Orange County Registrar of Voters
Voter's Choice Act Versus Traditional Election Models

ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With the passage of the "California Voter's Choice Act" (Senate Bill 450), counties are now permitted to conduct elections using Vote Centers instead of polling places. Since this change, the Registrar of Voters has been at the forefront of discovery in how Vote Centers work, the implications of implementing Vote Centers, and the advantages and disadvantages of moving to a Vote Center model.

With technology constantly advancing, the traditional polling place model has fallen behind the needs and expectations of Orange County voters. Multiple polling places in a single neighborhood cause confusion with local voters and leave them uncertain about where to vote, and eventually lead to more provisional ballots. In addition, the narrow timeframe of Election Day is becoming increasingly difficult for voters to work around.

Due to the shortcomings in polling place elections, voters are gradually changing the way they vote to accomodate their own schedule and lifestyle:

- Of the 1.2 million ballots cast in the 2016 Presidential General Election, **nearly 700,000 were vote-by-mail ballots**.
- Currently **61% of all registered voters have signed up for permanent vote-by-mail** status.
- The number of voters casting ballots at the polling place has **dropped 20 percentage points since 2004**.

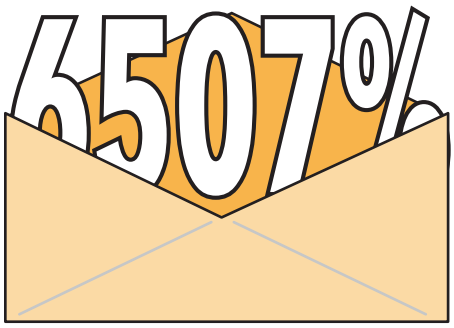
At this rate, in just a few years, we will see **90% of voters in permanent vote-by-mail** status while **only 20% of ballots are cast at the polling place**. More than 1,000 polling places would stand nearly empty on Election Day, expending County resources and taxpayer dollars to provide a service that 80% of constituents are not using.

The Registrar of Voters is ready to respond to this trend and has already taken preliminary steps for preparation. Voter survey responses strongly support the Vote Center model. A Vote Center pilot program was implemented in 2016 which provided experience and insight into how to effectively execute this project. Finally, a budget analysis of capital expeditures and operational costs illustrates projected savings of $10–20 million initially, then hundreds of thousands of dollars for each subsequent Statewide election.

The benefits of a Vote Center model are exemplified by the significant changes in voter behavior, matching the needs of today's voters with modernization that will compliment their desire for choices in how they vote. With an outcome that includes an elevated voter experience, our recommendation is to move forward with implementation of the Voter's Choice Act.

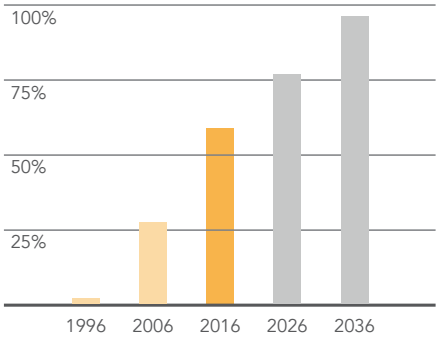
Neal Kelley
Registrar of Voters
Orange County, CA

ORANGE COUNTY'S VOTE CENTERS AT A GLANCE



Percentage increase in permanent vote-by-mail voters over past 20 years

Percentage of Permanent Vote-by-Mail Voters – Past, Present and Future



In twenty years, 93% of all Orange County voters will have signed up to automatically receive a vote-by-mail ballot for every election.

In-person Polling Place Voters Past 20 Years

In-person ballots cast at polling places dropped 37% percentage points since 1996.

1 in 5 vote-by-mail ballots were dropped off at the polls rather than mailed.

This has nearly tripled in the last twelve years, from 7% to 20%

QUICK FACTS

Vote Centers are much more secure
(see page 11)

Electronic poll books provide real-time voter data
(see page 11, 40)

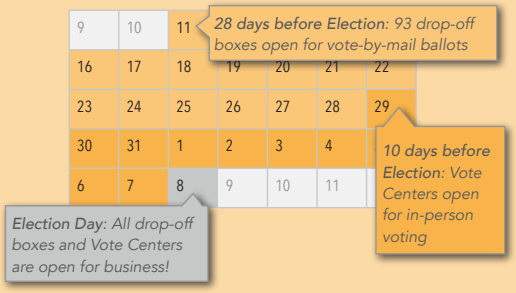
Voters can check registration status at any Vote Center
(see page 10)

Vote Centers are service centers, not just for voting
(see page 9, 10)

CALIFORNIA VOTER'S CHOICE ACT BY THE NUMBERS

125 Vote Centers

29 Days of Voting



1.5 Million Mail Ballots

93 Vote-by-Mail Drop Boxes

ORANGE COUNTY VOTERS: TRENDS & RESPONSES

The passage of the California Voter's Choice Act (Senate Bill 450, 2016) provides an opportunity for California counties to implement the most expansive change to the voting process in recent history. In the Voter's Choice model, multiple polling places would be replaced by neighborhood *Vote Centers*—carefully-selected facilities that are highly accessible and open for four to ten days prior to the election. In addition, all voters would receive a vote-by-mail ballot automatically, and secure ballot drop-off boxes would be located throughout the County. It is a fundamental change to the way we view and experience voting in Orange County.

But why? The Voter's Choice model, or "Vote Center" model, is a response to the gradual shift in voter behavior and perception from the traditional "one day, one polling place" concept to a system that works around voters' schedules, expectations and lifestyles.

Voter Trends

Voter behavior in recent years has demonstrated an increase in the use of vote-by-mail voting, dropping off vote-by-mail ballots at the polling place, and voters going to the wrong polling place. These trends illustrate the larger movement taking place across the State—increasingly, Orange County voters expect to be able to vote on their own terms, at the time and place of their choosing.

Vote-by-Mail

The number of voters choosing to vote-by-mail has steadily increased. Currently, 943,409 voters in Orange County are registered as permanent vote-by-mail voters, meaning they have chosen to automatically receive a vote-by-mail ballot every election. This represents 61% of the total registered voters. In 2002, California law changed to permit registered voters to become "permanent vote-by-mail voters" without a medical reason or other justification, meaning the voter would be sent a vote-by-mail ballot automatically every election. Since that time, there has been a steady increase in the number of voters requesting permanent vote-by-mail status (Figure 1).

Percentage of Permanent Vote-by-Mail Voters Past 20 Years

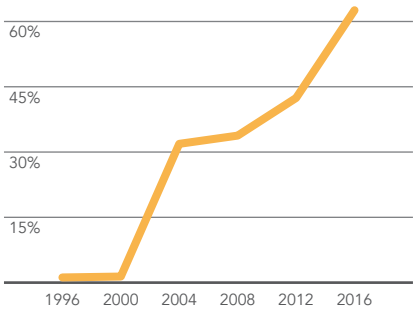


Figure 1. In 2002, California law changed to allow any voter to apply for permanent vote-by-mail status, regardless of status or need.

Percentage of In-Person Ballots Cast at the Polling Place – Past 20 Years

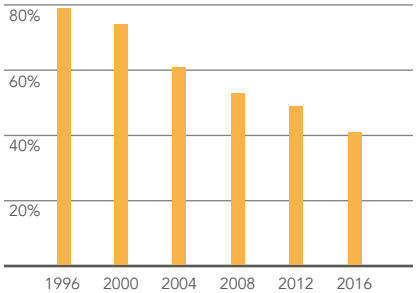


Figure 2. 2012 was the first year that more vote-by-mail ballots were cast than in-person polling place ballots. That trend has strengthened ever since.

Number of Provisional Ballots Cast Due to Wrong Polling Place – Past 12 Years

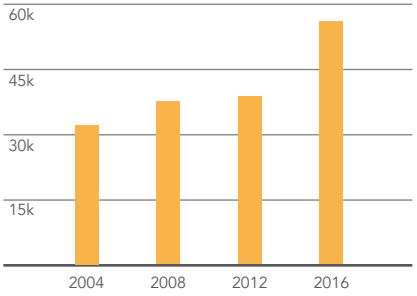


Figure 3. The number of provisional ballots increases the time it takes to certify an election. In the 2016 General, over 130,000 provisional ballots were cast.

"How likely are you to use a Vote Center over a polling place in the future?"

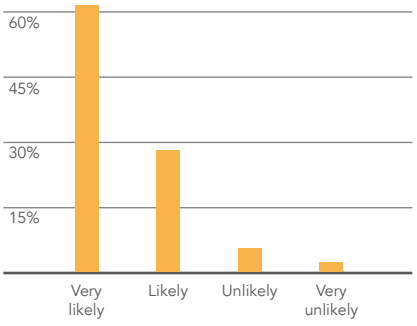


Figure 4. 6,433 voters responded to a survey about their experience with Vote Centers. The responses were overwhelmingly positive.

Vote-by-Mail Ballot Drop Off

Voters can return their vote-by-mail ballot by mail, or they can drop off their ballot at any polling place on Election Day. The numbers of voters that have chosen to drop off their vote-by-mail ballots at a polling place, as opposed to returning them through the postal system, has also steadily increased since 2004.

Voting at the Wrong Polling Place

The number of voters who vote at the wrong polling place has consistently risen since 2004 (Figure 3). This may occur because the voter has recently moved out of their assigned precinct but not updated their registration, or just because the voter is in the area on Election Day. A voter at the wrong polling place either must vote provisionally or go back to their assigned polling place. Provisional ballots must be manually verified after the election before they can be counted, which holds up the certification process.

Vote Center Survey

During the 2016 Presidential General election, a Vote Center model was piloted to gain insight into the implementation process. Six sites were selected and operated according to the requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act. For detailed information about the 2016 General Vote Center pilot program, please see "Case Study: Vote Centers in the 2016 General Election" on page 14.

The Registrar of Voters' office also conducted voter surveys to obtain direct feedback from voters who cast a ballot in a Vote Center as well as all voters who dropped off their vote-by-mail ballot before Election Day. Between both Vote Center voters and vote-by-mail drop-off voters, 42,000 total surveys were sent out and 6,433 completed surveys were returned. This represents a high response rate at 15%. Responses provide insight into the voter population that opted to vote or drop off their ballot at a Vote Center instead of the polling place.

