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**CENTER FOR
INCLUSIVE
DEMOCRACY**

**2020 General Election: Voter Outreach and Education in
Counties Adopting the California Voter's Choice Act**

About the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID)

Celebrating its 10-year anniversary, the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID), formerly known as the California Civic Engagement Project, is part of the USC Sol Price School of Public Policy and is based in Sacramento. CID conducts a range of national and multi-state research initiatives exploring voting behavior, civic engagement, electoral and economic research, the intersection of social justice and democracy, and more. Its non-partisan research informs and empowers a wide range of policy and organizing efforts aimed at eliminating disparities in social and economic wellbeing. To learn more about CID's research, visit: cid.usc.edu.

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Executive Summary

In 2020, 15 California counties opted to conduct elections as prescribed by the Voter's Choice Act (VCA). This voting model replaces neighborhood polling places with multi-service vote centers available up to 10 days before Election Day. Any voter can use any vote center in their county to obtain voter services. VCA counties also send vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots to all registered voters, who can return them by mail, at a vote center, or at a secure ballot drop box. The VCA requires that counties conduct outreach to community members to educate them about the voting changes in their county and to encourage the use of new voting options. Counties must also establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) to advise the county elections office on electoral access for voters with disabilities and voters with limited English proficiency.

Key Findings about VCA Implementation in the 2020 General Election

Findings are based on a survey of the election's offices in all 15 VCA-adopting counties.

This report by the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID) focuses on identifying voter outreach and education conducted by counties, including through the VAAC and other partnerships, with an emphasis on voting access for voters with disabilities in VCA counties. The report also covers siting location priorities and implementation. Because the vote center model mandates fewer voting locations by design, placement of voting sites is especially important for accessibility. For a discussion of the study's methodology, please see the report (page 10).

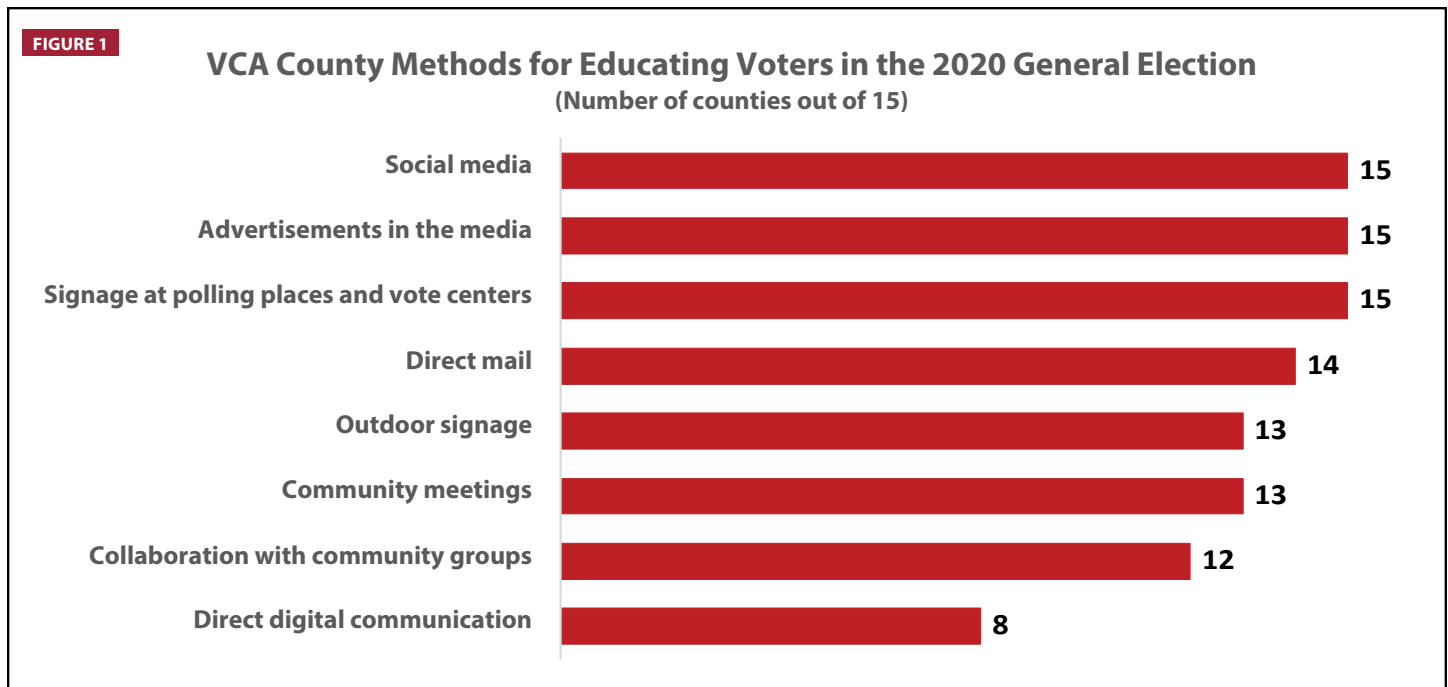
Our study addresses the following research questions:

1. What voter education and outreach efforts did VCA counties engage in for the 2020 general election?
2. What role did the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee and other partnerships play in the 2020 general election?
3. What were the priorities for locations and how did counties ensure an accessible voting experience for voters with disabilities in the 2020 general election?

1. Voter Outreach and Education

All VCA counties used multiple outreach methods to inform residents about the VCA

Every VCA county used numerous methods to reach eligible voters with information about the VCA. All 15 VCA counties conducted advertising campaigns in both traditional and social media outlets, and all reported posting signage at vote centers (Figure 1). All counties, with the exception of one, educated voters through direct mail. Thirteen of the 15 counties conducted voter outreach through outdoor signage (e.g., on a bus or billboard) and community meetings. Most VCA counties (12 of 15 counties) additionally reported collaborating with community groups on outreach.



VCA counties used numerous methods to reach out to voters with disabilities

Counties used a range of methods to reach out to voters with disabilities in order to provide information about the 2020 general election. The most common methods utilized to educate voters with disabilities were social media and community meetings. On average, VCA counties used six different methods to inform voters with disabilities and larger, more populous VCA counties reported using more diverse outreach methods than smaller counties. Twelve of the 15 VCA counties also held at least one virtual or in-person workshop for voters with disabilities. The three counties that did not hold either type of workshop were not required to do so because they first implemented the VCA in 2018 or reported COVID-19 as the reason.

Some VCA counties targeted voter outreach to historically underrepresented voters

Some VCA counties also targeted outreach and education efforts to historically underrepresented voters. Seven of 15 counties (Amador, El Dorado, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) indicated that their outreach efforts targeted at least one of the following groups: language minority voters, voters with disabilities, young voters, and senior voters. Only three counties (El Dorado, Sacramento, and San Mateo) reported conducting outreach specifically targeted to racial or ethnic groups, and four counties (Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, and Sacramento) reported outreach and targeted communications to Black and (except for Fresno) indigenous voters. Several counties reported conducting outreach to formerly incarcerated voters.

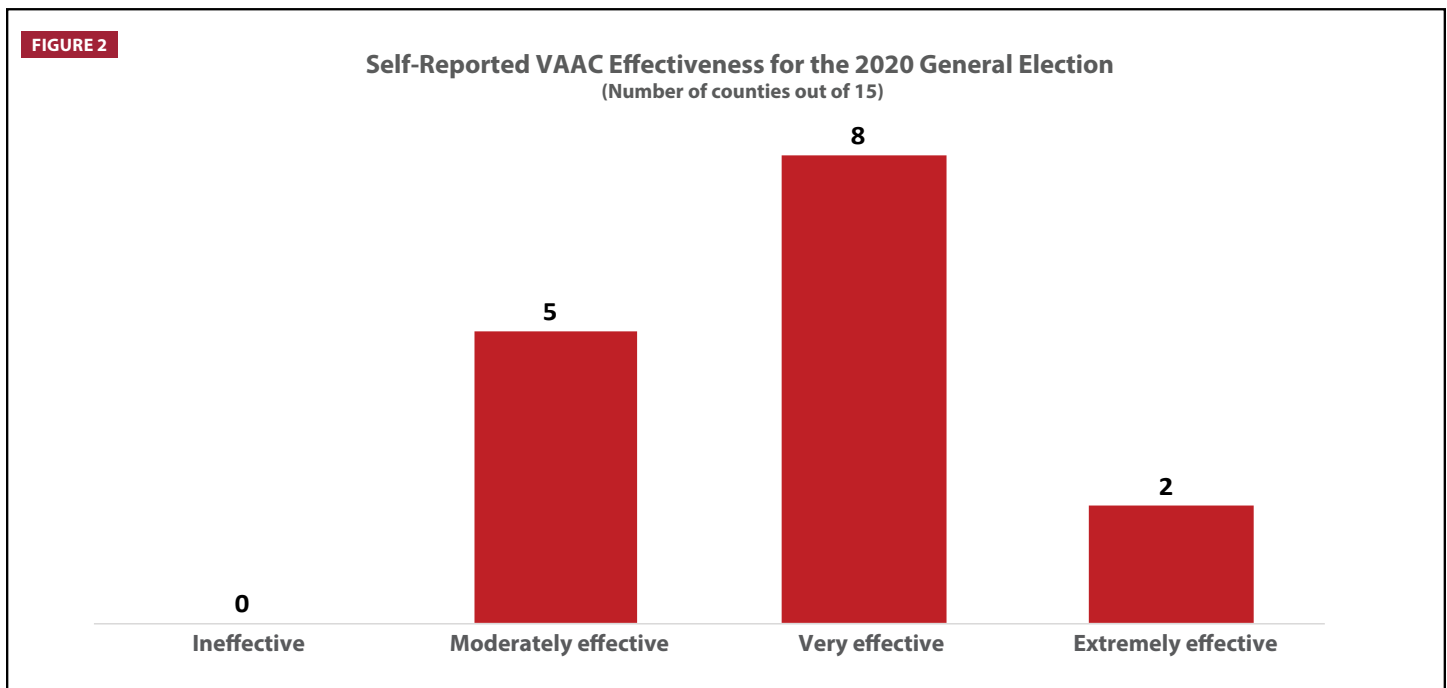
Counties were unsure of the most effective communication methods

Despite engaging in diverse outreach methods, many counties were unsure about what information was most effective for educating voters. Just under half of VCA counties reported that they either did not know which outreach methods were most effective for different voter groups or did not think that different types of information had an impact on different groups. Several counties reported that translating materials was effective for language minority groups; and some counties translated materials beyond what is required by law. Additionally, just over one-third of voters were aware of voting changes in their county highlighting the need for effective messaging.

2. Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee & Community Partnerships

Robustness of VAACs varied across counties

All VCA counties met the requirement to establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) for the 2020 general election, but their implementation and effectiveness varied from county to county. Several counties noted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on VCA implementation, including with holding VAAC meetings. While one county chose to reach out to individual VAAC members instead of convening meetings, the remaining counties held between one and six meetings with a range of two to 40 people in attendance. Nevertheless, all counties reported that their VAAC was at least moderately effective and counties most commonly reported their VAAC as very effective (Figure 2). County elections offices reported that their VAACs contributed to outreach efforts (10 counties), assisted with implementation such as identifying siting locations (eight counties), and informed best practices for the outreach and education strategies (10 counties).



Partnerships helped counties inform voters about the VCA

In addition to partnerships formed through the establishment of VAACs, VCA counties formed partnerships as part of their VCA implementation and voter outreach efforts. Fourteen of the 15 counties reported ongoing collaboration with community leaders and voter advocacy groups. In addition, counties partnered with a range of community groups, government agencies, media entities, and private groups. These partners primarily helped with voter outreach and education, and in some cases provided feedback or resources for VCA implementation, including vote center siting.

