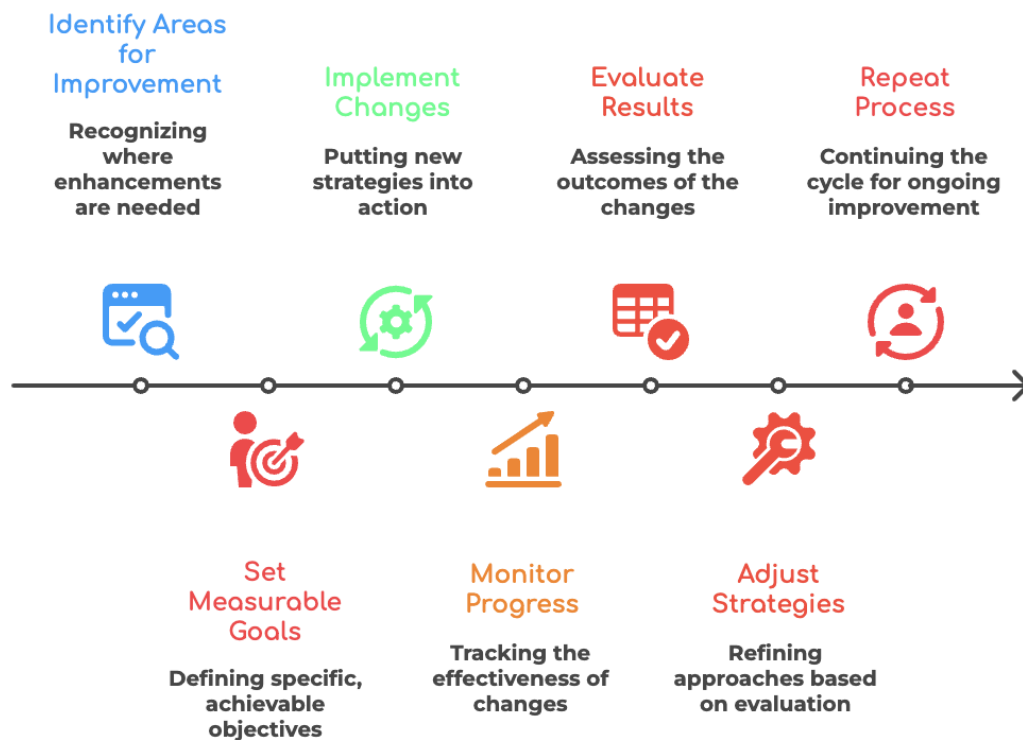
Modern election administration demands transparency, responsiveness, and human-centered innovation. Traditional paper-based workflows and siloed systems fall short in today's high-pressure, high-scrutiny environment.

By applying the principles of **design thinking**, election teams can go beyond digitization for its own sake and instead **build solutions that are empathetic, efficient, and adaptable**. The opportunities outlined here are not one-size-fits-all mandates—they are invitations to rethink operations, pilot targeted interventions, and co-create better systems with the people who use them.

## Next Steps for Election Administrators

To begin applying design thinking to your election operations, consider the following actions:

- **Listen First:** Engage your poll workers, trainers, and admins to surface pain points and unmet needs.
- **Prioritize Small Wins:** Identify high-friction processes where automation can deliver a big impact.
- **Prototype and Iterate:** Try lightweight rollouts in off-cycle elections or training environments.
- **Measure and Improve:** Collect structured feedback and use it to refine and scale your approach.



The **BallotDA platform** is purpose-built to help government agencies reimagine election workflows through configurable digital tools. From Location management, poll worker scheduling and training, Attendance kiosk, precinct readiness and payroll integration, BallotDA assists election teams by reducing manual effort, improving visibility, and ensuring compliance. We're committed to helping you move from legacy systems to forward thinking solutions **designed with election teams in mind**.

[Contact us today](#) to explore how BallotDA can support your goals with a customized roadmap or demo.