The majority of respondents are experienced voters (72% voting 10 years or more) and typically vote at the polling place (89%). More than half of respondents (53%) stated that their motivation to vote at a Vote Center was to "avoid Election Day rush."

The vast majority of respondents (90%) stated that they are "Likely" or "Very Likely" to use a Vote Center over a polling place again in the future (Figure 4). When asked, "In comparison to other methods of

voting you may have used in the past, how satisfied were you with the overall experience at the Vote Center?" nearly all respondents (96%) stated "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied." These responses correspond with the voter trends discussed at the beginning of this section.

The surveys indicated some concerns, which are also addressed in this document. For more information on specific plans to address voter concerns, please see "Implications of Vote Centers" on page 28. For detailed survey results, please refer to "Appendix A: Vote Center Survey Results" on page 32.

"Wonderful option. Would always vote this way if offered."

– 2016 Vote Center survey respondent, 16+ years voting experience, typically votes an electronic ballot at the polling place

Community Election Working Group Feedback

The Registrar of Voters' Community Election Working Group is an advisory committee with representation from major political parties, city clerks, the League of Women Voters, veterans, seniors, disability advocacy groups, language assistance advocacy groups, poll workers, youth and the public at-large. This group meets on a quarterly basis and advises the Registrar of Voters on issues of concern to the community. With the passage of the California Voter's Choice Act, the Registrar of Voters has reached out to the individual members of the Community Election Working Group to gather input about the concerns of the community. The overall response has been very positive toward the convenience and security of the Vote Center model, and the City Clerk offices that participated in the 2016 General Vote Center pilot program were pleased with how well the program worked.

The universal concern from these groups is getting the word out (Figure 5). Each community specifically stated that without sufficient outreach, members of their population could be marginalized. The Registrar of Voters is very sensitive to this concern and will ensure that the marketing program is robust and far-reaching. For more information on specific plans to address these concerns, please see "Implications of Vote Centers" on page 28. Detailed responses from the Community Election Working Group can be found in "Appendix B: Community Election Working Group Responses" on page 35.

Community Election Working Group Feedback Main Themes

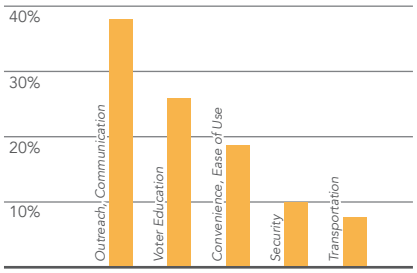


Figure 5. Community organizations expressed excitement and anticipation when asked about Vote Centers. All are concerned about getting the word out to voters.

VOTER'S CHOICE ACT: VOTE CENTER ELECTIONS

Senate Bill 450, entitled the California Voter's Choice Act, was signed into law on September 29, 2016. The bill authorizes specified counties (including County of Orange) on or after January 2, 2018, to conduct any election as an all-mailed ballot election as long as sufficient ballot drop-off locations and Vote Centers are provided according to the requirements in the bill. The passage of this bill marks a fundamental change in how elections can be conducted in California.

In the early eighteen hundreds, the United State adopted the Australian ballot, which espoused the concept of conducting elections on ballots controlled by the government instead of by the political parties. At the same time, community-based polling stations were established in population centers, which were defined by proximity to agricultural areas, commerce hubs and transportation routes. This "polling place" election system has remained in place since that era, although population centers have swelled hundreds of times over, the economies in these metropolitan areas have completely transitioned from agriculture to service sector, and technology has advanced at an unprecedented rate. The California Voter's Choice Act is a response to the polling place system under the current conditions found in the State of California.

In this section, Vote Centers and all-mail ballot elections are outlined briefly to give an overview of the California Voter's Choice Act. For

more detailed information, including a side-by-side comparison of polling places and Vote Centers, an in-depth look at operations and budget implications of Vote Centers, please refer to "Are Vote Centers Worth It: Cost-Benefit Analysis" on page 19.

Vote Centers

What does a Vote Center look like?

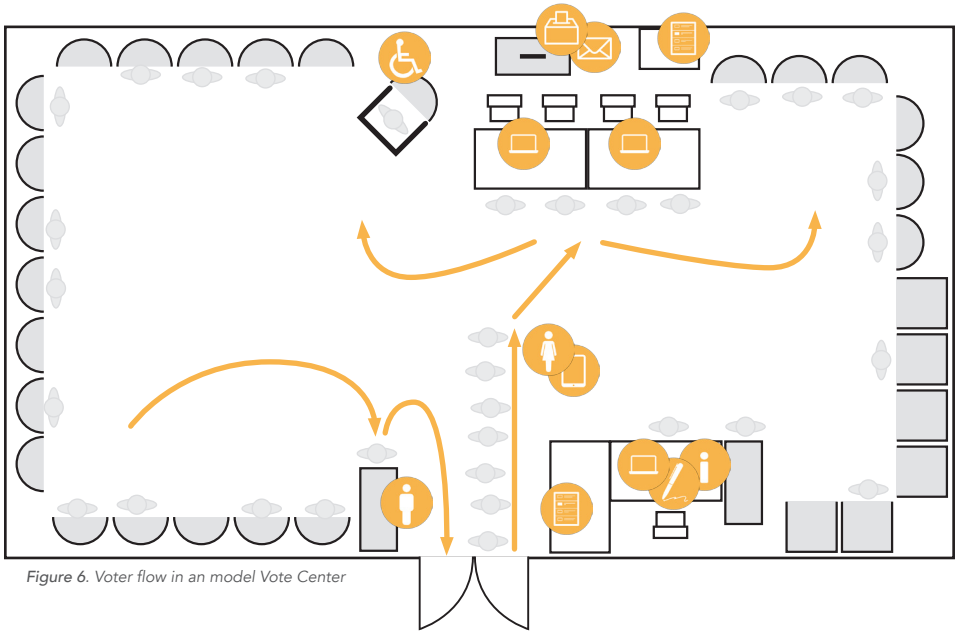


Figure 6. Voter flow in an model Vote Center

Vote Center Legend

- *Ballot printing / replacement ballots*
- *Electronic poll book check in*
- *Greeter / ingress control*
- *Electronic voter list / line management*
- *Information table / troubleshooting / check in*
- *Check voter registration status*
- *Accessible voting*
- *Ballot box*
- *Vote-by-mail drop-off*
- *Greeter / egress control*
- *Traffic flow*
- *Electronic ballot voting booth*
- *Paper ballot voting booth*

The voting experience at a Vote Center is somewhat similar to voting at a polling place. A voter enters the Vote Center and is greeted by an election worker who directs the voter to a check-in line. The check-in stations are equipped with electronic poll books which allow the election worker to verify the identity of the voter quickly and easily. The voter then signs on the poll book touchscreen and receives the appropriate ballot. Poll books also allow for multiple check-in stations with the ability to add more stations as needed, and can be removed from the table and utilized for enhanced line management.

Procedures for voting an electronic or paper ballot remain essentially the same as in the polling place model. Vote-by-mail voters who arrive to drop-off their ballot can bypass the line and proceed directly to the table, as they can in a polling place. They can also drop off their ballot at a drive-thru station at select Vote Centers, which would only be available in the Vote Center model.

What can I do at a Vote Center?

A Vote Center is more than a traditional polling station—it is structured as an official "satellite service center" for registered voters.

- In-person polling place voting: the primary function of a Vote Center is to provide a place for voters to cast their ballots. Any registered voter can vote at any Vote Center, regardless of where he or she is registered in Orange County.
- Open multiple days and weekends: Vote Centers are open four to ten days prior to Election Day, including weekends. They are also open during longer hours—7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.—on the four days before Election Day to provide more opportunity for voters to cast their ballot or drop off their vote-by-mail ballot.
- Vote-by-mail ballot drop-off options: Vote-by-mail voters can drop off their ballot at any Vote Center, and select Vote Centers will have drive-thru drop-off stations. In addition, secure vote-by-mail ballot drop-off boxes will be located throughout the County to provide yet another option for vote-by-mail voters.
- Vote-by-mail ballot status and replacement ballots: Because Vote Center poll books are connected to the Countywide database of registered voters and their voting status, any vote-by-mail voter could stop by and check the status of their vote-by-mail ballot. If the voter needs a replacement ballot for any reason, the election worker can verify that the original ballot has not been cast, void it and print a replacement ballot for the voter, who then can fill it out and cast it there on the same visit.
- Registration status: Voters can check their registration status at any Vote Center. Same-day registration will be offered at the Registrar of Voter's headquarters (per California law) so that if there is a problem with a voter's registration, the voter has a way to correct it and cast a ballot.
- General voter assistance: Voters will be able to visit any Vote Center in the ten-day period to inquire about any election-related questions or concerns.

Where will my Vote Center be located?

Based on population, registered voter density, proximity to public transportation and several other requirements in the California Voter's Choice Act, Vote Centers will be located in visible, accessible facilities with adequate parking, path of travel and voting space. With over 125 Vote Centers and 93 vote-by-mail drop-off locations, each registered voter in Orange County will have an option to cast his or her ballot near home, work or school (Figure 7).

Possible locations for Vote Centers and/or drop-off location are:

- City halls
- Libraries
- Community Centers
- School District Offices
- Post Offices
- Courts
- Airport
- Retail locations
- Transportation hubs (Metro, Train, Bus, Park & Ride)

Sample Distribution of Vote Centers in Orange County

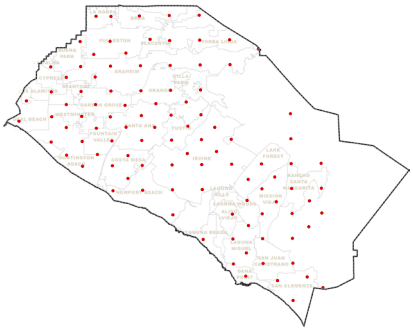


Figure 7. Based on population, voter density, transportation routes and many other factors, approximately 125 Vote Centers will be located throughout Orange County.

Security and Ballot Integrity

Vote Centers are inherently more secure than polling places. Fewer sites where an incident may occur, trained staff instead of volunteer poll workers and electronic check-in procedures instead of printed rosters are a few of the many ways that Vote Centers provide increased security to the voting process.