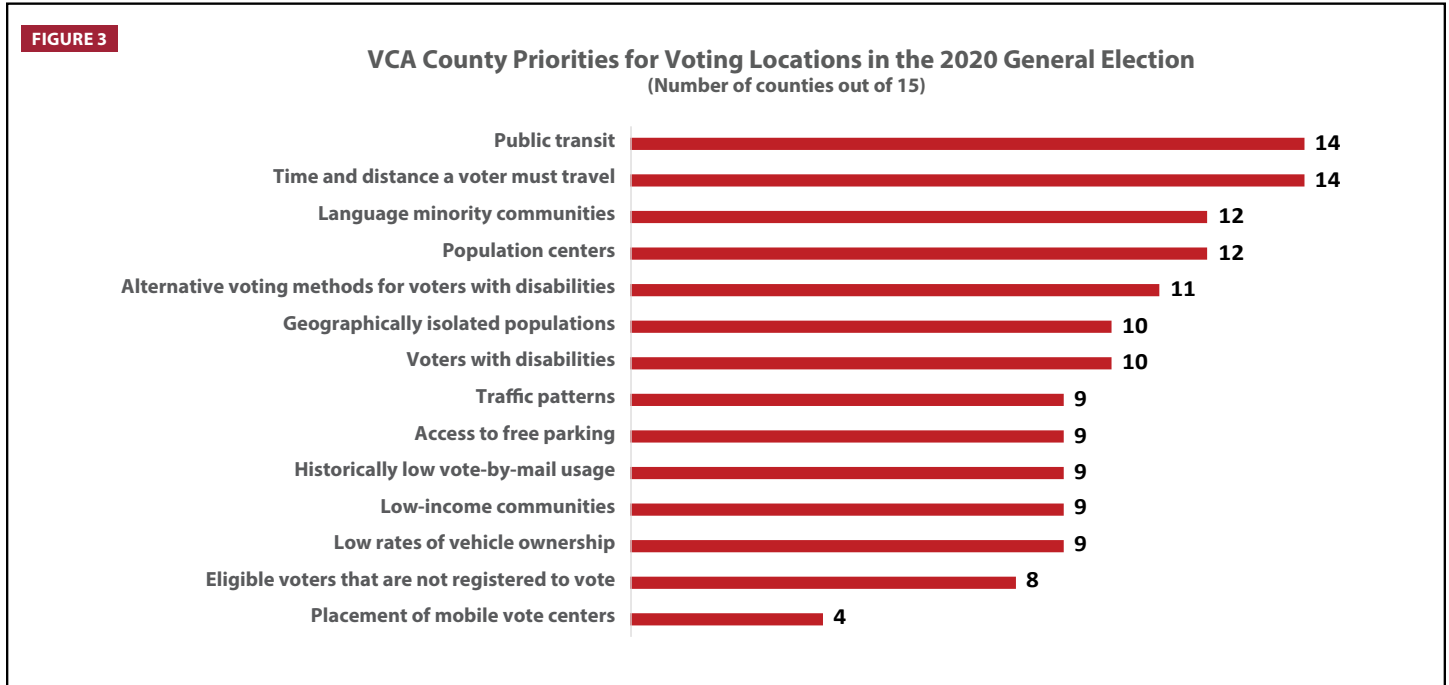
Partnerships provided counties with many benefits but there is room for improvements

All counties found VCA-related collaboration beneficial, however most counties also provided suggestions for how the collaborative process could be improved. Six counties wanted more direct participation or action (as opposed to feedback) from community partners. Several counties also reported that longer-term engagement, more frequent meetings, or more LAAC (Language Accessibility Advisory Committee) or VAAC members would have been improved effectiveness. Just over one-third of counties suggested that stronger partnerships could have helped increase outreach or voter turnout from at least one of the following groups: non-English language groups, racial and ethnic groups, rural voters, or young voters. Similar to the VAAC, the LAAC advises county elections officials on electoral access for non-English language voters.

3. Priorities for Siting Locations and Accessibility for In-Person Voting

Counties balanced many priorities when selecting voting location sites

VCA counties noted increased challenges with siting locations and recruiting vote center workers due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic; elections offices also had trouble finding locations that were available for extended voting periods available under the VCA. However, counties still aimed to balance several priorities in their selection of voting location sites, and although each county had a different set of priorities depending on many factors, the most common priorities were proximity to public transit and the time and distance a voter must travel to reach the voting site (Figure 3).



Counties prioritized voters with disabilities in siting voting locations

The VCA reduces the total number of voting locations in a county, therefore adopting counties must work to ensure that site reductions do not pose additional accessibility challenges for voters with disabilities. Two-thirds of VCA counties reported that voters with disabilities were a specific priority for siting locations, and a vast majority prioritized an easily accessible location and/or a site that meets ADA requirements. Most counties (11 of 15 counties) also prioritized alternative voting methods for voters with disabilities during the 2020 general elections.

VCA counties trained vote center workers on how to serve voters with disabilities

All VCA counties provided disability-related training to vote center workers. Most counties specified that this training included sensitivity training (12 of 15 counties), options for voters with disabilities (14 of 15 counties), and Ballot Marking Device (BMD) or general procedure training (10 of 15 counties). The content for staff training in all counties was informed by the VAAC, Disability Rights California or other partnerships, and/or included content from the Secretary of State’s office or another government agency.

Accessibility and use of the Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail option varied by county

The VCA requires counties to offer the option of Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM). RAVBM allows voters with disabilities to request an electronic ballot that they can download, read and mark using their own accessible technology. Voters can then print and cast the ballot by mail, return it to a drop box, or drop it off at a voting location. All VCA counties reported having information about RAVBM on their county website, in voter guides, or at county hosted events. Three counties (Los Angeles, Madera, and Napa) also advertised about RAVBM in the media.

The number of RAVBM ballots cast varied widely by county. At the low end, four counties reported that fewer than 20 voters used RAVBM ballots and at the high end, three counties reported over 500 RAVBM ballots cast. CID explored VCA county websites to observe the content and placement of RAVBM information and found a qualitative difference between sites. Although CID found RAVBM information on the elections websites of 11 counties (requiring one to three clicks to access), we were unable to locate RAVBM information on the websites of four counties. The counties with the lowest usage of RAVBM ballots did not fully match those whose websites had little to no RAVBM information based on CID's observation.

Summary

The California Voter's Choice Act requires adopting counties to provide targeted outreach so voters are aware of voting changes and to administer elections that are accessible to all voters. Despite the challenges of administering the 2020 general election in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, county elections officials reported a variety of outreach activities. A vast majority of counties educated voters through social media, community meetings, advertisements in the media, and collaboration with community groups.

VCA-implementation was collaborative with counties utilizing public input as well as feedback from their VAAC and community partners to ensure an accessible voting experience for voters with disabilities. As required by the VCA, all counties formed VAACs to provide feedback on accessibility as well as to target outreach specifically to voters with disabilities. Two-thirds of counties said the VAAC provided knowledge that helped serve voters with disabilities including feedback on siting locations. VCA counties engaged in additional partnerships beyond their VAAC, which primarily assisted counties with voter outreach and education but also provided feedback on the VCA-implementation process. With regard to siting locations, nearly all counties considered proximity to public transportation and time and distance a voter would need to travel to reach a voting location; two-thirds of counties reported that voters with disabilities were a priority.

Although counties employed varied efforts to inform voters about VCA-related changes, many county elections offices reported that they did not know which types of information were most effective for specific voting groups. Further, just over one-third of voters were aware of voting changes in their county. The findings suggest that elections officials and community stakeholders implementing the VCA for the first time in future elections should not underestimate the degree of voter outreach and engagement that will be needed to successfully implement the new voting system.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on our survey findings:

1. Continue investing in education and outreach and consider specific messaging to different voting groups.

Surveyed elections administrators were largely unaware of what messaging was most effective for voters, while a majority of voters were unaware of voting changes in 2020.

- Despite the fact that a majority of counties met the VCA requirements in terms of voter outreach and education only about a third of voters knew about voting changes, according to CID's survey of eligible California voters.
- Official materials should be tested across different voting groups. High-use materials from county elections offices need to have plain and accessible language, quality translation, and readability by voters with disabilities and other historically underrepresented voting groups.
- Previous research by CID showed that different voting groups have different preference for how and where they cast a ballot.
- Counties should devote time and resources to test effective voter messaging for different voting groups – including voters with disabilities, voters of color, young voters, rural voters, and senior voters – so they can target relevant information, and so county financial resources have the greatest impact.

- Effective voter messaging should be done in collaboration with neighboring VCA counties or community partners.

2. Dedicate more time to fostering relationships with community partners.

When utilized, community partners can provide valuable insights and resources to enhance the elections process from start to finish.

- Elections officials noted that collaboration was challenging because of un-sustained interest and could have been improved if there were more meetings, more time dedicated, or more action from community partners. Long-term, sustained collaboration may allow community partners to assist more with implementation.
- Community partners can help elections officials reach more voters. One-third of counties said they could improve their outreach with at least one of the following groups: non-English language groups, racial and ethnic groups, rural voters, or young voters.
- Some VCA counties noted increased challenges with siting locations and recruiting vote center workers both due to state or countywide restrictions related to COVID-19 and also due to the length of time vote centers must be available and the amount of time elections officials had to plan. However, several counties noted that community groups helped identify and recruit vote center locations and staff, which if utilized, could serve as an asset to VCA counties in the future.

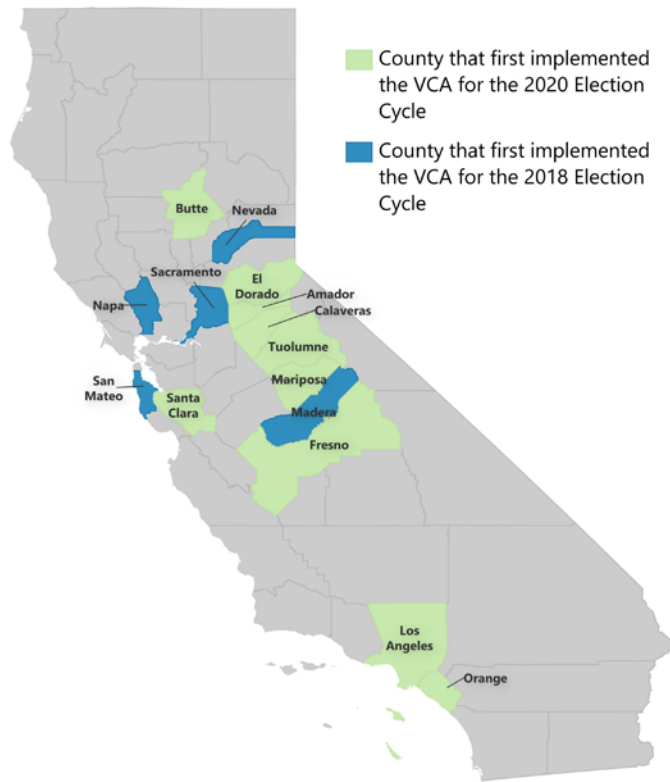
Introduction

In the 2020 general election, 15 California counties chose to conduct elections under the Voter's Choice Act (VCA).¹ The VCA requires that Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballots are automatically sent to all registered voters in a county. Voters have the option to submit their ballot by mail, drop it off at a designated drop off location or at a vote center. Voters can also vote in person at a vote center up to 10 days before Election Day and on Election Day. At vote centers, which replace traditional neighborhood polling places, voters can cast their ballots in person, drop off their completed vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots, access conditional voter registration, receive replacement ballots, and access additional resources, such as language assistance and accessible voting machines. While there are fewer vote centers than polling places by design, vote centers are open to voters for up to 10 days prior to Election Day and available for all voters to utilize countywide. In total, 15 California counties (approximately half the state's registered voter population) conducted elections under the VCA in 2020. Five counties, Madera, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, and San Mateo first adopted the VCA in the 2018 election cycle. These counties were joined by Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne in the 2020 election cycle (Figure 1).

Glossary

- **Election Administration Plan (EAP):** VCA counties are required to establish an Election Administration Plan. This plan must detail how the county intends to meet all requirements of the VCA, including how the elections office will engage the public and conduct outreach.
- **Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC):** VCA counties are required to establish a county LAAC to advise the county elections office as it relates to access to the electoral process for voters with limited English proficiency. Some non-VCA counties also have a LAAC.
- **Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC):** VCA counties are required to establish a county VAAC to advise the county elections office as it relates to access to the electoral process for voters with disabilities. Some non-VCA counties also have a VAAC.
- **Vote-by-mail (VBM):** VCA counties must deliver VBM ballots to all registered voters 28 days before Election Day. Voters can mark their VBM ballots at their convenience, which they can return by mail, dropped off at a ballot drop box, or dropped off at a vote center on or before Election Day.
- **Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM):** RAVBM is a system that allows voters to mark their selections using their own compatible technology to vote independently and privately in the comfort of their own home. After a voter marks their selections, they print out the selections and return the print out the same way they would return any paper VBM ballot.

FIGURE 1



With the adoption of the VCA by counties representing approximately half (49.6%) the voter population in California, policymakers and advocates alike have questioned how county elections offices have met all the new requirements of the law, and specifically how counties have informed voters about new options for casting a ballot. In order to understand the scope and reach of VCA counties efforts during the 2020 general election, we conducted a survey of the election offices of all 15 VCA counties. With this report we address the following research questions:

1. What voter education and outreach efforts did VCA counties engage in for the 2020 general election?
2. What role did the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee and partnerships play in the 2020 general election?
3. What were the priorities for locations and how did counties ensure an accessible voting experience for voters with disabilities in the 2020 general election?

In each of the following sections of this report, we provide an analysis of VCA counties activities related to outreach and education, the VAAC and other partnerships, and priorities for siting locations, as well as efforts specific to voters with disabilities and historically underrepresented groups in VCA-adopting counties during the November 3,

2020 general election. CID previously published a related statewide report: [California's Changing Electorate: A 2020 Post Election Analysis of Voting Behavior](#). Future reports in this series will include an analysis of interviews with voters within California's Black, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated communities.

Survey Methodology

In order to understand the scope of elections-related activities that VCA counties engaged in during the 2020 general election, we conducted a survey of the election offices of all 15 VCA-adopting counties. We collected data on the outreach methods, collaboration with the VAAC and stakeholders, and vote center siting priorities employed by VCA county election offices. Additionally, we surveyed counties, specifically, on how they met the requirements for serving and informing voters with disabilities.

