

Audit Revealed 43 States' Vote-By-Mail Application Forms Not Accessible to Many with Disabilities, as Deadlines Loom

Deque Systems Is Working with States to Repair This “Digital Divide,” Hosting The Fully Usable Application Forms for Access By All

HERNDON, VA – September 30, 2020 – Deque Systems’ audit of the application forms required for registered voters to vote by mail in November discovered that 43 states’ applications had some level of digital inaccessibility – making them challenging or impossible to complete by many people with disabilities. Five states do not have or require an application to vote by mail; two states have another application process.

Deque reached out to each state’s official in advance of this release, and as a free public service is “repairing” these states’ PDF applications to make them usable – or digitally accessible – to people with disabilities. State officials in 7 states jumped on this opportunity quickly, working with Deque on their remediated application forms. These states are Georgia, Rhode Island, Ohio, Montana, Missouri, Maryland and Kentucky.

These revised vote-by-mail applications, now usable by all, are available for registered voters and state officials at: <https://accessibility.deque.com/vote-by-mail-applications>.

The CDC says people with disabilities comprise as much as [26 percent of the population](#) which, given the slim margin of victory in recent elections, could have a significant impact in November.

Digitally accessible means these citizens can use screen readers or other special tools they depend on daily to read or complete documents on their

devices. Michigan and Massachusetts have accessible online application processes in addition to PDFs.

The deadlines to submit vote-by-mail applications vary from state to state, but generally conclude the last two weeks of October. Election day is November 3.

Completing an application for a mail-in ballot is a necessary step for mail-in voting in these states. Most Americans file this request online, or by completing the needed application information via a PDF document created and hosted by state governments.

“Mail-in ballots will be a preferred way to vote this year given the pandemic, but many states’ application process will be difficult or impossible for many people with disabilities. While most states made an effort to improve these documents’ digital accessibility to some degree, we still found access barriers across all 43 states,” comments Preeti Kumar, CEO of [Deque Systems](#).

“Voting is a right. It was an easy decision for us to offer these remediated PDFs as a free public service, hopefully making it easier for all to take advantage of mail-in voting options.”

What is Digital Accessibility?

Digital Accessibility is the practice of making digital documents, web and mobile apps accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. Many people with visual, auditory, motor, speech or cognitive disabilities rely on various forms of assistive technology or usability features to experience the full benefit the web has to offer. Without the continuous use of features like captions, alt-text for screen readers, zoom functions, simple presentation layouts and more, digital content may be inconvenient or impossible to use.

About Deque Systems

Deque (pronounced dee-cue) is a web accessibility software and services company, and our mission is Digital Equality. We believe everyone, regardless of their ability, should have equal access to the information, services, applications, and everything else on the web.

We work with enterprise-level businesses and organizations to ensure that their sites and mobile apps are accessible. Installed in over 250,000 browsers and with over 1,000 audit projects completed, Deque is the industry standard.

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For over fifteen years, Deque has been helping major corporations, government agencies, and other organizations ensure that their websites and mobile apps are accessible to everyone. We have more than fifteen years of history of serving the federal government, including undertaking the biggest accessibility program that's occurred in the United States government or anywhere. Deque also works with .edu's and mission-focused nonprofits to ensure that their materials and systems are usable and barrier free for users with disabilities. The company invented the first accessibility plug-in software, the first web-based testing platform, and the first server-based accessibility solution. All of these have been created in the service of helping our customers become accessible, advance the goals of their organization, and remove barriers for all users on the web.

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