Fewer sites means better incident response

In the 2016 General election, there were nearly 1100 polling places in Orange County. With the California Voter's Choice Act, there would be an estimated 130 Vote Centers which will be in larger facilities, have trained staff and will be more accessible to main transportation routes. With Vote Centers, incidents of electioneering, voter intimidation and/or attempted voter fraud will decrease due to the decreased "exposure" of the voting process (i.e. less sites at which an incident can occur) as well as the increased ability of the Registrar of Voters to respond quickly to any incident (i.e. trained staff on site at all times, less sites to cover with the Rapid Response Team).

Trained election worker staff means more consistent procedures

The 2016 General Election was carried out by over 6000 volunteer

poll workers. Although many of these poll workers are committed and well-trained, a large proportion are brand new volunteers or have not volunteered for a long time. In addition, poll workers are only trained for three hours, and sometimes training takes place weeks before Election Day. Given the diverse background of our volunteers no matter their level of experience as a poll worker, it is no surprise that there are stark inconsistencies in performance from polling place to polling place on Election Day. With Vote Centers, election workers would be on-boarded as regular full-time extra help staff, with a week-long schedule of orientation, training and hands-on practice.

Electronic poll books mean enhanced security

Figure 8. Electronic poll books provide an efficient, convenient and secure method of verifying voter identity.

The California Voter's Choice Act requires that Vote Centers are equipped with electronic poll books which are synced with the full voter list. These electronic poll books eliminate the ability to attempt voting multiple times. In place of voter lists that were printed weeks in advance, the electronic poll books are all synced together and updated with the most current registration information, including whether each voter had voted. For instance, if a malicious voter cast a ballot in one Vote Center, then drove down the street to attempt casting a second ballot, the electronic poll book would show that the voter has already voted. Electronic poll books also provide the election worker more information to verify the voter's identity.

In addition, a bill has been introduced to the California legislature to increase the penalty for a person who attempted or committed vote-by-mail fraud from $1,000 to $10,000 (AB 777, Harper). The Registrar of Voters anticipates more legislation dealing with aspects of the California Voter's Choice Act to increase security and integrity in the voting process.

All mail-ballot elections

Figure 9. Vote-by-mail drop-off box prototype for Orange County.

To date, 61% of registered voters in Orange County have signed up as permanent vote-by-mail voters, meaning they receive their ballot automatically in the mail for every election. According to the California Voter's Choice Act, every registered voter would receive a mail ballot without any action or request on the part of the voter. In addition, vote-by-mail ballot drop-off boxes would be permanently placed at convenient locations around the County. Under the current polling place model, the Registrar of Voters already successfully processes hundreds of thousands of vote-by-mail ballots—accommodating all mail-ballot elections would just be a matter of scaling up the current operation. From the voters' perspective, an all mail-ballot election with Vote Centers would be much more convenient and beneficial since Vote Centers would be equipped to check vote-by-mail status and print replacement ballots during the ten days prior to Election Day, as opposed to only one site (headquarters) with these capabilities.

CASE STUDY: VOTE CENTERS IN THE 2016 GENERAL ELECTION

Location of Vote Centers in 2016 General Vote Center Pilot Program

Figure 10. In the pilot program, Vote Centers were located in Anaheim, Irvine, Mission Viejo, Costa Mesa, Westminster and Santa Ana.

In response to the passage of the California Voter's Choice Act in late September 2016, the Orange County Registrar of Voters' office executed a pilot program that reflected the bill and provided a framework to implement the Vote Center model in the future.

The November 2016 pilot program model successfully fulfilled major components of the legislation; schedule, accessibility, availability, geographic coverage, and voting support and security. The program ran concurrently with the traditional polling place model, allowing for an observable comparison between the two methods. General conclusions point to higher voter accessibility and increased efficiency in cost and resource allocation.

Planning and Preparation

The November 2016 General Election was an ideal opportunity to apply the California Voter's Choice Act. The anticipation of high voter participation provided the opportunity for a viable pilot in multiple aspects of the Vote Center model including vote-by-mail drop-off and drive-thru drop-off, multi-day availability and extended daily schedules. Preparations began with the formation of a Vote Center Planning group with meetings focused on reviewing the legislation's requirements, identifying essential action items and creating a working Vote Center calendar.

Process Conception and Planning

The first and largest project task was reviewing historical early voting processes to help conceptualize the requirements of the Vote Center legislation and design a voting process that met the requirements. In past elections, the early voting period ended two weeks in advance of Election Day—under the Vote Center model, the voting timeframe extends from ten days prior to Election Day all the way up to 8:00 p.m. the night before Election Day. This required a completely new procedure to ensure the printed voter roster was clean and accurate for Election Day. Under the true Vote Center model with electronic poll books, this would not be an issue because poll books would be used during the entire voting period.

Simultaneous to the creation of Vote Center processes, the planning group defined the logistical procedures for the operation as a whole. The planning group identified three general areas and relevant subcategories of action:

- **Staffing:** job posting, interviewing and hiring, onboarding, training and scheduling
- **Equipment**: materials required by Elections Code, printed materials, voting equipment and newly-created marketing resources
- **Scheduling**: maintenance of the Vote Center election calendar, task deadlines and goals, implementation the Vote Center event, equipment delivery and pick up, daily procedures at each site including ballot pick up, application of security procedures and post-election audit process.

In considering the comprehensive process, Vote Centers follow a similar preparation calendar to traditional polling places. In November, the planning group implemented a streamlined process and created applicable procedures for all aspects of Vote Center election planning and organization.

Facility Recruitment

General recruitment of facilities began with direct conversations between the Registrar and numerous city partners throughout the County. Overview of the California Voter's Choice Act was presented to multiple department and city leaders and the offer of collaborating in the first pilot of Vote Center voting in California was well received by a number of city clerk offices. In reviewing the criteria for selecting Vote Center sites, the main focus included commitment to the ten day schedule through Election Day (weekend open hours and extended hours for the final four days), overall capacity and Countywide accessibility. Five sites were selected, not including the Registrar of Voters office, with two sites supporting drive-thru ballot drop-off locations (Figure 10). Three sites were city clerk offices within civic center campuses, one city community center and one County library. All sites reflected the criteria used in recruiting Vote Centers.

The Registrar of Voters scheduled site visits with all five confirmed participants to verify minimum requirements in all applicable areas: voting room and facility, IT and suitability for drive-thru voting. Facility requirements accounted for substantial parking to accommodate large numbers of voters, lighting for extended hours both morning

"The Irvine Civic Center was well organized…a surprisingly pleasant voting experience for me."

– 2016 Vote Center survey respondent, 11–15 years voting experience, typically votes by mail ballot

and night, and accessibility for private and independent voting. In addition to the minimum requirement surveys, an accessibility survey was completed at each of the participating sites. Voting room criteria focused on space large enough for two voter check-in stations, general access to electricity at multiple points throughout the room, separate space for a ballot on demand printer and access to the internet, preferably via a dedicated line. Physical security was evaluated in terms of the type of access to the building, access to the proposed voting room, onsite security in the form of guards, and cameras or for surveillance.

Staff Recruitment and Hiring

"My experience at the Mission Viejo City Hall Vote Center was quick, convenient, and an overall great experience."

– 2016 Vote Center survey respondent, 3 years or less voting experience, typically votes by mail ballot

Interviewing and hiring was a coordinated effort between Human Resources and management. Two field agents known as Vote Center Coordinators were hired to provide onsite support, provide supervision of service, maintain the schedules, organize and lead training, and to replenish the supplies throughout the Vote Center period.

Vote Center coordinators were identified weeks before the first day of scheduled training and were included in the Vote Center working group meetings. Immediate tasks focused on augmenting and developing the training rubric, creating training presentations, developing a delivery schedule for Vote Center sites, and crafting educational team-building exercises.

The Vote Center staff hiring focus was to assemble a team that would provide a high level of customer service, maintain schedule commitment throughout the Vote Center period and be adept in time and line management at each facility. Other applicable skills included experience in working with teams, positive attitude, project or process management and interpersonal communication skills. In accordance with State-mandated language support requirements, applicants who indicated a fluent skill level in Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese or Chinese were prioritized.

Due to the strenuous nature of the schedule and the electronic processes involved with voting, Vote Center staff are required to have high customer service skills and experience along with basic office administrative skills. By recruiting our staff to expect flexibility in placement and dedication to extended working hours, employees were well-prepared for the workload and time commitment of staffing the Vote Centers.

Supplies and Equipment

For this Vote Center pilot program, a preliminary inventory was identified in the planning group meetings. Much of the election-related material was taken from available stock in the warehouse and the remainder was ordered. A separate area in the warehouse provided staging for all equipment and materials being sent to Vote Center sites and a limited stock to be utilized throughout the voting period. High flexibility was necessary as there were multiple aspects of the procedure that changed as the event evolved and became more defined. In creating the process for voting and the procedures for implementation, new materials were created to support security, direction and tracking.

Voting Period

Vote Center voting was divided into distinct stages within the full voting period. Opening day was treated as a launch requiring full staffing regardless of demand, including on-site Vote Center staff, facility contact staff and Registrar of Voters staff. The subsequent days allowed for refining delivery and pick up schedules, responding to staffing needs, observing daily voter flow and practicing line and process management. Extended hours began four days before Election Day requiring an increase in supply replenishment and line management as well as response to space issues, parking concerns and increased voter traffic.

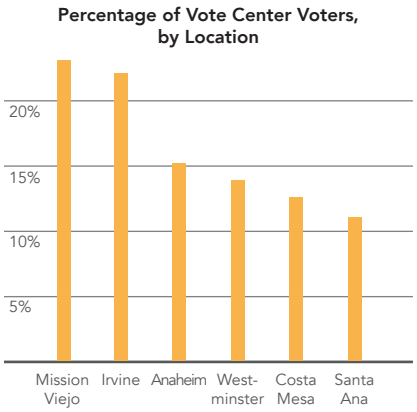


Figure 11. Vote Centers received light-to-moderate usage in the first week, then experienced high volumes of voter traffic on the weekend before Election Day.