The 58-question online Qualtrics XM survey was fielded to all VCA-adopting county elections offices. The survey questions were a combination of open-ended and multiple choice. These data are limited to the records kept by counties. As is common with surveys collecting self-reported data, a small number of counties completing the survey did not answer some survey questions or gave incomplete responses (noted as N/A in each data table below). Data from the open-ended questions were analyzed by creating categories that align with the survey responses. Additionally, any unique perspectives or robust responses were quoted or described in the body of the report.

2020 General Election Context

Voter's Choice Act

The Voter's Choice Act is an optional elections model for counties in California. In 2020, 15 California counties (approximately half the state's registered voter population) conducted elections under the Voter's Choice Act. Five counties, Madera, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, and San Mateo first adopted the VCA in the 2018 election cycle. The following counties adopted the VCA for the 2020 election cycle: Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara and Tuolumne.

In VCA-adopting counties, every registered voter is mailed a vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot, which voters can mail in or return at an established vote center or ballot drop box. At vote centers, which replace traditional neighborhood polling places, voters can also cast their ballots in person, access conditional voter registration, receive replacement ballots, use accessible voting machines, and access additional resources, such as language assistance. While there are fewer vote centers than polling places by design, vote centers are open to voters for up to 10 days prior to Election Day and available for all voters to utilize countywide.²

VCA counties are required to develop and adopt an Election Administration Plan (EAP), which details how the county intends to meet all requirements of the VCA including extensive outreach and education to inform voters about the new voting model.³ The county must hold consultation meetings with voters with disabilities and language groups and open the EAP (in accessible formats) to public comment before it is finalized. The California Secretary of State must review education and outreach plans in the EAP and accept, reject, or accept the plans with modifications.

In their EAP's, counties are required to specify how they will meet these requirements of providing accessible voting experiences for individuals with disabilities and non-English language groups.⁴ VCA-adopting counties must engage in targeted outreach to voters with disabilities and also establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) to advise the county elections office as it relates to access to the electoral process for this group. Similarly, counties must specify how they will meet the needs and inform state mandated language communities about changes and options under the VCA. Counties are required to translate their EAP's into languages mandated by the Secretary of State for their county. Counties must establish a Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) to advise the county elections office as it relates to access to the electoral process for voters with limited English proficiency. Some non-VCA counties also have a VAAC and/or LAAC.

Voter's Choice Act Election Administration Plan Requirements

- VCA county officials are required to draft an election administration plan (EAP) with input from the public.
- The county must hold consultation meetings with voters with disabilities and language groups, and open the EAP (in accessible formats) to public comment before it is finalized.
- VCA counties must establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) by October 1 prior to an election year, and they are required to hold their first meeting by April 1 of the election year.
- VCA county officials are encouraged to develop, recruit, launch, and utilize input from their LAAC and VAAC prior to the public consultation period for the EAP.
- County officials must give public notice and accept public comment for at least 14 days prior to a public hearing on the draft EAP and, upon adopting the final plan, submit the EAP's sections on voter education and outreach to the California Secretary of State.
- The Secretary of State shall "approve, reject a voter education and outreach plan, or approve with modifications" within 14 days of receiving it.
- The county shall post the draft plan, amended plan, and adopted final plan for election administration on its website, with language translations and in a format that is accessible for people with disabilities.

Ensuring a Safe and Accessible Election

The COVID-19 pandemic made the California 2020 general election challenging for both elections officials to administer and voters to safely access. Assembly Bill 860 and Senate Bill 423 were passed to address the impact of the pandemic on the election. Both bills directed changes in how the election was administered in VCA counties.⁵ Most notably, Assembly Bill 860 expanded the window of acceptance for a VBM ballot by two weeks in response to delays that the USPS was experiencing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. VBM ballots that were returned by mail were accepted if postmarked on or before Election Day and received by the county elections office no later than 17 days after Election Day.

Further, under Senate Bill 423, VCA counties were allowed to reduce the length of time their 11-day vote centers were open to only four days (starting three days prior to Election Day), but were still required to provide the number of drop boxes (one for every 15,000 registered voters) and voting locations (one for every 10,000 registered voters) as specified by the VCA. In addition, non-VCA counties were required to mail all registered voters a VBM ballot and were given the option to consolidate their voting locations to one location for every 10,000 registered voters and open those locations beginning three days before the election.

General Election Coronavirus Funding

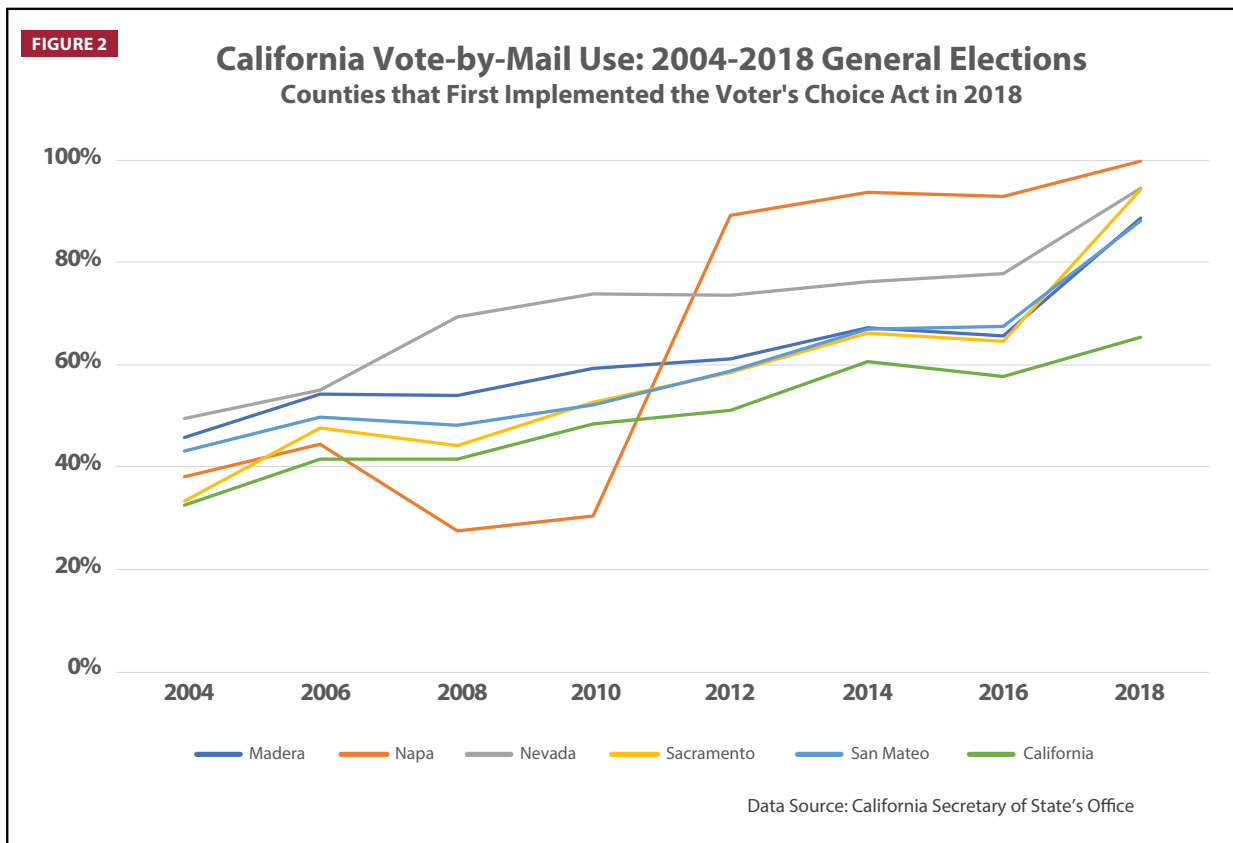
Consistent with California's requirement to reduce the spread of COVID-19, Assembly Bill 89 and Assembly Bill 100 appropriated state and county funding for the 2020 general election.⁶ This funding was in addition to funds allocated under state or local budget authority, as part of the normal conduct of elections. A portion of the funding was used for changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic: increased costs related to all aspects of voting by mail, equipment needs for processing the increased VBM ballots and meeting the in-person voting requirements, permanent and temporary staffing, additional security, specialized training of staff and election workers, cleaning and disinfection, personal protective equipment, and polling locations and election facilities. Another portion of the new funding was used for outreach and communication (see Secretary of State's office for allocated funding amounts per VCA county).

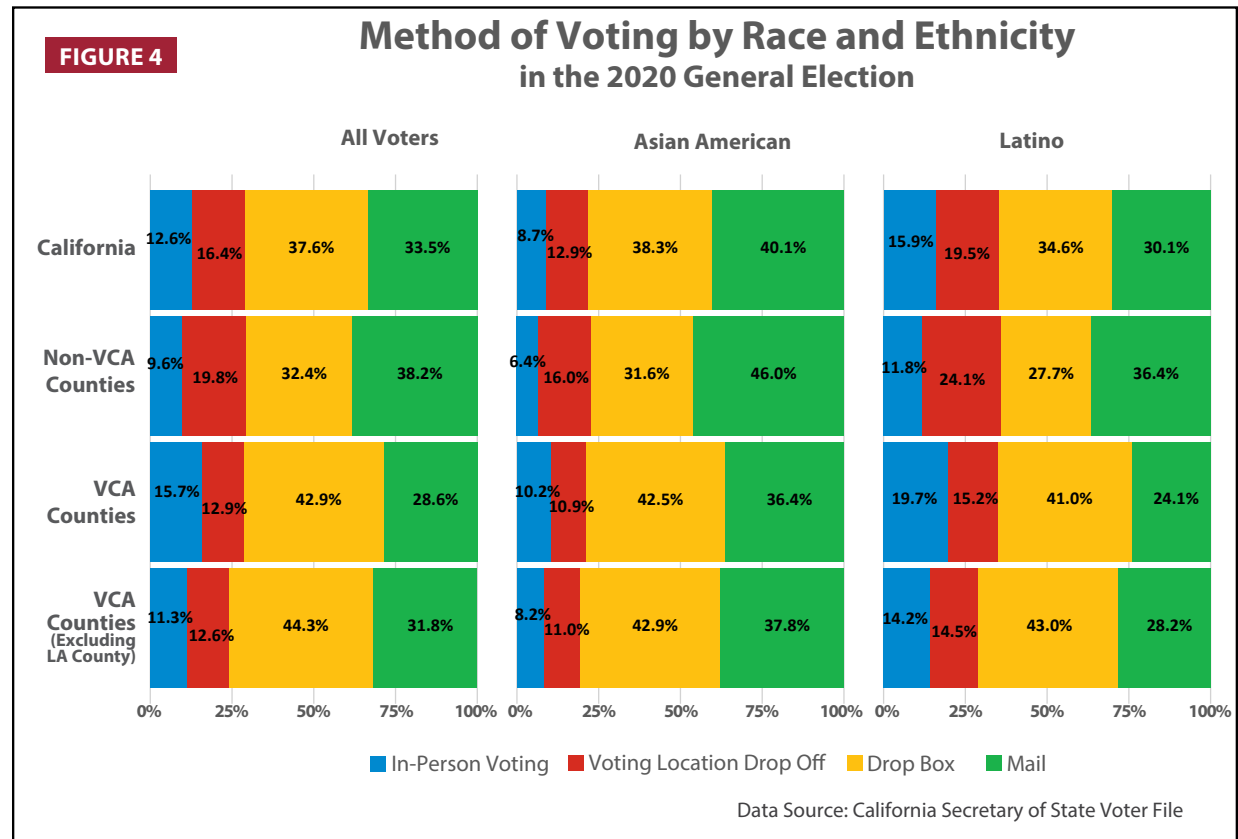
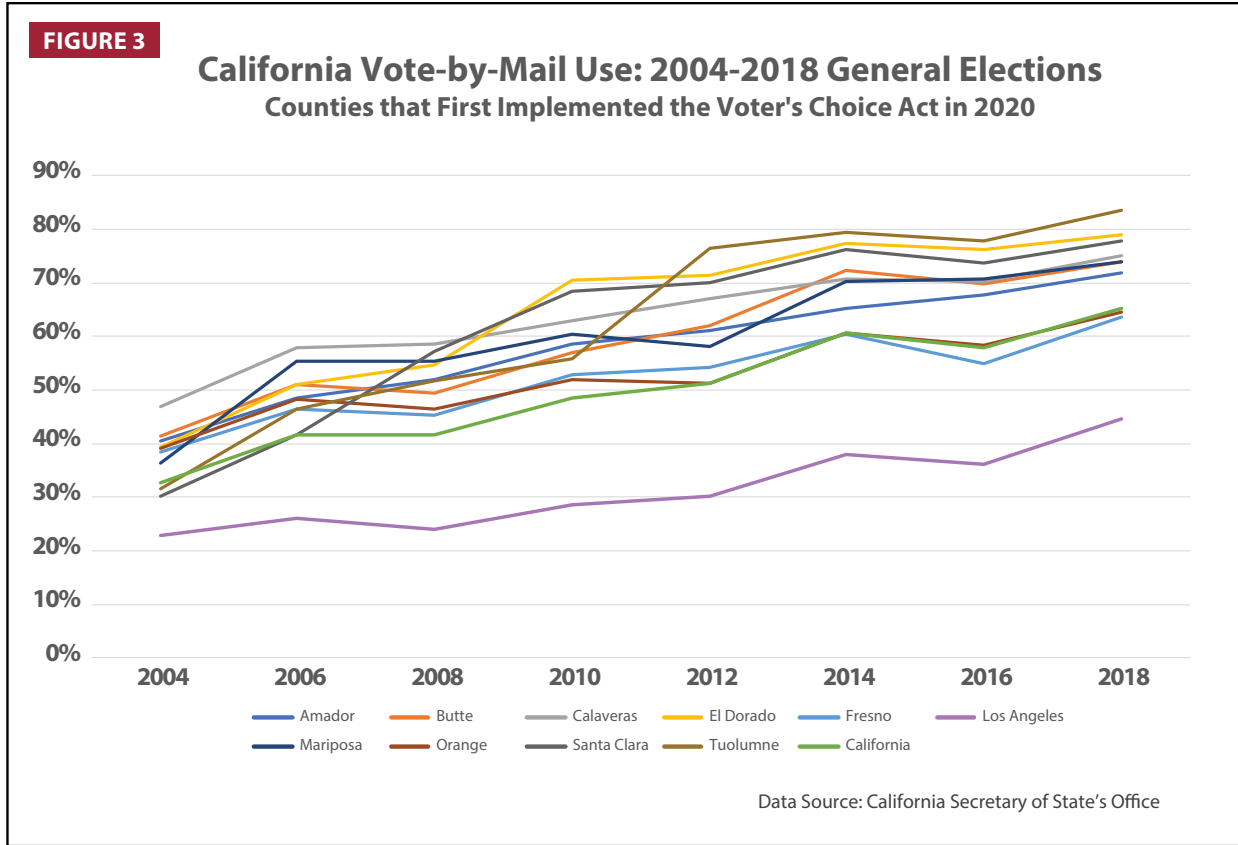
Vote-by-Mail Use in California

Vote-by-mail (VBM) use has been increasing in California for the last couple of decades, and most VCA counties had VBM rates higher than the state rate, prior to VCA-adoption (Figures 2 and 3).⁷ In the 2016 general election – before the VCA became law – VBM ballots comprised 57.8% of all votes cast, a notable increase from 27.1% of ballots in the general election of 2002.

Figures 2 and 3 show the percent of VBM general election ballots cast and counted over time in VCA counties (regardless of the method of return). All five VCA counties adopting the VCA in 2018 saw VBM use rates much higher than the state VBM use rates in the 2018 general election, (ranging from 88% in San Mateo to 99% in Napa). In contrast, counties first implementing the VCA in 2020 varied more significantly in their voters’ experiences with VBM (as low as 45% in Los Angeles to 84% in Tuolumne in the 2018 general election).⁸ It should be noted that between 2010 and 2012 Napa county converted a large number of registered voters to permanent vote-by-mail and that Los Angeles County has had historically lower VBM use rates compared to other VCA counties.

We note that while VBM is widely used in California, there are notable differences in voting preferences across racial and ethnic groups over the past two decades.⁹ Figure 4 shows that in the 2020 general election Latinos voted in-person at nearly twice the rate of Asian-American voters both in VCA counties and statewide.¹⁰ In contrast, Asian-American voters sent their VBM ballots through the mail at higher rates than Latino voters and all voters statewide.





Demographic Variation Across VCA Counties

One of the goals of the VCA is to better serve the needs of voters and to expand voting access for historically underrepresented groups, therefore understanding the demographics of county populations is an important component in the assessment of whether implementation was successful. Demographic characteristics should be considered when evaluating the diversity of education and outreach to county residents and eligible voters. Counties adopting the VCA have populations that range from small and rural (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, and Tuolumne) to two of the largest metropolitan counties in the state and nation (Los Angeles and Orange).

In Table 1, we see that most VCA counties are more racially and ethnically diverse than non-VCA counties, when looking at Latino, Asian American, and Black populations. Madera (57.8%), Fresno (53.1%), and Los Angeles (48.5%) all have a significantly larger Latino population when compared to the California average of 39.0%. The Asian-American populations in Santa Clara (36.3%) and San Mateo (28.3%) counties are nearly double that of the statewide proportion (14.3%). In contrast, the white, non-Latino proportion of the population in Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Nevada, and Tuolumne is over twice the statewide total of 37.2%.

Table 2 shows the eligible voter population (adult citizens) broken out by race and ethnicity.¹² Latinos are 32.2% of the eligible voter population in VCA counties while, non-Latino whites are 40.8%, Asian Americans are 18.1%, and Blacks are 7.4%. In Table 3 we see the proportion of each VCA county that is foreign-born, limited English proficient, and those who report a disability.¹³ The foreign-born population ranges from 4.8% in Calaveras, Nevada, and Tuolumne to 39.2% in Santa Clara, and limited English proficient population ranges from 2.1% in Calaveras to 25.3% in Los Angeles. In Santa Clara County 8.0% of the population reported having a disability compared to 21.1% in Calaveras.

Overall, eligible voters in VCA counties in 2020 are more racially and ethnically diverse and have higher proportions of the population who are foreign-born and who have limited English proficiency than California at large. However, Tables 1-3 show that diversity varies across VCA counties and counties with larger metropolitan areas tend to be more racially diverse and have higher percentages of residents that are foreign-born and identify as limited English proficient as compared to the less populous counties adopting the VCA which tend to have higher percentages of residents that have a disability.

**Table 1: Total Population by Race and Ethnicity
Voter's Choice Act Counties**

	Latino % Population	White, Non-Latino % Population	Asian-American % Population	Black % Population	American Indian and Alaska Native % Population	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander % Population	All Others Combined % Population
Amador County	13.9%	78.2%	1.2%	2.2%	0.6%	0.1%	3.7%
Butte County	16.3%	72.0%	4.5%	1.5%	0.8%	0.2%	4.8%
Calaveras County	12.1%	80.9%	1.5%	0.7%	0.4%	0.0%	4.4%
El Dorado County	12.8%	77.8%	4.5%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	3.3%
Fresno County	53.1%	29.4%	10.1%	4.5%	0.5%	0.1%	2.3%
Los Angeles County	48.5%	26.2%	14.4%	7.8%	0.2%	0.2%	2.6%
Madera County	57.8%	34.1%	1.9%	3.1%	1.0%	0.1%	2.0%
Mariposa County	11.3%	80.0%	1.2%	1.5%	1.9%	0.3%	3.9%
Napa County	34.1%	52.4%	8.0%	2.0%	0.3%	0.2%	3.0%
Nevada County	9.4%	85.2%	1.1%	0.5%	0.4%	0.1%	3.3%
Orange County	34.1%	40.6%	20.3%	1.6%	0.2%	0.3%	3.0%
Sacramento County	23.2%	44.7%	15.4%	9.5%	0.4%	1.1%	5.7%
San Mateo County	24.4%	39.2%	28.3%	2.2%	0.2%	1.3%	4.4%
Santa Clara County	25.5%	31.5%	36.3%	2.3%	0.2%	0.3%	3.9%
Tuolumne County	12.2%	80.2%	1.4%	1.8%	1.4%	0.2%	2.8%
VCA Counties	39.9%	33.2%	17.4%	5.7%	0.2%	0.4%	3.1%
VCA (w/o LA County)	30.6%	40.8%	20.7%	3.4%	0.3%	0.5%	3.7%
Non-VCA	38.2%	41.0%	11.2%	5.3%	0.5%	0.4%	3.4%
State	39.0%	37.2%	14.3%	5.5%	0.4%	0.4%	3.3%

Data Source: American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates- 2015-2019

Table 2: Eligible Voter Population by Race and Ethnicity*
Voter's Choice Act Counties

	Latino % Eligible Voter Population	White Non-Latino % Eligible Voter Population	Asian-American % Eligible Voter Population	Black % Eligible Voter Population	American Indian and Alaska Native % Eligible Voter Population	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander % Eligible Voter Population	All Others Combined % Eligible Voter Population
Amador County	13.1%	78.0%	0.9%	3.8%	0.7%	0.1%	3.4%
Butte County	13.0%	78.0%	4.3%	1.7%	0.9%	0.2%	2.0%
Calaveras County	10.0%	83.7%	1.1%	1.4%	0.5%	0.1%	3.2%
ElDorado County	10.3%	82.8%	3.8%	1.0%	1.1%	0.2%	0.8%
Fresno County	44.0%	38.0%	10.2%	6.1%	0.5%	0.1%	1.1%
LosAngeles County	39.9%	32.9%	16.0%	10.3%	0.3%	0.3%	0.4%
Madera County	44.1%	46.0%	2.2%	4.8%	1.3%	0.1%	1.5%
Mariposa County	9.6%	82.1%	1.4%	1.4%	1.7%	0.4%	3.5%
Napa County	25.6%	62.0%	8.1%	2.2%	0.4%	0.3%	1.5%
Nevada County	8.8%	84.9%	1.9%	1.8%	0.4%	0.2%	2.0%
Orange County	25.8%	49.7%	21.6%	2.1%	0.2%	0.3%	0.2%
Sacramento County	18.0%	52.4%	14.8%	11.6%	0.4%	1.0%	1.8%
SanMateo County	21.0%	45.1%	28.3%	3.2%	0.2%	1.3%	1.0%
SantaClara County	22.4%	37.4%	35.3%	3.0%	0.2%	0.4%	1.4%
Tuolumne County	11.2%	81.6%	0.8%	3.0%	0.2%	0.2%	3.0%
VCA Counties	32.2%	40.8%	18.1%	7.4%	0.3%	0.4%	0.7%
VCA (w/o LA County)	24.3%	49.0%	20.3%	4.4%	0.4%	0.5%	1.1%
Non-VCA	27.4%	52.1%	9.5%	5.8%	0.6%	0.4%	4.2%
Statewide	29.8%	46.6%	13.7%	6.6%	0.4%	0.4%	2.5%

Data Source: American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates- 2015-2019

*Eligible voter population defined as adult citizens

Table 3: Selected Demographics
Voter's Choice Act Counties

	Foreign-Born % Population	Limited English % Population*	Disability % Population**
Amador County	6.0%	3.2%	18.9%
Butte County	7.3%	5.1%	17.1%
Calaveras County	4.8%	2.1%	21.1%
El Dorado County	9.2%	4.4%	13.2%
Fresno County	21.2%	19.0%	13.1%
Los Angeles County	34.0%	25.3%	9.9%
Madera County	20.2%	18.5%	13.0%
Mariposa County	5.8%	2.9%	20.3%
Napa County	22.1%	16.7%	11.7%
Nevada County	4.8%	2.6%	14.3%
Orange County	30.1%	20.4%	8.5%
Sacramento County	20.9%	13.6%	11.8%
San Mateo County	34.8%	18.7%	8.2%
Santa Clara County	39.2%	21.1%	8.0%
Tuolumne County	4.8%	11.1%	19.6%
VCA Counties	31.1%	21.6%	10.0%
VCA (w/o LA County)	27.9%	17.6%	10.1%
Non-VCA	22.6%	13.9%	11.09%
Statewide	26.8%	17.7%	10.5%

Data Source: American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates- 2015-2019

*The percent of the population with limited English proficiency. Limited English proficiency is defined as people who speak English "less than very well".

**The percent of residents (age 5 to over 75) with disabilities out of the total population.

1. VCA Counties' Voter Outreach and Education Efforts in the 2020 General Election

Key Takeaways:

- VCA outreach and education budgets, as well as time allotment varied significantly between counties.
- All 15 VCA counties conducted advertising campaigns in both traditional and social media outlets, and all reported posting outdoor signage at vote centers.
- On average, VCA counties used six different methods for informing voters with disabilities about voting options.
- Seven of 15 counties targeted outreach and education to at least one of the following voting groups: language minority voters, voters with disabilities, young voters, and senior voters.
- Just under half of VCA counties reported that they either did not know which outreach methods were most effective for different voter groups or did not think that different types of information had an effect on different groups.

Outreach Budget

In California's 2020 general election, VCA county election offices allocated funding specified for staff and outreach-related activities in order to meet the requirements of the VCA. Table 4 shows that eight counties (Butte, Los Angeles, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) reported that there was a specific staff person dedicated to the counties' education and outreach efforts. The CID survey asked counties how many staff hours were dedicated to outreach and education and elections offices could choose between 0 and 500+. Time allotment ranged from 18 hours in Napa County to 500+ hours in Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. San Mateo provided a follow-up answer and reported their exact staff hours as 1,225.7. Mariposa and Madera did not track hours spent specifically on outreach and education, and El Dorado reported it did not do any voter outreach for the general election due to restrictions related to COVID-19.