Lessons learned

In addition to the successful completion of the Vote Center pilot program, which enabled nearly 28,000 voters to cast their ballots early with only six Vote Center sites, the Registrar of Voters also developed a feel for the amount of time and staff required to operate Vote Centers.

Resources

At least three people are needed for the constant stream of supply drop off and ballot pick up for five sites. Thirty sites would need a minimum of ten people on each support team and a policy needs to be defined indicating when ballots are required to be picked up and delivered to the main office. Many times the window of time between two drop-offs or pick-ups did not suffice but this may be solved with a higher number of Vote Centers that are geographically closer together. Overall, supporting busy Vote Center sites required an intense, prolonged time period of constant work wherein coordinators

were required to be available two hours before Vote Centers opened and two hours after Vote Centers closed. The team was successful in implementing training procedures, set-up, line management and time management to the Vote Center sites to which they were assigned.

Launching Vote Centers required extra on-site support from Election Services and IT staff as well as requiring the full Vote Center team to be present in order to experience opening procedures, possible problems throughout the process and closing procedures. Team leads assisted in reviewing the opening procedures and security checks in place required to open polls on the first day, then continued these procedures on subsequent days.

Long lines

"The line was long but it moved very fast. The personnel were very friendly, helpful, and efficient."

– 2016 Vote Center survey respondent, 16+ years voting experience, typically votes an electronic ballot at the polling place

At peak traffic times, namely the Saturday, Sunday and Monday before Election Day, some Vote Centers did experience a surge in voters which resulted in long lines. The Registrar of Voters' office responded quickly to these situations, and several plans for improvement are being pursued.

- More voting units: in the Vote Centers that have sufficient space, more voting units would have helped ease the long lines.
- Enhanced line management: additional resources are needed to communicate with voters in line. In a true Vote Center election, the mobile electronic poll books could be utilized for a "pre-check-in" process while the voters are waiting in line.
- Streamlined check-in process: since the pilot Vote Centers were still operating in the traditional polling place model, the check-in process had to meet requirements for both current election law and the requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act. This two-step check-in process, which included a 30–60 second wait for a label to print for each voter, will be reduced down to one simple step of the voter signing on the electronic poll book's touchscreen. This will allow voters to be processed faster than in the pilot program and further reduce lines.
- Communication with voters: additional outlets need to be explored to communicate with voters about where Vote Centers are located and the current estimated wait time so voters can redirect to a different location if their destination Vote Center is experiencing long lines.

ARE VOTE CENTERS WORTH IT: COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

Budget Comparison

The Vote Center model defined in the California Voter's Choice Act will ultimately save millions of dollars on capital and operational expenditures. The main support of these savings comes from the reduction in polling places which will greatly reduce the number of voting equipment units needed to purchase and maintain. Additional savings will come from reduced operational expenses by lowering the needed support/staffing/equipment delivery to these locations.

Capital Expenditures

The current voting equipment used by the Registrar of Voters for the purposes of hosting elections throughout Orange County is outdated and in need of replacement. Replacement equipment options are outlined below.

Traditional Polling Place Voting

Projected Spending = $23,400,000.00–$40,000,000.00

Estimated costs for capital expenditures to support traditional election services are outlined in the following table. Identified within this table are the cost differences between traditional polling locations utilizing In-Person Electronic Capture Voting Systems and/or Ballot on Demand ballot creation options to be used at each polling location. These costs are estimated at $40,000,000.00 and $23,400,000.00 respectively.

Traditional Polling Place Election Estimated Costs

Units	Equipment	Unit Cost	Proposed Costs
In-Person Electronic Capture Voting System			
9600	DRE's (Electronic Capture)	$ 4,166.67	$40,000,000.00
			$40,000,000.00
Ballot on Demand Voting System			
1300	ADA	$ 10,000.00	$13,000,000.00
1300	On-Demand Printer	$ 4,000.00	$5,200,000.00
1300	On-Demand Scanner	$ 4,000.00	$5,200,000.00
			$23,400,000.00

Table 1. Traditional Polling Place Election Estimated Costs. Derived from current inventory and estimated costs of equipment.

Vote Center Model

Projected Spending = $8,537,550.00–$14,177,550.00

Alternatively, the following table provides estimated costs for capital expenditures to support Vote Center elections as outlined in the California Voter's Choice Act. These options include the use of In-Person Electronic Capture Voting Systems and/or Ballot on Demand ballot creation options to be used at each Vote Center location. These costs are estimated at $14,177,550.00 and $8,537,550.00 respectively.

Vote Center Model Estimated Costs

Units	Equipment	Unit Cost	Proposed Costs
In-Person Electronic Capture Voting System			
3168	DRE's (Electronic Capture)	$ 4,166.67	$13,200,000.00
90	Drop Boxes	$ 6,195.00	$ 557,550.00
420	E-Polling Solutions	$ 1,000.00	$ 420,000.00
			$14,177,550.00
Ballot on Demand Voting System			
420	ADA	$ 10,000.00	$4,200,000.00
420	On-Demand Printers	$ 4,000.00	$1,680,000.00
420	On-Demand Scanners	$ 4,000.00	$1,680,000.00
90	Drop Boxes	$ 6,195.00	$ 557,550.00
420	E-Polling Solutions	$ 1,000.00	$ 420,000.00
			$8,537,550.00

Table 2. Vote Center Model Estimated Costs. Projections based on Voter's Choice Act requirements for Vote Centers.

Voting Location Operational Cost Comparison

There are extremely large operational costs incurred when hosting an election. The following tables compare the costs to sustain traditional Election Day operations verses the projected costs of election days spread over the course of 11 and 4 days as mandated for Vote Center operations in the California Voter's Choice Act.

Operational Cost Comparison – Polling Places	
Number of Polling Places	1093
Number of Days in Operation	1
Physical location	$ 46,450.00
Volunteers	$ 946,796.90
Equipment delivery	$ 179,577.96
Supplies	$ 652,725.27
Total	**$1,825,550.13**

Table 3. Operational Cost Comparison – Polling Places.

Operational Cost Comparison – Vote Centers				
		Number of Vote Centers	28	112
		Number of Days in Operation	11	4
Cost Per Site	**Average Daily**	**One Time**		
Physical location	$ 50.00		$ 15,400.00	$ 22,400.00
Extra Help Staff	$ 1,943.77		$ 598,680.59	$ 870,808.13
Equipment Delivery		$ 35,000.00	$ 7,000.00	$ 28,000.00
Supplies	$ 162.04		$ 49,907.41	$ 72,592.59
			$ 670,988.00	$ 993,800.72
Total				**$1,664,788.72**

Table 4. Operation Cost Comparison – Vote Centers.

As displayed in Table 3 and Table 4 above, there is opportunity for savings when comparing traditional polling place elections to those of Vote Center modeling. These monetary savings come from the ability to consolidate activities into larger, more centralized voting locations throughout the County. This process will allow for maximum efficiencies in recruitment of site locations, distribution of equipment, training of staff, field support personnel and need of general supplies.

"I got in. I got out. No crowds. Plenty of parking. No hassle. Very convenient. I didn't have to try to rush before or after work."

– 2016 Vote Center survey respondent, 16+ years voting experience, County employee, typically votes an electronic ballot at the polling place

Vote Centers vs. Polling Places Comparison

In Orange County and other populous counties of California, where the population has exploded in just the last several decades, the polling place model is an insufficient and inefficient system of conducting elections for millions of registered voters. The Vote Center model provides an improved method by increasing efficiencies and meeting voter expectations—allowing them to vote when, where and how they choose.

How do Vote Centers compare to polling places in terms of benefits to the voters?

Many of the benefits of the Vote Center model are listed in the comparison between Vote Centers and polling places in Table 5 below.

Comparison of Benefits – Polling Places vs Vote Centers		
	Polling Places	Vote Centers
Direct Record Electronic voting units	●	●
Disabled access voting units	●	●
Drop-off vote-by-mail ballot at any site	●	●
Secure electronic poll books with voter fraud controls		●
Live voter list, synced with master database		●
Large reduction in provisional ballots		●
Well-trained extra help staff		●
All sites fully accessible during voting period		●
Vote at any site in the County		●
Voting period is open for multiple days		●

Table 5. Comparison of Benefits. Vote Centers provide many benefits that are not availabe in polling places.

Can Vote Centers handle all the voters in Orange County?

The following table provides a breakdown of the differences between the capacity of Vote Centers and polling places, based on the number of in-person voters in the 2016 General Election and projections for future elections using Vote Centers. Over the last four presidential election cycles, the number of in-person polling place voters has steadily decreased at an average of 8%. The last two cycles have seen the number of polling places drop by an average of 2.5%. Projections for future elections reflect these trends.

Vote Center Capacity – Actual and Projected		
	Polling Places	**Vote Centers**
2016 Actuals		
Number of sites used	1,093	6
Total number of in-person voters	516,801	27,554
Average number of in-person voters processed per site	473	**4,592**
Projected for Future Vote Center Elections		
Number of sites to be used	1,066 (-2.5%)	130
Total number of in-person voters	475,457 (-8%)	
Number of in-person voters to process per site	446	**3,657**

Table 6. Vote Center Capacity – Actual and Projected. Historic reduction rates in polling place in-person voting (8%) and polling place sites (2.5%) are applied to future projections.

How will voters check-in at a Vote Center?

Vote Center check-in procedures are more secure and reliable than in the polling place. To illustrate this, a quick overview of the check-in process for both Vote Centers and polling places is provided below.

Traditional Polling Place

During the polling place check-in process, a voter waits in line to see the combined roster clerk – there is only one printed roster per precinct – who manually flips through the roster to locate the voter. Once the voter has been located the roster clerk will then instruct the voter to sign next to their name attesting to their identity. The voter then will see the address clerk to verify their address, after that they will see the ballot issue clerk to be assigned an access code and be able to vote.

If the voter is not located in the combined roster then the address clerk will verify the voter's address and attempt to assist the voter in finding their correct polling place. Ideally the voter will then drive over to their assigned polling place and vote there. In the event that the voter insists in voting at the polling place where their name was not found in the roster, they will be processed provisionally.

This process can take upwards of 5-7 minutes per vote with only one voter being able to be assisted at one time. While one voter is being assisted other voters wait their turn in line, if this is during the first morning hours or after work, the line queue will grow rapidly increasing the wait times for all voters.