Budgets for voter outreach varied by county and ranged from \$2,000 in Amador County to \$12 million in Los Angeles County. Nevada County noted that it is hard to isolate a specific outreach budget and estimated \$30,000. Rather than estimate, Mariposa reported its entire election budget, \$60,000. San Mateo reported \$486,305 and elaborated on their response, "We did over \$250,000 of advertising that touched upon the VCA in some manner, including the three required postcards, bus and taxi ads, advertisements in newspapers (English/Spanish/Chinese and local college papers), targeted text messaging, radio advertisements, business cards/fliers/bookmarks/quartersheets for handing out at events, and online advertisements." Butte, Fresno, and Madera did not separately calculate outreach budgets. The budget per registered voter ranged from \$0.06 in Amador and El Dorado to \$2.06 in Los Angeles.

Please note that Amador, Butte, Madera, Napa, and Orange were the only counties to provide a budget per registered voter, all other counties were calculated by CID using the 15-day Report of Registration.¹⁴ Additionally, Santa Clara's [budget](#) information will be provided by the county and posted on this report's home webpage at a later date. Because election budgets and spending are complex, we included notes from counties regarding amount breakdowns.

The CID survey initially asked counties about funding for the 2020 general election but we omitted results due to incomplete and inconsistent responses. Therefore, we are unable to discuss how variation in available funding designed to help counties adapt to changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced voter outreach and education budgets.

Table 4: County Voter Outreach and Staffing Budget in the 2020 General Election

	Dedicated VCA Staff Person	Total Staff Hours for VCA Outreach	Education and Outreach Budget*	Budget per Registered Voter**	Education and Outreach Spending*
Amador County	-	80	\$2,000	\$0.08	\$1,700
Butte County	Yes	80	Not separately budgeted	\$0.85 (self-reported)	Around \$85,000 on mailings, signs and media advertisements.
Calaveras County	-	54	\$25,000	\$0.80	\$19,500
El Dorado County	-	-	\$8,000	\$0.06	\$0.05 (per voter)
Fresno County	-	123	Not separately budgeted	-	\$541,000
Los Angeles County	Yes	500+	\$12,000,000	\$2.06	\$11,500,000
Madera County	-	-	Not separately budgeted	\$1.00 (self-reported)	\$1.50 (per voter)
Mariposa County	-	-	\$60,000 (total election budget)	\$5.03	-
Napa County	-	18	\$46,000	\$0.50 (self-reported)	\$46,000
Nevada County	Yes	300	Around \$30,000	\$0.40	Around \$60,000
Orange County	Yes	500+	\$403,804	\$0.22 (self-reported)	\$2,393,703 total spent (utilized grant funding to allow for higher spending than originally budgeted.)
Sacramento County	Yes	500+	\$75,000	\$0.08	\$120,300 ads/media + \$400,000 mailers
San Mateo County	Yes	500+ (exactly 1,225.7)	\$450,000	\$1.02	\$486,305
Santa Clara County	Yes	500+	N/A	-	N/A
Tuolumne County	-	30	\$20,000	\$0.57	\$14,471

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

Non-answers are noted as N/A. A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

* Budget information is subject to the accuracy of counties' survey answers. For most counties, publicly available budgets do not specify outreach spending related to the VCA.

** Butte, Madera, Napa, and Orange provided their budget per voter, all other were calculated by Center for Inclusive Democracy based on county provided budget data. Registered voters as of 15-day Report of Registration, 2020 general election.

Outreach Methods

Counties implementing the VCA are required to develop an outreach and education plan to inform voters about VCA-related voting changes in their EAPs. In this section of the report, we ask counties about the outreach they actually conducted (not what they planned) during the 2020 general election. Under the VCA, counties are required to conduct outreach in the media (e.g., newspaper, radio, TV, and social media) and through official county elections materials (e.g., direct mail, election office website). The outreach plans must include methods to educate voters with disabilities and language minority communities. Counties are also encouraged to conduct outreach through community partners, outdoor signage, and public service announcements.

During the 2020 general election, all VCA counties reported engaging in advertising campaigns in both traditional and social media outlets, as well as posting outdoor signage (e.g., bus, billboard, etc.). Table 5 shows that with the exception of Amador, Fresno, and Mariposa, all counties also directly collaborated with community groups on VCA-related outreach. Eight counties (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) reported informing community members about the VCA through direct digital communication (e.g., email, social media, online ads). With the exception of Amador and Butte, all counties said they hosted community meetings to inform residents about the VCA. In addition, Napa reported that they utilized the Registrar of Voters' social media toolkits, and San Mateo mentioned that it conducted meetings virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Note: We do not have detailed data regarding the types of advertising campaigns, nor data on their impact in reaching community members.

Table 5: Outreach Methods by County Elections Officials in the 2020 General Election

	Collaboration with Community Groups	Advertisements in the Media	Outdoor Signage	Social Media	Signage at Polling Places or Vote Centers	Direct Mail	Direct Digital Communication	Community Meetings
Amador County	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fresno County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Total	12/15 counties	15/15 counties	13/15 counties	15/15 counties	15/15 counties	14/15 counties	8/15 counties	13/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

The CID survey asked "What traditional and social media methods were used in voter outreach and education for the 2020 general election?" Respondents could mark all that apply from a list of choices.

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Outreach Methods for Voters with Disabilities

Table 6 shows that counties utilized several methods to educate voters with disabilities in the 2020 General Election. Twelve out of 15 VCA counties reported that they collaborated with community groups and advertised in the media, and 11 counties posted outdoor signage. Additionally, 14 counties utilized social media and 12 counties used direct mail. Six counties, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Mateo utilized direct digital communication such as text messaging. Over two-thirds of VCA counties said they hosted community meetings and collaborated with groups focused on accessibility to inform voters with disabilities about new voting options under the VCA.

Table 6: County Methods for Educating Voters with Disabilities in the 2020 General Election

	Collaboration with Community Groups	Advertisements in the Media	Outdoor Signage	Social Media	Direct Mail	Direct Digital Communication	Community Meetings	Collaboration with Groups Focused on Voting Accessibility
Amador County	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Fresno County	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-
Total	12/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	11/15 Counties	14/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	6/15 Counties	13/15 Counties	12/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

The CID survey asked “Did your office use any of the following methods for educating voters with disabilities about the new voting options under the Voter’s Choice Act for the 2020 general election?” Respondents could mark all that apply from a list of choices.

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn’t in that survey category.

VCA counties were required to make additional efforts to inform voters with disabilities about their voting options in the 2020 general election. In response to the open-ended question, “How did your office inform voters with disabilities about voting method changes for the 2020 general election?” Table 7 shows that 12 counties reported using traditional elections outreach methods (e.g., county website, voter guide, mail, public meetings), 10 counties utilized digital media or paid advertisements, eight counties noted partnerships with community groups, and five counties reported communicating with voters with disabilities through their VAAC. We note here, that because of the nature of open-ended questions, that county offices may have utilized communication methods that they did not report. Additionally, Butte County reported they did not make voting method changes and therefore did not inform voters with disabilities about voting method changes.

Table 7: Outreach Methods for Informing Voters with Disabilities about Voting Changes in the 2020 General Election

	Elections Office Outreach	Media or Advertisements	In Collaboration with Community Groups	Via the VAAC
Amador County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Butte County	-	-	-	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
El Dorado County	Yes	-	-	-
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	-	-	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	-	-	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Total	12/15 Counties	10/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	5/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "How did your office inform voters with disabilities about voting method changes for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Counties first implementing the VCA in 2020 – including Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne – were required to host workshops for both voters with disabilities and voters with limited English proficiency. Butte and El Dorado counties reported that due to the COVID-19 pandemic they were unable to meet this requirement (Table 8). Despite mandated pandemic-related restrictions, some counties successfully hosted virtual or in-person events. Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, San Mateo and Tuolumne hosted one meeting for voters with disabilities; Sacramento and Santa Clara hosted three, and Los Angeles County hosted eight workshops for voters with disabilities. In addition to these workshops, counties also hosted meetings for the disability community through their VAAC (Table 15). Counties hosted a slightly greater number of workshops for voters with limited English proficiency with Los Angeles, Fresno, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara all hosting between five and 13 workshops for these voters. Please note that San Mateo County updated their survey answers related to Table 8 on December 15, 2021.

Table 8: Workshops Conducted by County Elections Offices in the 2020 General Election

	Eligible Voters (November 2020*)	Number of Workshops for Voters with Disabilities	Workshops for Voters with Disabilities per Capita**	Number of Workshops for Voters with Limited English Proficiency	Workshops for Voters with Limited English Proficiency per Capita**
Amador County	27,210	1	27,210	1	27,210
Butte County	151,237	0	0	0	0
Calaveras County	35,949	1	35,949	1	35,949
El Dorado County	145,474	0	0	0	0
Fresno County	605,256	1	605,256	9	67,251
Los Angeles County	6,129,494	8	1,225,899	5	1,225,899
Madera County	90,184	1	90,184	1	90,184
Mariposa County	14,893	1	14,893	1	14,893
Napa County	90,729	1	90,729	1	90,729
Nevada County	77,628	1	77,628	0	0
Orange County	2,000,842	1	2,000,842	9	222,316
Sacramento County	1,028,719	3	342,906	2	514,360
San Mateo County	504,398	1	504,398	7	72,057
Santa Clara County	1,205,945	3	401,982	13	73,176
Tuolumne County	42,620	1	42,620	1	42,620

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

*Eligible voters as of 15-day Report of Registration, November 2020 General Election.

** Calculated by Center for Inclusive Democracy based on county-provided workshop data.

Outreach Methods for Historically Underserved Groups

The demographic and geographic reach of voter outreach and education campaigns varied among the VCA counties. Table 9 shows that seven out of 15 counties (Amador, El Dorado, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) indicated that their outreach specifically targeted at least one of the following voting groups: language minority voters, racial or ethnic groups, voters with disabilities, young voters and senior voters. Additionally, all counties indicated that they conducted a county-wide outreach campaign that reached all voting groups. Amador County noted, “Workshops for language and accessibility were held, as well as any community groups that would host us,” while Napa targeted “Underserved populations throughout the county including language, disabled, youth, seniors.” Orange County included “Federal and state mandated languages and disability communities. Middle/high schools, colleges, universities, and senior groups.” In terms of neighborhoods and racial/ethnic groups, San Mateo noted, “N. Fair Oaks is largely Latino; the county’s Black and Pacific Islander communities are somewhat concentrated in EPA [East Palo Alto] and Belle Haven. We also did a text messaging pilot to 500 young voters (18 to 32 years of age) who did not check the box for voting information in another language on the registration application in these areas.” Sacramento referred to its EAP where it discussed outreach to language groups, voters with disabilities, young voters, and senior voters. In addition to a countywide campaign, Butte County noted that it made extra efforts with voters displaced by wildfires.

Please note, after reviewing counties’ survey responses, CID determined that survey question, “What was the demographic and geographic reach of voter outreach and education in the 2020 general election?”, did not fully capture elections offices’ outreach, especially for historically underserved groups (Table 9). To obtain additional information, we followed-up to ask counties about their outreach efforts (e.g., workshops or meetings) and targeted communication specifically to Black, Indigenous, or formerly incarcerated voters (Table 10). As is common with open-ended survey questions, responses may not capture all the activities undertaken by election offices.

Table 10 shows that two-thirds of VCA counties (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, San Mateo, and Tuolumne) reported that they did not specifically conduct outreach efforts to Black, Indigenous, or formerly incarcerated voters in the 2020 general election. Los Angeles, Orange, and Sacramento reported reaching out to all three groups, while Fresno reached out to Black voters and Santa Clara reached out to those formerly incarcerated. Butte did not host in-person events due to the pandemic, but they reported maintaining open lines of communication with their stakeholders, which in the 2020 primary election included Black and Indigenous community groups and their county sheriff for the inmate voting program. Napa did not target these groups but noted their community partners did.

Methods of outreach to Black, Indigenous, or formerly incarcerated voters included:

- Radio station advertisements (Sacramento),
- Unique regional posters in neighborhoods that are predominately Black (Fresno),
- Providing information to incarcerated individuals in partnership with the ACLU and sheriff (Orange),
- Print and digital advertisements in media geared toward Black voters (Sacramento),
- Hosting events (in-person or virtual) for Black voters (Orange and Sacramento),
- Flyer delivery to Black community businesses (Sacramento),
- Flyer delivery to Indigenous community partners (Sacramento),
- Facebook Live event presentation with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) – Indigenous community (Sacramento),
- Voting presentations to inmates, including those who will be released and eligible to vote before the election (Sacramento and Santa Clara), and
- Voting video playing on loop at county jails (Santa Clara).

Table 9: Demographic and Geographic Voter Outreach Efforts in the 2020 General Election

	Non-English Language Groups	Racial or Ethnic Groups	Residents with Disabilities	Youth	Seniors
Amador County	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Butte County	-	-	-	-	-
Calaveras County	-	-	-	-	-
El Dorado County	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Fresno County	-	-	-	-	-
Los Angeles County	-	-	-	-	-
Madera County	-	-	-	-	-
Mariposa County	-	-	-	-	-
Napa County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	-	-
Total	5/15 counties	3/15 counties	6/15 counties	5/15 counties	5/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What was the demographic and geographic reach of voter outreach in the 2020 general election?" A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Table 10: Specific Outreach and Targeted Communications Efforts in the 2020 General Election

	Black	Indigenous	Formerly Incarcerated	Did Not Specifically Target
Amador County	-	-	-	Yes
Butte County	-	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	-	-	-	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	-	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	-	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	-	-	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	-	-	Yes
Napa County	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	-	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	-	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	Yes
Total	4/15	3/15	4/15	10/15

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from the responses to the open-ended question, "Did your office specifically targeted communications efforts to Black, indigenous, or formerly incarcerated voters?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Delivery Effectiveness

In response to the open-ended question, "Were certain types of information more effective for different types of voters (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, voters with disabilities, voters with language needs, young voters, older voters)?" seven counties reported that they either did not know or did not think that different types of information had an affect on different groups (Table 11). Three counties (Calaveras, Orange, and Santa Clara), indicated that translating voter outreach materials was effective for language groups. Please note, counties are required by law to translate materials to state mandated language groups, however, some counties included additional languages or additional translated materials to increase access.

The remaining counties noted additional methods as most effective but did not specify to which voters those methods were best employed. Three counties noted the importance of clear messaging: Los Angeles County said that educational messaging was effective when targeted to specific communities, Sacramento more generally stated that using plain language was needed, and Tuolumne noted that voters seemed most interested in a general overview of changes as well as steps to ensure security. Orange County discussed outreach methods including multi-language online ads, bilingual phone assistance, social media presence, university partnerships, public meetings targeted to different language groups, promotional videos in voiceover languages, webinars with nationally recognized organizations, information sharing with election subcommittees, and through the LAAC and VAAC, however they did not indicate the effectiveness of the methods.

Table 11: Effective Information Delivery Methods for the 2020 General Election						
	Events/ Meetings	Digital Communication	Print	Language Specific	Clear Messaging	Don't Know
Amador County	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
Butte County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
El Dorado County	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	-	-	-	-	Yes	-
Madera County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Napa County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
Sacramento County	-	-	-	-	Yes	-
San Mateo County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-
Total	3/15 counties	2/15 counties	3/15 counties	3/15 counties	3/15 counties	7/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "Were certain types of information more effective for different types of voters (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, voters with disabilities, voters with language needs, young voters, older voters)?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Voters' Knowledge of Election Changes in the 2020 General Election

In this section, we describe survey findings from a CID survey of California eligible voters. CID surveyed 6,392 eligible voters in VCA counties to learn about their voter experience during the 2020 general election. Despite significant outreach conducted by counties, the survey found that only 36.7% of eligible voters knew that their county had made voting changes during the 2020 general election. Voters with disabilities were somewhat more informed with 41.7% reporting that they knew about voting changes. Voters in VCA counties were slightly more knowledgeable than voters statewide where 32.4% of all eligible voters and 37.3% of eligible voters with a disability were aware of voting changes.¹⁵ These data also varied by race, ethnicity, and age. Please see appendix for detailed information.

Did your county change the options for how and where you could cast your ballot in the November 2020 general election? VCA Counties		
	Eligible Voters	Eligible Voters w/ Disabilities
Yes	36.7%	41.7%
No	35.0%	31.1%
Don't Know	28.3%	27.2%

Data Source: CID Voter Experience Survey

2. VAAC and Community Partnerships in the 2020 General Election

Key Takeaways:

- All VCA counties met the requirement to establish a VAAC for the 2020 general election, but their implementation and effectiveness varied from county to county.
- Over two-thirds of VCA counties conducted community meetings, met with and created ongoing collaboration with community leaders or advocacy groups, and conducted a county-wide media campaign to educate voters about VCA changes.
- Collaborators provided feedback on EAP or VCA implementation, assisted counties with siting locations, helped improve community trust, increased outreach, and helped counties to recruit vote center staff.
- Elections officials said partnerships could have been enhanced if they had more time to work with stakeholders, either by meeting earlier in the election cycle or more frequently; having consistent partners that attend more than a couple meetings during the election cycle could have improved outcomes.

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)

As noted earlier, all VCA counties are required to establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), consisting of members of the community, to advise the county elections office on electoral access for voters with disabilities. The SOS recommends that counties utilize the VAAC in the following three ways: 1) Provide an opportunity for people who represent the disability community to provide feedback on the voting process including on voting material or websites, at polling places, and procedurally; 2) Create ongoing communication and cooperation with community groups ensuring that elections officials can resolve issues as they arise; and 3) Provide outreach to individuals and groups to promote awareness of voters with disabilities as well as seniors.¹⁶

Voter's Choice Act VAAC Requirements

- Establish a VAAC consisting of members of the community to partner with elections officials to meet regularly to develop strategies for improving voting accessibility.
- VAAC membership should be established no later than October 1 of the year prior to the first VCA election.
- First VAAC meeting should be by April 1 of the year in which the election is held.
- Additionally, the SOS suggests a minimum of three to five members depending on the number of registered voters in a county.¹⁷

All VCA counties met the requirement of establishing a VAAC during the 2020 general election, however, the robustness of VAACs varied significantly across counties. County elections offices reported that their VAACs contributed to the 2020 general election by assisting with outreach efforts (10 counties), helping with implementation such as establishing siting locations (8 counties), or providing knowledge to help inform best practices for outreach or implementation (10 counties) (Table 12). Calaveras, El Dorado, Orange, and Santa Clara counties said their VAAC contributed to all three: outreach, implementation, and knowledge. Napa, for example, said that its VAAC had a, “focus on using RAVBM and accessibility of vote centers” while Los Angeles’ VAAC assisted in, “Amplifying education and outreach messaging, direct messaging to community-based organizations and voters with disabilities.”

VCA counties indicated that their VAACs improved services for voters with disabilities by providing or assisting with outreach, implementation, or knowledge (Table 13). Four counties said the VAAC helped with outreach to voters with disabilities by collaborating with partners or helping to create outreach materials. Nevada County noted, “They were our advisors and provided feedback on our EAP. They also educate their own membership with county information.” Another seven counties said the VAAC helped with implementation specifically with regards to identifying and staffing vote center locations. Just over two-thirds of counties said the VAAC provided knowledge. In Fresno, the VAAC provided feedback on

accessibility at vote center locations. Calaveras, Napa, Orange, and Sacramento all said the VAAC assisted with RAVBM. Amador and El Dorado reported that they did not make any changes for this election.

Table 12: VAACs Role in the Education and Outreach Strategy for the 2020 General Election

	Community Outreach	Administrative Implementation	Community Knowledge and Feedback
Amador County	Yes	-	Yes
Butte County	Yes	-	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fresno County	-	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	Yes	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-
Napa County	-	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	Yes	-
San Mateo County	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes
Total	10/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	10/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What roles did the VAAC play in your county's education and outreach strategy for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Table 13: VAACs Role in Improving Services for Voters with Disabilities for the 2020 General Election

	Community Outreach	Administrative Implementation	Community Knowledge and Feedback
Amador County	-	-	-
Butte County	-	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	-	-	Yes
Madera County	-	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-	Yes
Orange County	-	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	-	Yes
Total	4/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	11/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What role did your county's VAAC have in improving services for voters with disabilities for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Similarly, counties utilized their LAACs for community outreach, administrative implementation, or feedback on how to best serve their communities (Table 14). Just under half (seven counties) helped in multiple capacities. Specifically, Los Angeles' LAAC was effective at "amplifying education and outreach messaging, direct messaging to community-based organizations who work with language accessibility" and Napa noted that through the LAAC, "community groups helped to increase turnout among target populations, helped find bilingual greeters and vote center workers." Other counties highlighted one area that the LAAC was effective at such as commenting on the EAP (Fresno) and assisting with siting locations (Mariposa).

Table 14: Role Played by the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee for the 2020 General Election

	Community Outreach	Administrative Implementation	Knowledge and Feedback
Amador County	Yes	-	Yes
Butte County	Yes	-	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	Yes
Fresno County	-	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	Yes
Madera County	-	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-
Nevada County	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	-	Yes
Sacramento County	-	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	-
Tuolumne County	-	-	Yes
Total	7/15 counties	5/15 counties	10/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What role did the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) play in your county's outreach and education strategy for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

VAAC Implementation and Effectiveness

As noted above, VCA counties' VAACs are mandated to meet certain requirements. For the 2020 general election, several counties noted impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on VCA implementation. Table 15 gives an overview of VAAC meetings and operations as self-reported by the counties. Despite challenges related to COVID-19, nearly all counties convened their VAAC in preparation for the 2020 general election. Butte County did not hold meetings during the pandemic and instead reported outreach to individual members. With the exception of Butte, VCA counties reported as few as one VAAC meeting (Mariposa and Napa) and as many as six (Sacramento), with attendance ranging from two people in Mariposa and Napa to 40 people in Los Angeles. Nearly all VCA counties, with the exception of El Dorado, said they solicited agenda items from members prior to meetings. Just over two-thirds of counties (11 out of 15) also reported having a VAAC webpage with information about upcoming meetings or information about past meetings on their website.

A vast majority of counties felt that their VAAC was effective. Napa and San Mateo ranked their VAAC as extremely effective; Butte, Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, and Santa Clara as very effective; Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, and Tuolumne as moderately effective. No counties ranked their VAAC as ineffective. Further, in response to the open-ended survey question (Table 16), "Please explain the effectiveness of the VAAC for the 2020 general election cycle?" nearly all counties noted the knowledge and feedback they received from their VAACs. Eight of the 15 counties (Butte, Calaveras, Los Angeles, Madera, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, and Santa Clara) referenced community trust and contacts; and Butte, Los Angeles, Madera, Orange, Sacramento, and San Mateo said their VAACs were effective at outreach or hosting events. Amador and Mariposa rated their VAACs as moderately effective and noted that their VAACs did not influence their VCA implementation processes. El Dorado did not utilize its VAAC for the 2020 general election.

Table 15: County Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) for the 2020 General Election

	First VAAC Meeting 2020 General Election	Number of VAAC Meetings	Average VAAC Meeting Attendance	Public Input on Agenda Items	Dedicated VAAC Page on Website	Self-Reported VAAC Effectiveness
Amador County	June 2020	3	5	Yes	-	Moderately effective
Butte County	-	-	-	-	-	Very effective
Calaveras County	July 2020	2	4	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
El Dorado County	May 2019	5	13	-	Yes	Moderately effective
Fresno County	July 2020	2	10	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Los Angeles County	January 2020	4	40	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Madera County	August 2020	2	5	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Mariposa County	February 2020	1	2	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
Napa County	September 2020	1	2	Yes	-	Extremely effective
Nevada County	February 2020	2	2-3	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Orange County	July 2020	2	10	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Sacramento County	June 2020	6	7	Yes	Yes	Very effective
San Mateo County	May 2020	5	8	Yes	Yes	Extremely effective
Santa Clara County	May 2020	5	6-12	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Tuolumne County	August 2019	5	7	Yes	-	Moderately effective

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Table 16: Factors in the Effectiveness of the VAAC for the 2020 General Election

	Outreach/ Events	Feedback or Knowledge	Community Trust and Contact	Not Very Helpful
Amador County	-	-	-	Yes
Butte County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Calaveras County	-	Yes	Yes	-
El Dorado County	-	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	Yes	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-	Yes
Napa County	-	Yes	Yes	-
Nevada County	-	Yes	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Santa Clara County	-	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	Yes	-	-
Total	6/15 Counties	11/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	2/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Respondents were first asked, "How effective do you think your VAAC efforts were for the 2020 general election?" Respondents could choose from Likert scale ranging from not effective at all to extremely effective (Table 15). Table 16 was created from responses to the open-ended question, "Please explain the effectiveness of the VAAC for the 2020 general election cycle."

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Outreach Partnerships

In addition to relationships formed via the VAAC, counties engaged in multiple partnerships to inform voters about VCA-related election changes. Nearly all VCA counties conducted community meetings and met with and created ongoing collaboration with community leaders or advocacy groups (Table 17). With the exceptions of Amador, Butte, and Fresno, all counties educated voters through all three methods.

Table 17: Educating Voters About VCA-Related Changes in the 2020 General Election

	Conducted Community Meetings	Met with Community Leaders and Voter Advocacy Groups	Created an Ongoing Collaboration with Community Leaders and Voter Advocacy Groups
Amador County	-	Yes	Yes
Butte County	-	Yes	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Napa County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total	13/15 counties	15/15 counties	14/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

The CID survey asked "What methods did your office use to educate voters on VCA-related election changes and to minimize voter confusion in the 2020 general election?" Respondents could mark all that apply from a list of choices.