Vote Center Model

In the Vote Center model, the check-in process is expanded by having multiple electronic poll book check-in stations. The electronic poll books will be either directly connected to the Election Management System database or have a copy of the database loaded locally. As voters arrive at the voting place, they can choose one of multiple lines. Once they reach the electronic poll book clerk, the election worker will be able to type in the voter's information and immediately find a match in the database. Once the information is confirmed, the same electronic poll book clerk (no need for a street address clerk) will verify the information and ask for a signature to attest to the voter's identity. The signature is captured in the electronic poll book itself, after this then the voter can proceed to be issued either a paper or electronic ballot and vote.

"I was VERY IMPRESSED by how quickly people were able to vote."

– 2016 Vote Center survey respondent, 16+ years voting experience, typically votes an electronic ballot at the polling place

The availability of check-in stations is only limited by the number of electronic poll books assigned to a specific Vote Center. The number of electronic poll books at any Vote Center location can be determined by looking at historical in-precinct voting turn out data for that area as well as other potential factors (i.e. foot traffic, visibility etc). This means that a Vote Center could begin operating with three electronic poll books and based on demand, deploy additional electronic poll books as necessary.

For more details on electronic poll books, please refer to Appendix C.

How will Vote Center sites be selected?

Based on the requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act, Orange County would need a minimum of 125 Vote Centers. Several factors will be taken into consideration when selecting these locations in addition to our polling place history and types of facilities historically used in the past. Our plan is to continue to leverage the relationships we have developed throughout the years in selecting the best available sites.

There are 34 City Clerks in the County that could potentially host a location as a Vote Center, along with 134 city and County libraries. These locations are not only sites used as polling places in the past, but are also familiar to voters in the community. In the 2016 General Vote Center pilot, these types of facilities were used and they proved to meet the needs required of a Vote Center as well as voter familiarity.

When selecting these locations, the size, parking and accessibility will

be major determining factors as they have been in the past. The best available locations will want to be selected so that voters can have a positive voting experience.

The California Voter's Choice Act gives very specific guidelines for selecting Vote Center locations. These factors include the following:

- Proximity to public transportation.
- 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 household vehicle ownership.
- Proximity to low-income communities.
- Proximity to communities of eligible voters who are not registered to vote and may need access to same day voter registration.
- Proximity to geographically isolated populations, including Native American reservations.
- Access to accessible and free parking.
- The distance and time a voter must travel by car or public transportation.
- The need for alternate methods for voters with disabilities for whom vote-by-mail ballots are not accessible.
- Traffic patterns near Vote Centers.
- The need for mobile Vote Centers in addition to the number of established Vote Centers.

Are Vote Centers better than polling places?

Traditional polling places have been used in elections for over one hundred years and have become a symbol of the American citizen's right to vote. However, the presumed permanence of polling places has obscured inherent flaws in the system. The Vote Center model was developed with these shortcomings in mind (see Table 7).

To illustrate some of the inherent problems with the polling place system, consider the following real-world scenario:

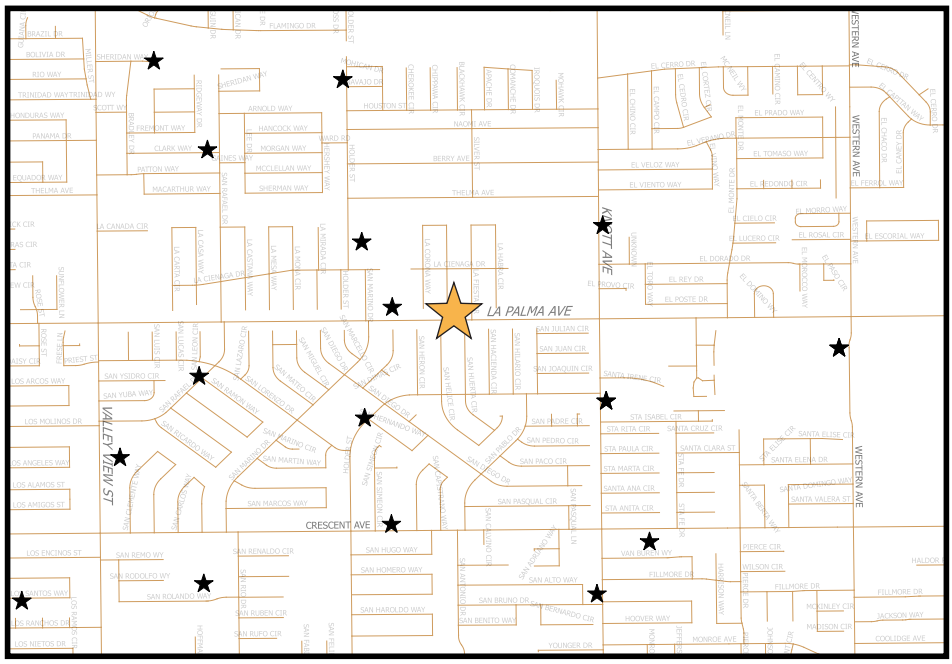


Figure 12. Small section of Buena Park with 16 polling places (black stars) in the 2016 General Election, with some across the street from each other. The orange star represents a potential Vote Center location that could serve this entire community.

This Buena Park area holds 24,583 residents and 12,905 active voters across three square miles of land. A driver taking main roads from one corner of this area to the other will travel 2.8 miles and will arrive within 14 minutes, if driving at 5:00pm on a typical Friday evening. Any other time of the week will average 8 minutes.

According to current polling place requirements, this section of Buena Park needs 16 polling places: four elementary schools, three private residences, three churches, two community centers, a school district office building, a Boys and Girls club, a fire station and a Moose Lodge. Some are literally across the street from each other.

Under the California Voter's Choice Act requirements, this small area could be serviced by one Vote Center, located centrally within 1.5 miles of any point on the map.

Vote Center Solutions to Polling Place Problems	
Shortcomings in Polling Place Model	**Vote Center Solutions**
Polling places originally functioned as the way to control which ballot a voter received. Since voters are only allowed to vote on local contests and measures, the voter list at the polling place was the only way to ensure that each voter got the correct ballot.	Electronic poll books contain the whole voter list for the entire County, therefore allowing the election worker to lookup any registered voter and determine which ballot should be issued. This model has proven accurate many times during Early Voting in Orange County.
With the increase in population and complexity of district boundaries, precincts have become smaller over time which has moved polling places closer together. This results in thousands of voters living near one or more polling places which are not their assigned precinct. This leads to confusion and increased provisional ballots.	Vote Center locations are not determined by arbitrary boundaries, and are not assigned to specific precincts. This means Vote Centers are located where they are needed, and the voter has the choice to vote at the location closet to their home, work or school. The number of provisional ballots will decrease substantially.
Due to precinct boundary limitations, hundreds of polling places each election cycle are hosted out of someone's garage. Often times, the cramped space in a garage can barely accommodate the poll workers and equipment, let alone voters. These inefficient locations have persisted to today because of polling place requirements in the Elections Code.	Vote Center locations are not bound by the same requirements as polling places. If a large residential tract has no community center or other gathering space, a Vote Center can be selected across the street at a shopping district or other public facility.
The number of required polling places is not set until after candidate filing, based on the number of contests and measures on the ballot. This has resulted in last minute changes to the total number of polling places needed–in 2010, over 100 new polling places were added at the last minute.	Vote Centers can be established long before candidate filing is finished because locations are not determined by district boundaries. No matter what contests and measures are on the ballot, the Vote Center locations would stay the same.
Schools account for at least 45% of all polling places each election. This opens the campus to the general public for Election Day, but leaves the County liable for anything a voter or volunteer does while voting.	Due to the time requirements in the California Voter's Choice Act, school sites would no longer be considered for hosting Vote Centers. This relieves the County of the liability and concerns that nearly school site has raised with our office.

Table 7. Vote Center Solutions to Polling Place Problems.

Implications of Vote Centers

A transition to the Vote Center model as defined in the California Voter's Choice Act will be the biggest change to elections in the history of Orange County. As with all change, there are concerns about replacing the traditional polling place concept with something that is different and unknown to the majority of Orange County voters. The Registrar of Voters' office is actively seeking this feedback and has already begun work on finding solutions for the affected parties.

Below are some of the most common questions that have been submitted to the Registrar of Voters.

How will you get the word out about this change?

Virtually all of the community organizations from the Community Election Working Group are concerned mainly about outreach efforts to spread the word about Vote Centers. Community outreach is one of the top priorities of the Registrar of Voters' office, which can be seen by our proven track record in previous election years. In 2016, for example, the Registrar of Voters conducted over one hundred community events, including street fairs, concerts, beach events, a 4th of July celebration, public service announcements, corporate sponsorship, and senior center events.

For complete list of outreach events, please refer to Appendix D.

Ideas from the Community Election Working Group include:

- Television, radio and print media advertisements
- Partnering with local sports teams to run PSA announcement during games
- Community events geared toward the military and veterans
- Homeowner association meetings
- City council and advisory committee meetings
- Press releases
- Electronic billboards
- Multimedia and social media platforms
- Partnerships with City Clerks' offices

The Registrar of Voters' office plans to implement all these ideas and more to inform the registered voters of Orange County about Vote Centers, with the objective of hitting each demographic multiple times with the same message. Outreach is taken very seriously at

the Registrar of Voters and our long history of extensive outreach experience will provide a sure foundation for getting the word out.

What will you do to educate voters about how this change will affect their lives?

In addition to simply announcing the change from polling places to Vote Centers, many representatives in the Community Election Working Group voiced concerns about educating voters about Vote Centers and how this change will affect the voting experience. Voter education is an additional layer on top of the general marketing plans listed above, and it includes face-to-face meetings with registered voters to answer their questions and address their concerns. This includes speaking engagements at a variety of venues and organizations across Orange County, voter education events at local colleges and universities, workshops with voting system demonstrations for voters with disabilities, and open houses with mainstream and ethnic media.

These types of events have been carried out by the Registrar of Voters in past election years and can readily be retooled for new voting equipment and the general message of Vote Centers.

What is being done to prepare for voters who may not have transportation to the Vote Center?