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

To glean further insights about the role of partnerships during VCA implementation, counties were asked to describe how their partnerships with community groups, government agencies, media entities, and private groups enhanced their outreach strategies for the 2020 general election (Table 18). El Dorado, once again, noted that due to the pandemic they did not partner with groups other than their own county departments. All other county responses were organized as follows:

i. Community groups: Over two-thirds of VCA counties (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) said that community groups contributed to outreach, while less than one-third (Butte, Fresno, Mariposa, and Sacramento) noted receiving feedback from community groups such as siting location preferences or clear language for outreach. Calaveras, Madera, and Sacramento counties said that community groups provided them with resources.

ii. Government agencies: Twelve out of 15 VCA counties (Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) said government agencies (e.g., as part of city and county governments) assisted with VCA outreach while only three counties said that government agencies assisted with feedback (Butte, Mariposa, and Sacramento) and four counties said resources (Madera, Napa, Sacramento, Santa Clara).

iii. Private groups: Seven of 15 counties (El Dorado, Los Angeles, Madera, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) did not collaborate with private groups for the 2020 general election. While one-third of VCA counties (Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, Nevada, and Orange), said that private groups helped them with outreach. Butte and Fresno said private groups provided feedback and Sacramento said they provided resources.

iv. Media organizations: Twelve counties (Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) indicated that media entities helped with voter outreach and education, while only Butte said they provided feedback, and two counties (Calaveras and Mariposa) said they provided resources.

Table 18: Partnership Enhancement on Voter Outreach Strategy for the 2020 General Election

	Community Groups			Government Agencies			Private Groups			Media Entities		
	Outreach	Feedback	Resources	Outreach	Feedback	Resources	Outreach	Feedback	Resources	Outreach	Feedback	Resources
Amador County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Madera County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mariposa County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes
Napa County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-
Orange County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-
Sacramento County	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
San Mateo County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Total	12/15 counties	4/15 counties	3/15 counties	12/15 counties	3/15 counties	4/15 counties	5/15 counties	2/15 counties	1/15 counties	12/15 counties	1/15 counties	2/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "Describe how your partnerships with the following groups [community groups, government agencies, private groups, media entities] enhanced your outreach strategy for the 2020 general election.

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Benefits and Challenges of Partnerships

VCA-adopting counties are required to engage in a higher level of collaboration than non-VCA counties, and while this can improve outreach efforts and VCA implementation, working collaboratively also requires additional time and resources. In response to the question, "Other than voter outreach and education, how did collaboration among various stakeholders influence the VCA implementation process for the 2020 general election?" nearly all counties said that collaboration with stakeholders improved some aspect of the VCA implementation process (Table 19). Seven counties said stakeholders provided feedback on EAP or VCA implementation, while four counties said that collaborators helped improve community trust, three counties mentioned improved outreach, eight counties said they assisted with siting locations, and two counties said recruiting vote center staff. Seven counties – Calaveras, Los Angeles, Madera, Napa, Nevada, Orange, and Santa Clara – indicated that stakeholders contributed in multiple capacities. Mariposa responded "don't know" and El Dorado did not collaborate with stakeholders during this election cycle. San Mateo responded to this question noting that they implemented the VCA in 2018.

Table 19: Impact of Stakeholder Collaboration on the VCA Implementation Process in the 2020 General Election

	Feedback on EAP/VCA Implementation	Improved Community Trust	Improved Outreach	Assisted with Siting Locations	Recruited Vote Center Staff
Amador County	-	Yes	-	-	-
Butte County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Calaveras County	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
El Dorado County	-	-	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	-	-	-	-
Napa County	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	-	-	Yes	-
San Mateo County	-	-	-	-	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	-	-	-
Total	7/15 counties	4/15 counties	3/15 counties	8/15 counties	2/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "Other than voter outreach and education, how did collaboration among various stakeholders influence the VCA implementation process for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Over two-thirds of VCA counties provided suggestions for how collaboration could be improved (Table 20). Six counties wanted more participation or action from community partners with one county noting that collaborators should do more than critique. More specifically, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne thought collaboration could have been more successful if they engaged with collaborators earlier or had more frequent meetings.

Sacramento and Santa Clara both mentioned the challenge of working with partners short-term. Sacramento noted that “Due to the high interest in the election, many new folks jumped in which required a lot of catch-up on processes and procedures; I think communication virtually worked well and saved commute time.” Santa Clara suggested that collaborators “...introduce more of their co-workers and peers in the same process since most participants rarely attended every single event and to help with the turnover of collaborators as they advanced or focused on different aspects of their work or advocacy.” Santa Clara went on to say that they would also like stronger partnerships and to streamline messaging with state agencies.

Orange County reported, “One of the challenges we had was to identify sites for vote centers and ballot drop boxes as it was our first time working with the public for multiple days of use. Now that the community becomes more familiar with our operation and sees the collaboration as their opportunity to promote, we anticipate higher engagements moving forward.” Amador, Madera, and Napa reported that they had strong collaborations and that improvements were not necessary.

Table 20: Collaborative Improvements for the 2020 General Election

	More Participation from Community Partners	More Robust LAAC/VAAC Meetings or Membership	Assistance with Siting Locations and Vote Centers	Earlier Engagement or More Meetings/Time Committed	Collaborated Well/No Improvements Needed
Amador County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Butte County	-	Yes	-	-	-
Calaveras County	-	Yes	-	-	-
El Dorado County	-	-	-	-	-
Fresno County	Yes	-	-	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Madera County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	-	-	-	-
Napa County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-	-	-	-
Orange County	-	-	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
San Mateo County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Total	6/15 counties	2/15 counties	1/15 counties	6/15 counties	3/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, “What about the collaborative process could have been improved for the 2020 general election?” A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn’t in that survey category.

In response to the open-ended question, “What groups in your county were missing from voter outreach and education efforts for the 2020 general election (i.e., are there groups you would like to see involved in future elections)?” eight counties (Amador, Butte, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Napa, Orange, San Mateo, and Tuolumne) reported that all groups were included. Orange County elaborated and said, “Data indicates many voters were reached with a historic 87.3% turnout and voters of all backgrounds were included in our general marketing efforts. The Orange County Registrar of Voters continuously strives to improve its outreach efforts and welcomes suggestions from the community.”

The remaining six counties shared groups who they would like to increase partnerships with or would like to improve their outreach towards. Madera, Nevada, Sacramento, and Santa Clara said outreach to language or racial and ethnic groups was missing or could be improved in the future; certain counties noted specific groups or voters that they would like to collaborate with in future elections including Jakarta Movement, Mi Familia Vota, Asian-Pacific Islander voters, and Spanish-speaking voters. Santa Clara County reported working to reach all groups but had difficulty reaching young adults and communities that speak languages that are less common in the county; they also noted that they “did not provide a lot of voter outreach and education to our formerly incarcerated voters or voters without a fixed address. Efforts are currently being assessed to reach these voters.” Calaveras County reported trouble reaching rural voters and Fresno noted that “many groups were happy to comment about EAP or VCA development but unwilling to help make improvements, too busy focused on their own election-oriented activities.”

Table 21: Groups Missing from Voter Outreach and Education Efforts for the 2020 General Election

	Youth	Non-English Language Groups	Racial or Ethnic Groups	Other Groups	All Groups Included
Amador County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Butte County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	-	-	-	Yes	-
El Dorado County	-	-	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Madera County	-	-	Yes	-	-
Mariposa County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Napa County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	-	Yes	-	-	-
Orange County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Sacramento County	-	-	Yes	-	-
San Mateo County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Total	1/15 counties	2/15 counties	2/15 counties	3/15 counties	8/15 counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, “What groups in your county were missing from voter outreach and education efforts for the 2020 general election (i.e., are there groups you would like to see involved in future elections)?”

A dash (-) indicates that the survey question was answered but that the column category did not apply to that county.

3. Priorities for Siting Locations in the 2020 General Election

Key Takeaways:

- Counties noted increased challenges with siting locations and recruiting vote center workers both due to the COVID-19 pandemic and also due to the extended period of time that vote centers are open under the VCA.
- All 15 VCA counties balanced several priorities when selecting voting location sites, however only three counties responded to the survey that they considered the 14 criteria listed on the survey.
- Nearly all counties reported that they prioritized vote center locations that were easily accessible and that met ADA requirements.
- A vast majority of counties trained their staff with sensitivity protocols, options for voters with disabilities, and training for their Ballot Marking Devices (BMD); training materials were either sourced internally, through community partners such as Disability Rights California, or through the SOS or other government offices.
- The number of Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) ballots cast varied widely by county, and while all counties provided information on RAVBM in voting materials, only three counties did additional advertisements in the media.

Voting Location Site Selection

Under the VCA, vote centers replace traditional neighborhood polling places and while there are fewer vote centers than polling places by design, vote centers are typically open to voters for up to 10 days prior to Election Day and available for all voters to utilize countywide. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, counties were only required to open vote centers for three days prior to the 2020 general election. Additionally, due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 restrictions and guidance, elections officials had limited time for siting voting locations. At vote centers, voters can cast their ballots in person, drop off their completed vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots, access conditional voter registration, receive replacement ballots, and access additional resources, such as language assistance and accessible voting machines. The minimum number of vote centers and drop boxes as required by the VCA are one drop box per 15,000 voters, one 11-day vote center per 50,000 voters, and one 4-day vote center per 10,000 voters.

Voter's Choice Act Vote Center Siting Location Considerations

- Proximity to public transit
- Proximity to communities with historically low vote-by-mail usage
- Proximity to population centers
- Proximity to language minority communities
- Proximity to voters with disabilities
- Proximity to communities with low rates of vehicle ownership
- Proximity to low-income communities
- Proximity to communities of eligible voters that are not registered
- Proximity to geographically isolated populations (e.g., Native Reservations)
- Access to free parking
- Time and distance a voter must travel to reach a location
- The need for alternate voting method for voters with disabilities
- Traffic patterns
- Proximity to college campus or university
- The need for mobile vote centers

Since there are fewer vote centers than traditional polling places, location siting is especially important. For the 2020 general election, all counties balanced several priorities that best served their voters based off the VCA suggested priority list. Madera, Orange, and San Mateo were the only counties to consider the 14 VCA criteria asked about in the survey (Table 22). Nearly all counties (except Sacramento) said that being in close proximity to public transportation was a priority for siting locations. All counties except El Dorado took into consideration the time and distance a voter would have to travel to vote. Other priorities considered by at least two-thirds of VCA counties included being close to population centers, language minority communities, voters with disabilities, isolated populations, and alternative voting methods for voters with disabilities. Calaveras, Madera, Orange, and San Mateo were the only counties to report considering the placement of mobile vote centers.

Table 22: County Priorities for Siting Locations in the 2020 General Election

	Public Transit	Historically Low Vote-by-Mail Usage	Population Centers	Non-English Language Communities	Voters with Disabilities	Low Rates of Vehicle Ownership	Proximity to Low-Income Communities
Amador County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes
Total	14/15 Counties	9/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	10/15 Counties	9/15 Counties	9/15 Counties
	Eligible Voters Who are Not Registered to Vote	Geographically Isolated Populations	Access to Free Parking	Time and Distance a Voter Must Travel	Alternative Voting Methods for Voters with Disabilities	Traffic Patterns	Mobile Vote Centers
Amador County	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Calaveras County	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Fresno County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Napa County	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
Total	8/15 Counties	10/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	14/15 Counties	11/15 Counties	9/15 Counties	4/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

The CID survey asked, “What location characteristics were prioritized when choosing vote center locations for the 2020 general election?” Respondents could mark all that apply from a list of choices.

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Voting Location Site Selection for Voters with Disabilities

To better understand how VCA counties prioritized accessibility we also asked about siting priorities, specifically for voters with disabilities. Table 23 shows that nearly all counties reported that they prioritized a site that meets ADA requirements (12 of 15 counties), as well as an easily accessible location (13 of 15 counties). Nine counties mentioned parking (Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Madera, Orange, Sacramento, Santa Clara and Tuolumne) and two counties noted proximity to voters with disabilities (Butte and Fresno). Orange County stated that “Each potential voting location was visited by a specially trained ADA Specialist. Each location was surveyed for accessibility as per the Secretary of State guidelines. Locations that did not meet accessibility requirements were not selected as Vote Centers.” Although it is not specific to voters with disabilities, another three counties (Amador, Napa, and Santa Clara) mentioned Internet or cellphone connectivity as consideration for siting.

Table 23: Priorities for Siting Locations Specifically Relating to Voters with Disabilities for the 2020 General Election

	ADA Requirements	Accessible Location	Parking	Proximity to Voters with Disabilities
Amador County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Fresno County	-	Yes	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	-	Yes	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	-	-	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Total	12/15 Counties	13/15 Counties	9/15 Counties	2/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What were the priorities for siting locations specifically relating to voters with disabilities for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Vote Center Planning for Voters with Disabilities

County elections staff had to make additional considerations for voters with disabilities that are outlined in the following section of the report. Please note that we did not ask these questions in regards to all voters or non-English language groups.

In addition to selecting accessible sites noted above, counties also ensured that vote center staff were trained on best practices for serving voters with disabilities. Los Angeles, Nevada, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties had a dedicated staff person at county offices that served voters with disabilities. Training hours for vote center workers that were focused on how to serve voters with disabilities ranged from 15 minutes in Napa to 24 hours in Los Angeles, with most VCA counties (Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, and Santa Clara) reporting between one to three hours.

Counties also noted that recruiting and training staff was especially challenging due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but a majority of counties presented their staff with sensitivity training, options for voters with disabilities, and training for their Ballot Marking Devices (BMD) (Table 24). Tuolumne reported that workers were trained on, "Setting up a vote center, using the accessible devices and speaking with individuals," while Los Angeles trained workers on, "How to meet and greet voters with disabilities and how to use all of the check-in and Ballot Marking Devices." Calaveras, Fresno, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara said they acquired content for vote center staff training as part of a collaboration with their VAAC and Disability Rights California (DRC) (Table 25). Calaveras, Fresno, Madera, Napa, Orange, and Tuolumne also acquired content from the Secretary of State's office or another government agency.

Table 24: Vote Center Staff Training in Regards to Disability Accessibility for the 2020 General Election			
	Sensitivity Training	Options for Voters With Disabilities	BMD or Procedure Training
Amador County	Yes	Yes	-
Butte County	-	Yes	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	-
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes
Total	12/15 Counties	14/15 Counties	10/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What did the vote center staff training entail regarding disability accessibility for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Table 25: Content Source for Vote Center Staff Training Regarding Disability Accessibility for the 2020 General Election			
	Internally/ VAAC	DRC or other Partnership*	SOS/State/City Agencies
Amador County	-	Yes	-
Butte County	Yes	-	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	-	-
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	-
Madera County	-	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	Yes	Yes
Total	12/15 Counties	10/15 Counties	6/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "Where did your office acquire content for the vote center staff training regarding disability accessibility for the 2020 general election?"

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

*DRC is the acronym for the Disability Rights California.

Ballot Accessibility: RAVBM and BMD

The VCA requires counties to offer the option of Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM). With this option, voters with disabilities can request a ballot be sent electronically to them. Voters can then download, read and mark the ballot on their computer using their own accessible technology. Voters using RAVBM are then able to print and mail in their ballot, or return it to a secure drop box or voting location (see glossary). In the 2020 general election, all voters were allowed to use RAVBM regardless of disability status due to the COVID-19 pandemic. For voters who want or need to vote in-person, VCA counties are required to have three accessible BMDs (voting systems) per vote center (Table 26). BMDs allow voters with disabilities to vote privately and independently.

RAVBM usage varied across VCA counties in the 2020 general election, ranging from 12 in Madera to 5,709 in Santa Clara (Table 27) Orange County had 1,992 RAVBM ballots cast and reported that their high rate of RAVBM usage was because, “Public awareness of RAVBM increased following two special elections conducted after the 2020 general and RAVBM was featured in Orange County’s extensive marketing and communication efforts for safe voting options under COVID-19.” All 15 VCA counties reported having information about RAVBM on their county websites, in voter guides, and at county-hosted events (Table 28). Los Angeles, Madera, and Napa counties informed voters about RAVBM through the media.

While all counties reported having information about RAVBM available on their county elections websites, we note that there is a qualitative difference in the content and placement (e.g., how easy to find) of RAVBM information. CID explored VCA county websites and found that only Amador and Fresno had information about RAVBM directly on their elections homepage, while seven counties (Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Nevada, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) had this information on a sub-menu on the homepage (Table 29). We were unable to find RAVBM information on the websites of Butte, Mariposa, Napa, and Tuolumne, however, some of these counties provided links to the SOS RAVBM website; it is also possible that this information existed somewhere on the sites and was not located by the CID team. Additionally, we do not have data on how RAVBM-related content might have changed on county websites over the course of the 2020 general election period. Overall, the county elections websites of Calaveras, Orange, Sacramento, and Santa Clara were all clear and particularly easy to navigate.

Table 26: Type and Model of Ballot Marking Device (BMD)

Amador County	ES&S ExpressVote
Butte County	Dominion ICX
Calaveras County	Hart Verity Touchwriter
El Dorado County	Dominion ICX
Fresno County	Dominion ICX
Los Angeles County	VSAP BMD
Madera County	Dominion ICX
Mariposa County	Dominion ICX
Napa County	Dominion ICX
Nevada County	Hart Verity Touchwriter
Orange County	Hart Verity Touchwriter
Sacramento County	Dominion ICX
San Mateo County	Dominion ICX
Santa Clara County	Dominion ICX
Tuolumne County	Dominion ICX

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table 27: Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) Usage in the 2020 General Election

	Type of RAVBM	RAVBM Application on County Website	Number RAVBM Cast
Amador County	Democracy Live	Yes	19 RAVBM ballots were issued and 9 were returned. Of the 9 returned, 8 were good and 1 was challenged because that voter already returned a good mail ballot.
Butte County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	
Calaveras County	Democracy Live	Yes	19: 5 voters accessed an RAVBM Ballot, 1 voter accessed a County VIG, 5 Voters had a domestic IP address, and 8 RAVBM Ballots where accessed
El Dorado County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	508
Fresno County	Democracy Live	Yes	80
Los Angeles County	Interactive Sample Ballot 2.5.1	Yes	479
Madera County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	12
Mariposa County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	60 military and overseas voters
Napa County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	13
Nevada County	Democracy Live	Yes	107
Orange County	Democracy Live	Yes	6,014 voters accessed the RAVBM system 1,992 downloaded a ballot
Sacramento County	Democracy Live	Yes	300
San Mateo County	Democracy Live	Yes	667
Santa Clara County	Democracy Live	Yes	5,709
Tuolumne County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	84

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Table 28: Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) Outreach in the 2020 General Election

	Election Office Outreach	Media or Advertisements
Amador County	Yes	-
Butte County	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	-
El Dorado County	Yes	-
Fresno County	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-
Total	15/15 Counties	3/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category.

Table 29: Number of Clicks on Elections Website to Access RAVBM Information

Amador	Butte	Calaveras	El Dorado	Fresno	Los Angeles	Madera	Mariposa	Napa	Nevada	Orange	Sacramento	San Mateo	Santa Clara	Tuolumne
1	-	2	2	1	3	2	-	-	2	3	2	2	2	-

Data Source: CID collected data April, 2021. Please note, we do not have data on how RAVBM-related content might have changed on county websites over the course of the 2020 election period.

For counties with a dash (-), we could not find information about RAVBM on their website, however, they may have provided an external link to information about RAVBM on the SOS website.

Conclusion

Despite the unprecedented challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, the majority of VCA counties engaged in targeted outreach efforts, utilized their VAAC and other partnerships, and prioritized siting locations to ensure an accessible voting experience for all voters in the 2020 general election. VCA implementation methods varied across all counties, but larger, more populous VCA counties reported using more diverse outreach methods (e.g., direct digital communication, collaboration with community groups, etc.) and considered more priorities for siting locations (e.g., access to free parking, mobile vote centers, etc.) than smaller counties. The same was true when examining efforts specifically for voters with disabilities.

As required by the new law, VCA county elections offices reported engaging in education and outreach efforts to inform voters about VCA-related changes and to increase voter participation from historically underrepresented groups. Nearly all counties utilized traditional media, social media, outdoor signage, signage at vote centers, and direct mail to educate voters. In addition to a general outreach campaign, nearly half of the counties gave special focus to non-English language groups, racial or ethnic groups, young voters, seniors, or those that had been recently displaced by California wildfires.

Counties also collaborated with stakeholders to meet the VCA requirements. Over two-thirds of counties collaborated with community groups, hosted community meetings, met with community leaders, and created an ongoing collaboration with advocacy groups to discuss VCA changes. Two-thirds of VCA counties said that partnerships with community groups, government agencies, and media entities enhanced voter outreach.

All 15 VCA counties balanced several priorities when selecting voting location sites. Some VCA counties noted increased challenges with siting locations and recruiting vote center staff both due to COVID-19 related restrictions and also due to limited time counties had to adapt to changes. However, also due to the COVID-19 pandemic, VCA counties were allowed to reduce the length of time their 11-day vote centers were open to only four days (starting three days prior to Election Day), which may have helped counties in finding available locations to site vote centers. Additionally, about half of the counties said that collaborating with partners increased knowledge or resources for VCA implementation including siting vote centers and ballot drop boxes.

A majority of counties informed voters with disabilities about voting method changes through elections office outreach (e.g. county website, voter guide, mail, public meetings); in addition, about half of the VCA counties utilized digital media or collaborated with community groups on outreach. Two-thirds of counties rated their VAAC as moderately or very effective and said that the VAAC improved services for voters with disabilities by providing knowledge. Additionally, almost all counties had a dedicated VAAC page on their website and solicited agenda items from VAAC members prior to meetings. Further, nearly all counties trained vote center staff on sensitivity training and options for voters with disabilities. Content for elections staff training was most commonly sourced internally, with the VAAC, or from the DRC. The most important factors for VCA counties in siting locations for voters with disabilities was that locations were easily accessible and that they met ADA requirements. RAVBM usage varied widely.

Recommendations

1. Continue investing in education and outreach and consider specific messaging to different voting groups.

Surveyed elections administrators were mostly unaware of what messaging was most effective for voters, while a majority of voters were unaware of voting changes in 2020.

- Despite the fact that a majority of counties met the VCA requirements in terms of voter outreach and education only about a third of voters knew about voting changes, according to CID's survey of eligible California voters. A slightly higher percentage of voters in VCA counties knew about voting changes when compared to voters statewide (36.7% vs. 32.4%), indicating that VCA-required outreach increased voter knowledge.
- Official election materials should be tested across various voting groups. High-use materials from county elections offices need to have plain and accessible language, quality translation, and readability by voters with disabilities and other historically underrepresented voting groups.
- Counties should devote time and resources to test effective voter messaging for different voting groups – including voters with disabilities, POC voters, young voters, rural voters, and senior voters – so they can target relevant information, and so county financial resources have the greatest impact.
- Previous research by CID showed that different voting groups have different preference for how and where they cast a ballot, which should be considered when developing outreach campaigns.
- Effective voter messaging should be done in collaboration with neighboring VCA counties or community partners.

2. Dedicate more time to fostering relationships with community partners.

When utilized, community partners can provide valuable insights and resources to enhance the elections process from start to finish.

- Elections officials noted that collaboration was challenging because of un-sustained community interest and could have been improved if there were more meetings, more time dedicated, or more action from community partners. Long-term, sustained collaboration may allow community partners to assist more with implementation.
- Community partners can help elections officials reach more voters. One-third of counties said they could improve their outreach with at least one of the following groups: non-English language groups, racial and ethnic groups, rural voters, or young voters.
- Some VCA counties noted increased challenges with siting locations and recruiting vote center staff both due to state or countywide restrictions related to COVID-19 and also due to the length of time elections officials had to plan. However, several counties noted that community groups helped identify and recruit vote center locations and staff, which if utilized, could serve as an asset to VCA counties in the future.

Notes

1. For more information on the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450
2. For additional details on the requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450
3. For a full list of VCA-county EAP's, see: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voters-choice-act/vca-counties>
4. For additional details on the Election Administration Plan requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450
5. For information on Assembly Bill 860 and Senate Bill 423, see: <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>
6. For information on Assembly Bill 89 and Assembly Bill 100, see: <https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/>
7. California Assembly Bill 1520 (2001) gave Californians the ability to register as a permanent Vote-by-Mail voters. Registered voters with this status receive a VBM ballot in every election without needing an excuse or having to request such a ballot. See the California Secretary of State's 2016 general election voter participation report: <http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/sov/2016-general/sov/03-voter-participation-stats-by-county.pdf>
8. For historical vote-by-mail usage in California, see the California Secretary of State's website at: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail#hist>
9. For information on California voting method trends by demographics, see: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b8c7ce15d5dbf599fb46ab/t/58e58499e4fcb5fc935614c6/1491436758841/VBM+Issue+Brief+Revised.pdf>
10. For information on California voting method trends by demographics, see: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b8c7ce15d5dbf599fb46ab/t/612dd3632b33f91f9853933f/1630393191825/USC+CID+2020+GENERAL+ELECTION+RESEARCH+REPORT+8-27-21+WEBSITE+RELEASE.pdf>
11. Total population and citizen voting-age population data from the American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates, 2015-2019
12. Total population and citizen voting-age population data from the American Community Survey, 5-year Estimates, 2015-2019
13. Disability population calculation: The percent of residents with disabilities out of the total population, ACS 2015-2019 5-year estimates. Percent limited English proficient population calculation: The percent of the population that has limited English proficiency, ACS 2015-2019 5-year Limited English proficiency is defined as people who speak English "less than very well".
14. See California Secretary of State's 15 Report of Registration for the 2020 general election: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/report-registration/15day-gen-2020>
15. For more information of California voter's knowledge regarding the 2020 general election, see CID report: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b8c7ce15d5dbf599fb46ab/t/612dd3632b33f91f9853933f/1630393191825/USC+CID+2020+GENERAL+ELECTION+RESEARCH+REPORT+8-27-21+WEBSITE+RELEASE.pdf>
16. For more information on Voter's Choice Act requirements and recommendations, see VCA Starter Toolkit: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vca/toolkit/starter-kit.pdf>
17. For more information on Voter's Choice Act requirements and recommendations, see VCA Starter Toolkit: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vca/toolkit/starter-kit.pdf>