A select number of representatives on the Community Election Working Group, including disability rights advocates and language communities, voiced concern over transportation to Vote Centers. Inherent in the California Voter's Choice Act is the prioritized requirement to locate Vote Centers near public transportation hubs and along known commute routes. Vote Centers will also be located near shopping districts and community centers. In addition to this requirement, the Registrar of Voters' office is exploring the possibilities of partnering with transportation services such as OCTA, Uber and Lyft to further accommodate those who may not have direct transportation to a Vote Center.

What are you doing to reduce lines at the Vote Center?

The main concern emerging from both the City Clerk's offices and from the 2016 General Election Vote Center survey results is the length of the lines during peak voting times. One survey respondent stated the concern succinctly: "Normally it would take about 5 minutes at our polling [place]. It took 1½ hrs at Irvine City Hall." The Registrar of

Voters' office is keenly aware of these concerns and working tirelessly to minimize the impact of lines during the Vote Center voting period.

There are a number immediate points that can be made in regards to this concern, as well:

- As with a polling place, the line of voters is largely dependent on the time at which the voter arrives. During peak voting times, a polling place covering a large precinct may also end up with a one-to-two hour wait in line—this problem is inherent to voting in a populous county, not to Vote Centers.
- The Vote Center coordinators were monitoring lines throughout the voting period, and during the last four days of voting, did report times where the wait time to vote could reach two hours. This happened at Mission Viejo City Hall and Irvine City Hall. However, during the seven days prior to that, including a Saturday and Sunday, there was virtually no line and voters went through the entire process within minutes. The challenge is educating voters about this dynamic.
- During the Vote Center pilot program in the 2016 General Election, six Vote Centers served 27,000 in-person voters. This equates to an average of 4,592 voters per Vote Center. Projected numbers for 2018 estimate that 475,457 in-person voters will be served by 130 Vote Centers, reducing the average voters per site to 3,657 (see table of page ##). This 20% decrease illustrates that less voters will be going to each Vote Center on average than during the pilot program, which will result in shorter lines.

The Registrar of Voters' office is committed to minimizing lines as much as possible and continually exploring new ways to manage the voter line more efficiently. This commitment is evident in the last few elections where we have trained poll workers to use a provided copy of the voter list to "walk the voter line" and perform pre-check-in practices to reduce wait times and keep communication with voters open. In the 2016 General Election, we provided an Internet link for the poll workers to quickly lookup a voter's correct polling place in an effort to further improve line management practices.

The concept of voter line management is ever-present in the world of elections. The Registrar of Voters' office is dedicated to continue our tradition of tackling this issue directly and putting the voting experience first, just as we've done in the past.

CONCLUSION

Polling places once served Orange County as the primary method to cast one's ballot. However, current trends illustrate that voters are tending toward convenience rather than physical proximity—they want to vote when, where and how they choose, and not be tied down to one specific location on one specific day. Currently, more ballots are cast by mail than in the polling place, and 61% of registered votes have signed up for permanent vote-by-mail status, which is up 30 percentage points from just ten years ago. These are trends that cannot be ignored.

Support for the Vote Center model is very broad, encompassing the Orange County Grand Jury, city clerks, major political party representatives, veterans and seniors groups, and advocates for voters with disabilities and special language needs. But most importantly, the vast majority of voters who have firsthand experience casting their ballot at a Vote Center are satisfied with their experience and likely to return to a Vote Center in the future. Survey comments frequently request for Vote Centers to be implemented in future elections.

In light of this strong support of Vote Centers, and based on the cost-benefit comparison between Vote Centers and polling places as outlined in the previous sections, the Registrar of Voters is confident that the most efficient, economical and effective course of action at this time is to implement the California Voter's Choice Act in all elections going forward. This recommendation aligns with trends in voter behavior and preference, technology advances, fiscal prudence and goals, and community input.

"Voted at Costa Mesa Neighborhood Center: All volunteers were well trained and very helpful. The center was easy to get to with plenty of parking. Will definitely go there again in the future if it is an option."

– 2016 Vote Center survey respondent, 16+ years voting experience, typically votes at the polling place, read about Vote Centers in sample ballot

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Vote Center Survey Results

The Registrar of Voters' office conducted voter surveys to obtain direct feedback from voters who cast a ballot in a Vote Center as well as all voters who dropped off their vote-by-mail ballot before Election Day. Between both Vote Center voters and vote-by-mail drop-off voters, 42,000 total surveys were sent out and 6,433 completed surveys were returned. This represents a high response rate at 15%.

Below are the responses for each question, separated by survey type, "VC" for Vote Center and "VBM" for vote-by-mail drop-off. The charts on the right show the percentage of each answer by survey type.

How long have you been voting in Orange County?

Answer	VC	VBM	Total	Percent
First-time voter	388	267	655	10.2%
3 years or less	177	121	298	4.6%
4 to 10 years	512	338	850	13.2%
11 to 15 years	331	197	528	8.2%
16+ years	2364	1736	4100	63.8%
Total	3772	2659	6431	

How did you hear about Vote Centers?

Answer	VC	VBM	Total	Percent
Sample ballot	1642	1297	2939	44.6%
Radio	145	70	215	3.3%
Social media	359	155	514	7.8%
Word of mouth	764	489	1253	19.0%
Other	981	690	1671	25.3%
Total	3891	2701	6592	

What was your motivation to vote at a Vote Center? (select all that apply)

Answer	VC	VBM	Total	Percent
Avoid Election Day rush	2123	1364	3487	28.9%
Convenient hours	1225	833	2058	17.0%
Vote early	1936	1176	3112	25.8%
Convenient location	1279	1194	2473	20.5%
Other	452	494	946	7.8%
Total	7015	5061	**12076**	

What voting method do you typically use?

Answer	VC	VBM	Total	Percent
Electronic ballot at the polling place	3019		3019	79.6%
Paper ballot at the polling place	317		317	8.4%
Vote-by-mail	457		457	12.0%
Total	3793	0	**3793**	

In comparison to other methods of voting you may have used in the past, how satisfied were you with the overall experience at the Vote Center?

Answer	VC	VBM	Total	Percent
Very satisfied	2537	1974	4511	70.9%
Satisfied	1047	579	1626	25.5%
Dissatisfied	105	22	127	2.0%
Very dissatisfied	67	34	101	1.6%
Total	3756	2609	**6365**	

Given the option of a Vote Center, how likely are you to use a Vote Center over a polling place in the future?

Answer	VC	VBM	Total	Percent
Very likely	2157	1803	3960	62.1%
Likely	1176	627	1803	28.3%
Unlikely	289	132	421	6.6%
Very unlikely	124	65	189	3.0%
Total	3746	2627	6373	

How did you drop off your vote-by-mail ballot?

Answer	VC	VBM	Total	Percent
Walk-in (dropped off inside Vote Center)		1387	1387	53.3%
Drive-thru (dropped off in the ballot drop-off box located outside of the Vote Center)		1214	1214	46.7%
Total	0	2601	2601	

Comments

"People who worked at the center were organized and pleasant. The workers kept the room quiet and orderly and yet they smiled the entire time. It was an excellent choice to vote there."

"Loved the new process. Please continue to use it!!"

"Very convenient. Please keep this as an option."

"The staff at the Irvine location were excellent. Voted during a break in the work day, and it went as smoothly and efficiently as I could have hoped. The exact opposite of a trip to the DMV..."

"Early voting was a wonderful experience. Please offer it next election. Thanks!"

"Liked not being rushed, the whole experience was fantastic. I will probably vote this way from now on."

Appendix B: Community Election Working Group Responses

There were several reoccurring themes that came out of the various meetings with representatives from the Community Election Working Group (CEW).

Outreach & Communication

Outreach and communication were consistently discussed throughout every meeting with CEW members. Suzanne Narducy, a poll worker representative, believes the biggest challenge in implementing Vote Centers will be communicating the change to voters. Narducy recommends the ROV conduct various types of outreach to voters including television, radio and print media advertisements. Judy Barnes, who represents the senior community and has also served as a poll worker, suggested including the all mail ballot elections in the marketing and outreach plan, and communicating to voters that ballots will be picked up nightly from every drop box to ensure security.

Elizabeth Campbell, Systems Change Advocate, for the Dayle McIntosh Center (DMC) also believes that outreach is extremely important in communicating to voters with disabilities. Gabe Taylor and Paul Spencer, with Disability Rights California (DRC), discussed several options for outreach to voters including public service announcements, mailers with clear messages, and utilizing all forms of media outlets. DRC believes it is important to communicate to voters so they understand although they will receive a VBM ballot, they can also go to a Vote Center or request an accessible VBM ballot. DRC also suggested partnering with local sports teams (Anaheim Angels, Anaheim Ducks) for PSA announcements during the games.

Rosalind Gold and Ofelia Medina, both with NALEO, also discussed the need to increase outreach events in the Latino community, focusing on face-to-face interactions. Gold and Medina believe outreach efforts should focus not only on people who are already voting, but also to reach out to new and prospective voters. Tim Cheng, representing the Chinese community, also suggested community outreach to all communities. Lyle Brakob, a veterans' affairs representative, recommends publicizing in newspapers and attending several community outreach events, especially events geared to military and veterans.

Additional outreach and communication recommendations

from other CEW members include, presenting information at homeowners' associations (HOAs) meetings, city council and advisory committee meetings, and issuing several press releases. Many of the recommendations for communicating to voters include utilizing multimedia platforms such as print media, radio, TV ads, electronic billboards, social media, and community outreach events.

Voter Education

In addition to outreach and communication, many CEW members strongly recommended the ROV increase voter education efforts. The League of Women Voters (LWV) representatives said there needs to be huge outreach efforts to educate voters about Vote Centers. The LWV is interested in partnering with the ROV to disseminate information to the community about Vote Centers and SB450. The LWV also recommended expanding outreach and voter education events at local colleges and universities: University of California, Irvine (UCI), California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), Chapman University, etc. Dayle McIntosh Center (DMC) recommends holding voter education workshops that explain the voting process and the many options voters have. DMC also recommends having workshops with actual voting equipment demonstrations so voters with disabilities can practice voting and alleviate any fears they may have. NALEO recommends organizing community-based educational workshop events that teach people how to complete a VBM ballot and use voting equipment. NALEO also recommends partnering with local Latino community organizations to host meetings and events, to educate voters about the services that will be offered at Vote Centers. Charles Kim, Korean community representative, acknowledged the need to educate the older generation of voters who are used to voting at polling places. Kim suggested the ROV have several open house events with the media to continuously educate and familiarize everyone with the new voting process. In addition, he suggested the ROV host voter education workshops and a meet & greet with Neal Kelley.

Transportation

Many CEW group members discussed transportation concerns about voters getting to Vote Centers. For individuals with disabilities, transportation is a huge concern as there are many challenges with planning and coordinating transportation, per Campbell with the Dayle McIntosh Center. Campbell believes partnering with transportation services like Uber, Lyft and OCTA is a great idea, especially for DMC's consumers with disabilities that can easily get in and out of a car. Taylor

with DRC recommends providing as much information as possible for persons with disabilities, such as drive thru ballot drop off locations, closest Vote Center locations, drop off boxes, etc. He also said that voters with disabilities must plan and prepare their transportation in advance to get to locations, and it would be helpful to include what bus routes to use to get to Vote Centers. NALEO recommends identifying and eliminating geographical and transportation barriers, by considering traffic and commute patterns when selecting Vote Center locations. NALEO also suggested taking into consideration where voters live and where they work.

City Clerk Feedback

In conversing with the City Clerk offices that participated in the Vote Center Pilot Program, general feedback was focused on Vote Center employees and team communication, physical room layout and voter processing, and line management. City Clerks all were overwhelmingly positive about the experience and when speaking to the future Countywide implementation of the Vote Center model voiced main concerns about outreach and education along with facility recruitment.

Both Irvine and Mission Viejo City Clerk offices were positive about the implementation of a consistent Vote Center team. They expressed appreciation for the stability and communication maintaining the same team brought to the Vote Center and noted that it enhanced the customer service of the Center in regards to directions, information and general assistance. Though mainly positive, the Anaheim City Clerk's office did report a slow learning curve and indicated that in comparison to past early voting events, there was a difference in control of the process and crowds. Across the board, all participating offices preferred working with officially hired individuals and felt secure in the level of quality of Vote Center staff as they were County hired, trained and tested. Communication overall was clear, the Mission Viejo City Clerk stated that it was a pleasure having an identified onsite Coordinator a phone call away and if necessary, an open line to the Registrar of Voters Office as well.

Equipment and room layout was ultimately dependent on the room provided, the surrounding campus and the facility's building. All sites were visited in advance and a proposed layout was approved; ultimately, all layouts were slightly rearranged after the first day's experience. The Anaheim City Clerk noted that there should have been a greeting desk so that voters immediately entering the Vote Center room knew that they were in the right place. Mission Viejo

had a physical set up that was spaced out, but as reported back to our office, was not the ideal set up for a walk in Vote-By-Mail drop off voter. The Irvine City Clerk reported that the best thing our office provided was bright, distinct and concise directional signage. Even if the voter was not near the voting room, they knew that they were in the correct place. Both Irvine and Mission Viejo also supported drive thru ballot drop off locations. In mapping out the best area on campus, both offices reported that following the flow of traffic toward the building worked out, but that a very clear path was an absolute in the success of a drive thru set up. Within the voting room, the Anaheim City Clerk indicated that the voting process itself was the main source of concern and suggested a different check in process that would allow one way directional flow for any given voter.

The largest amount of feedback received from all participants was regarding line management. As this was a smaller implementation of the Vote Center model focused on geographic areas central to each County district, crowds of voters were larger than originally anticipated. This was a problem with a positive result, because it required our Vote Center project lead and onsite Coordinators to find solutions for these bottlenecks and implement line management procedures for the final four days. The Anaheim City Clerk's office voiced this was the biggest challenge and indicated that they were instrumental in creating multiple different iterations of a line. In reassessing the space, the room chosen was not the best room in the facility but was the closest to the City Clerk offices. In the future, other rooms should be considered or a more in depth review of line and space management should be applied. Both Mission Viejo and Irvine offices were the busiest Vote Center sites; they were able to respond to the increasing lines with ease due to the location of the rooms, wide open space throughout the facility and the option for the line to be outside. Ultimately, all City Clerk offices suggested increased signage where needed, contingency plans in place before the final four days for quick response to crowds and an advance layout plan of different line set up options amenable to the space provided.

In looking to the future of Vote Center model operations throughout all of Orange County, the City Clerks' offices of Fullerton, Anaheim, Mission Viejo and Irvine were focused on the outreach communication and voter education planned from within our office and in partnership with their offices. All City Clerks felt it important that we have an intense, focused message and that we share with our City partners in order to reiterate the same, consistent messaging throughout the

time leading up to the election. Everyone that we spoke to strongly supported utilizing every type of media available to us and committed to providing support. The Mission Viejo City Clerk supported the idea of reaching out on a large scale general marketing campaign, but also suggested that a grassroots approach would work well in many pockets throughout south Orange County because of the population demographics and space. They offered contacts with associations throughout the area and recommended that our office touch base with the associations. The Irvine City Clerk was highly active in the November 2016 marketing development and administration, and has suggested a City Clerk supported public service announcement. Irvine is dedicated to providing multiple platforms for advertisement and education and has indicated that a specific budget is set aside especially for this wide reaching, well supported marketing plan.

Recruiting facilities will be a procedure in which we work hand in hand with our City partners. Each specific area has population, transportation and language demographics that are distinctly different. The Fullerton City Clerk expressed the importance of Vote Center placement central to different communities. Border areas and outlier populations will need to be reviewed in order to have locations properly identified well in advance. Timing will be key to the success of Vote Center recruitment and as indicated by the Irvine City Clerk, city facilities should be requested a minimum of 9 months in advance of any election.

Appendix C: Electronic Poll Books

Introduction

Electronic Poll Books (e-poll books) have become the industry standard as voting jurisdictions continue to innovate and refine the voting process and experience. These e-poll books are now a proven technology with over 32 states currently either using or having plans to use them in the near term.

In 2015 California approved the use of Electronic Poll Books, but before any e-poll book can be used, it must be certified by the secretary of state (CA SB439, 2015). This certification process at the state level ensures that any electronic poll book used will meet and/or exceed California's standards for security, reliability and processing.

Traditionally, Orange County has used paper rosters which contain a list of eligible voters within the local precinct. In a Vote Center model, these traditional paper rosters would be impossible to manage as we would now be providing Orange County voters the convenience of voting anywhere within the County and not only at their local precincts. Eligible Orange County voters can now exercise their right to vote at a time and place that is most convenient to them. Electronic Poll Books provide the mechanism by which the Registrar of Voters can keep track of and service all Orange County eligible voters regardless of where they choose to vote.

What is an e-poll book and what does it do?

An e-poll book is typically either hardware, software or a combination of the two that allows election officials to review, process and/or maintain voter registration information for an election.

The software component of the e-poll book is proprietary to the vendor who sells and supports it. The hardware component of the e-poll book can be a mission-specific build where the hardware is built specific and customized to the software and additional peripherals it will run, or it can also be COTS - commercial off-the-shelf - hardware (i.e. Apple iPad, Microsoft Surface, other tablets) which run the proprietary software.

E-poll books directly replace paper rosters and provide a mechanism to ensure the efficient and secure processing of eligible voters at any Vote Center location throughout the County. They are able to accomplish this by having a secured and encrypted direct/real-time/near-real-time or a batched connection to the County Election

Management database to push and receive updates and changes to the voter rolls.

What does an e-poll book NOT do?

An e-poll book does not tally or count votes locally.

An e-poll does not connect to the voting system, it only connects to the election management system for voter processing and updating. The air gap between the voting system and election management system remains persistent and unbroken throughout the election.

Will e-poll books increase or decrease lines?

E-poll books will decrease lines. To help explain how they do so, below is a quick overview of voter processing in the traditional polling place model using paper rosters and voter processing using e-poll books in a Vote Center model.

Traditional Polling Place

The bottleneck in the traditional polling place model is the check-in process. During the check-in process a voter waits in line to see the combined roster clerk – there is only one roster per precinct – who manually flips through the paper roster to locate the voter. Once the voter has been located the roster clerk will then instruct the voter to sign next to their name attesting to their identity. The voter then will see the address clerk to verify their address, after that they will see the JBC clerk to be assigned an access code and be able to vote.

If the voter is not located in the combined roster then the address clerk will verify the voter's address and attempt to assist the voter in finding their correct polling place. Ideally the voter will then drive over to their assigned polling place and vote there. In the event that the voter insists in voting at the polling place where their name was not found in the roster, they will be processed provisionally.

This process can take upwards of 5-7 minute per vote with only one voter being able to be assisted at one time. While one voter is being assisted other voters wait their turn in line. If this is during the first morning hours or after work, the line queue will grow rapidly increasing the wait times for all voters.

Vote Center Model

In a Vote Center model, the check-in process is expanded by having multiple e-poll book check in stations. The e-poll books will be either

directly connected to the Election Management System database or have a copy of the database loaded locally. As voters arrive at the voting place, they can choose one of multiple lines. Once they reach the e-poll book clerk, they will be able to type in their information and immediately find a match in the database. Once the information is confirmed, the same e-poll book clerk (no need for a street address clerk) will verify the information and ask for a signature to attest to the voter's identity. The signature is captured in the e-poll book itself, after this then the voter can proceed to be issued either a paper or electronic ballot and vote.

The availability of check-in stations is only limited by the number of e-poll books assigned to a specific Vote Center. The number of e-poll books at any Vote Center location can be determined by looking at historical in-precinct voting turn out data for that area as well as other potential factors (i.e. foot traffic, visibility etc). This means that a Vote Center could begin operating with three e-poll books and based on demand, deploy additional e-poll books as necessary.

In addition to the multiple check-in stations, e-poll books allow the Vote Center workers to "rover" the line and begin engaging the voters even as they wait to be assisted. Because the e-poll books contain the entire voter database, this line rovering concept will allow Vote Center workers to "dequeue" any voters who may need more specific assistance or answer any questions which may otherwise slow down the check-in process.

In addition to voter processing and line management, e-poll books could also be used to:

- Update and change voter information
- Accomodate same day voter registration
- Connect to the statewide voter database to ensure that voters are not able to cross County lines and attempt to vote multiple times
- Distribute real-time notifications and messages from the Registrar of Voters to all Vote Centers.

Is the data in the e-poll book secure?

Protecting voter data is extremely important to us. This applies not only to the data within our physical office, but also extends to any device that may contain or receive/transmit voter information in the

field.

Specifically to the e-poll books, there will be a series of technical security layers, protocols, procedures/checklists and physical protections in place to ensure that both the data contained within and the actual e-poll book hardware is safe.

- Certification: Only e-poll books that have passed the rigorous certification by the state of California will be used at Orange County Vote Centers.
- Technical security: Data transferred between the Election Management System and the e-poll books will be over a secured VPN connection and/or Https protocol.
- Protocols: Strict protocols will be developed which will detail e-poll book handling, storage, use and chain of custody.
- Procedures and checklists: To ensure the proper and efficient use of e-poll books the Registrar of Voters will develop procedures and checklist to detail, train and assist Vote Center workers in using the e-poll books.
- Physical protection: All e-poll books will require a strong password to gain access to the interface. Depending on California certification guidelines, it may be possible to require a two-factor authentication where the e-poll book can only be accessed by a combination of a password and the insertion of a physical USB device. Additionally, e-poll books must be stored in a secured location within the Vote Center and may not be left out in the open.
- Digital protection: Any locally-stored data will be encrypted.

Is there widespread (nationwide) support for e-poll books?

Electronic poll books have been in the election space for a number of years. Just like any other technology it has evolved over time and it is considered matured. The e-poll book technology has been tried and tested by many localities with very positive results.

Orange County has been in direct communication with the state of Colorado, the state of New Mexico and King County, Washington and they have been very open about the implementation and use of e-poll books at their sites. We've gained extensive knowledge and will follow their best practices as we continue to vet this technology.

On February 6, 2017, the Brennan Center for Justice at New York

University School of Law stated that: "Electronic poll-books are electronic versions of the voter rolls that can be used to process voters at the polls instead of a paper-based list. Many jurisdictions have found that using electronic poll-books enables easier, faster, and error-free sharing of voter data, while speeding up polling place administration for election officials

Jurisdictions in at least 31 states plus the District of Columbia have used some form of electronic poll-book to process voters at the polls. Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia have recently used electronic poll-books in at least one county within the state."

Conclusion

Electronic Poll Books at Vote Centers will assist to provide a fast, reliable, secure and efficient voter processing and information sharing across all Vote Centers and the central Registrar of Voters office. They will also provide tools for better line management which will result in reduced wait times at the polling places. Additionally, they will allow the Registrar of Voters to process eligible voters and assist the general public at any Vote Center that is most convenient to them.

Appendix D: List of 2016 Community Outreach and Engagement Events

2016 Community Outreach and Engagement Events		
2016 Event Name	Date	Impressions
Taller San Jose Presentation 1	1/14/2016	20
Cesar Chavez MyBallot	1/21/2016	300
Saddleback Republican Assembly	2/18/2016	20
OCCORD Citizenship Fair	2/27/2016	300
Irvine High School Multi-Cultures Festival	3/4/2016	1000
ShamROCK n' RUN	3/6/2016	1000
Hope Builder Program - Taller San Jose Presentation 2	3/7/2016	25
Westminster Spring Festival	3/19/2016	700
Irvine Teen Forum	3/23/2016	300
Taste & Experience Korea Event	3/23/2016	500
Mission Viejo High School MyBallot	3/25/2016	30
Westminster Senior Center	3/30/2016	40
OC Leadership Forum on Aging	4/1/2016	200
Faces of Fullerton	4/9/2016	500
Diocese of Orange	4/9/2016	40
ABC Taller San Jose Presentation 3	4/14/2016	40
Elections 2016 Candidates Forum	4/14/2016	50
Cypress HS Voter Registration Drive	4/18/2016	1000
Laguna Woods Dem Club Registration Training	4/19/2016	30
Concorde College Resource Fair	4/21/2016	200
Korean-American Federation of the OC	4/22/2016	30
Friendly Center Health & Resource Fair	4/22/2016	150
Segerstrom MyBallot	4/26/2016	2600
HS Voter Educ Week Santa Ana HS (Sec. Padilla)	4/27/2016	200
Celebrate Ladera	4/30/2016	300
El Modena HS Government Class Presentation	5/2/2016	120
Silver Academy at Youngnak P-Church	5/3/2016	35
OC Employee Wellness Info Fair	5/4/2016	100
Westminster Senior Center eSlate Demo	5/4/2016	60
CSUF Town Hall Meeting	5/6/2016	400
SOKA University International Festival	5/7/2016	1000

2016 Community Outreach and Engagement Events

2016 Event Name	Date	Impressions
Irvine Spectrum, The Golden Chef Series	5/7/2016	400
Taste of Anaheim	5/12/2016	5000
Little Saigon Rock the Vote	5/12/2016	1000
Costa Mesa Senior Citizens Center	5/16/2016	10
Clinical Med Asst Prog-Taller San Jose Presentation 4	5/19/2016	40
OC Conservation Corps	5/19/2016	15
Doheny Blues Festival	5/21/2016	10000
Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	5/22/2016	60
OC Catholic Charities Citizenship Program	5/31/2016	70
OC School of Arts	6/3/2016	1000
Flag Day Celebration	6/14/2016	100
OC Conservation Corps & Charter Schools	6/16/2016	15
Voting Involvement Association Board Meeting	6/17/2016	15
Self-Advocacy Class-North OC Comm College Dist	6/20/2016	43
Citizenship Ceremonies City Nat'l Grove-Anaheim	6/21/2016	3000
Summer Series: Faithful Citizenship ENGLISH	6/28/2016	100
Summer Series: Faithful Citizenship SPANISH	6/28/2016	60
Huntington Beach 4th of July Celebration	7/2/2016	5000
OC Hispanic Chamber of Commerce	7/8/2016	70
Construction Training Prog-Taller San Jose Presentation 5	7/11/2016	9
OCCCO Voter Registration Drive Presentation	7/13/2016	30
San Clemente Ocean Festival	7/16, 7/17	6000
Westminster Safety Day	7/20/2016	700
AFL-CIO	7/21/2016	300
Downtown Anaheim CFM	7/21/2016	300
Candidate Academy for Members of the OCLF	7/21/2016	60
OC Fair (Mobile Voting Unit)	7/22/2016	1500
Costa Mesa Dem Club: Voter Registration Training	7/26/2016	9
Southwest Voter Registration Projects	7/26 & 7/28	25
City of La Palma Civic Expo	7/30/2016	400
Dana Point Summer Concert Series	7/31/2016	4000
CERT National Night Out	8/2/2016	500
Southwest Voter Registration Project	8/3 & 8/4	83
San Clemente Concerts	8/4/2016	2000
Southwest Voter Registration Projects	8/9/2016	15

2016 Community Outreach and Engagement Events

2016 Event Name	Date	Impressions
OC Fair (Mobile Voting Unit)	8/12/2016	2500
Black Heritage Celebration	8/13/2016	300
Kiwanis Club	8/16/2016	15
San Juan Capistrano Summer Nites	8/17/2016	2000
Downtown Santa Ana 5K Ciclovia	8/20/2016	500
Latino Health Access	8/20/2016	20
Lake Forest Concert Series	8/21/2016	1000
Hope Builders - Taller San Jose Presentation 6	8/22/2016	30
Downtown Anaheim CFM	8/25/2016	300
Achieve Better Communication Meeting	8/26/2016	20
Rancho Mission Viejo Rodeo	8/27, 8/28	8000
The VIC 40th Skimboarding Competition	8/27, 8/28	500
Taller San Jose Presentation 7	9/1/2016	30
Orange Int'l Street Fair	9/2, 9/3, 9/4	250000
Heritage Pointe - Mission Viejo	9/7/2016	40
Tall Ships Festival	9/10/2016	1000
38th Annual Fiestas Patrias	9/10 & 11	5000
Dia De La Familia (Family Day)	9/11/2016	300
Construction Program-Taller San Jose Pres 8	9/12/2016	20
Family Resource Center Presentation (SSA/CSF)	9/14/2016	30
Concorde College Constitution Day	9/16/2016	50
Surf The Vote at Aliso Beach (Mobile Voting Unit)	9/17/2016	500
Moon Festival	9/17/2016	120
San Juan Capistrano Summer Nites	9/21/2016	1500
Dayle McIntosh Center Speaking Engagement	9/23/2016	35
Irvine Global Village Festival	9/24/2016	8000
Komen Race for the Cure	9/25/2016	10000
CSUF Voter Reg. Day, OCROV Concert	9/27/2016	1000
Irvine HS MyBallot	9/27/2016	1530
South Coast Repertory Citizenship Night	9/29/2016	200
Senior Fitness Expo 2016	9/30/2016	200
Chapman Univ Homecoming, OCROV Concert	10/1/2016	4000
12th Annual Oktoberfest Exile Skimboard	10/1 & 10/2	1000
Self-Determination Conf. Speaking Engagement	10/1/2016	150
Irvine Lakeview Senior Center	10/4/2016	25

2016 Community Outreach and Engagement Events

2016 Event Name	Date	Impressions
Los Alamitos HS	10/5/2016	800
Fullerton Artwalk Info Booth	10/7/2016	100
Taller San Jose Presentation 9	10/7/2016	25
San Clemente Village CFM	10/9/2016	500
Laguna Niguel Junior Civic Workshop	10/11/2016	100
OC Employee Nov-8 Volunteer Sign Up Day	10/12/2016	300
Sage Hill HS MyBallot	10/12/2016	300
Meet the Irvine Candidates Forum	10/15/2016	120
Orange Home Grown CFM	10/15/2016	1000
Spooktacular Fun Days	10/16/2016	6000
Friendly Center Health & Resource Fair	10/17/2016	100
HB Surf City Airshow (Mobile Voting Unit)	10/21, 22, 23	100000
#CSUFvotes Fair Info Table & Street Team	10/24/2016	300
Tustin Gardens Senior Citizen Voter Ed.	10/24/2016	25
Vietnamese Community of Southern Calif	10/26/2016	15
OC Catholic Charities Citizenship SPANISH	10/26/2016	60
Anaheim Fall Festival/Halloween Parade	10/29/2016	10000