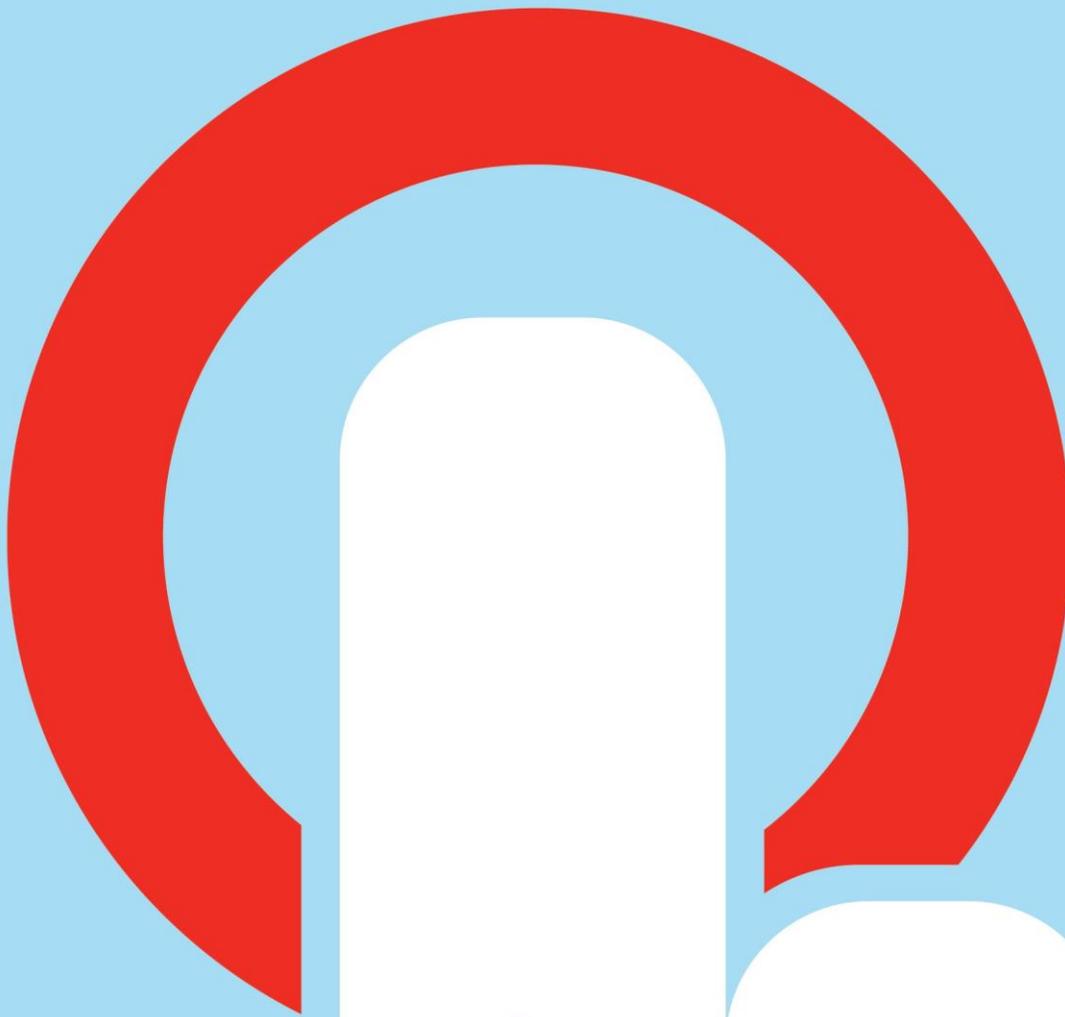


Public Participation: A Guide for Election
Officials Implementing the California
Voter's Choice Act



VOTER'S CHOICE
CALIFORNIA

Voter's Choice California is a project of Future of California Elections



1000 North Alameda Street, Suite 240

Los Angeles, CA 90012

www.futureofcaelections.org

www.voterschoice.org



Public Participation: A Guide for Election Officials Implementing the California Voter's Choice Act

September 2017

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the authors of this guide: Catherine Hazelton, Raúl Macías, Ofelia Medina, Lori Shellenberger and Rachel Sherman. We also would like to thank the following who provided edits and other invaluable contributions: Neal Kelley, James Schwab, Dora Rose, Jenny Burger, James Woodson, John Dobard, Fred Nisen, Yesenia Martinez, and the California Secretary of State's SB 450 Task Force.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **Page 7**

SECTION 1: MAXIMIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION **Page 8**

Establish your goals for engaging the public

- Vote center and dropbox site selection
- Outreach and voter education materials
- Outreach plans
- Voter experience

Establish and engage your Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) and Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) early in the process

Hold public consultation meetings

- First Stage: Public consultation before drafting Election Administration Plan (EAP)
- Second Stage: Public comment period
- Third Stage: Second draft EAP
- Fourth Stage: Final EAP

Voter's Choice Act (VCA) legal requirements and recommended best practices

SECTION 2: IDENTIFYING PUBLIC PARTICIPANTS **Page 16**

Create a diverse outreach list

Engage allies

Personalize invitations

Voter's Choice California (VCC) Calendar of events

Other methods

SECTION 3: HOW TO RUN A GREAT MEETING **Page 18**

Planning a public meeting

- Timing
- Location
- Accessibility
- Comfort
- Remote participation
- Social media

Meeting facilitation

- Agenda setting and facilitation
- Flexible questions

- Soliciting active participation
- Accessibility for voters with disabilities
- Language accessibility
- Materials
- Follow up

SECTION 4: OTHER WAYS TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

Page 22

Your website

Surveys

Advisory votes

Social media

Traditional/ethnic media

Individual conversations

SECTION 5: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS WITH SAMPLE RESPONSES FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

Page 25

- Why are we switching to this new process?
- How will the new voting process work?
- Will vote centers be open on the weekends?
- What if I lose my ballot or make a mistake?
- What is a dropbox?
- Can I vote at any vote center?
- Why can't we use my polling place?
- What if I've moved since the last time I registered to vote?
- What if I'm not registered to vote?
- How will the vote centers look and feel?
- Who decides where the vote centers and dropboxes will be located?
What are the criteria?
- Will vote centers be accessible to people with disabilities?
- What about voters who speak languages other than English? Will they be able to use the vote centers?
- I don't have a car. How will I get to a vote center?
- Are there going to be long lines at the vote centers?
- Who made the decision to switch to this new process?
- Will this make it harder for me to vote in person?
- Is this an attempt to disenfranchise voters?
- Why can't I vote close to home?
- Why will I be mailed a vote-by-mail ballot when I didn't ask for one?
- Will I need to show photo identification at the vote center?
- Could this make it easier for people to commit voter fraud?
- Will the dropboxes be secure?

- Will the Voter's Choice Act cost taxpayers more money?
- How might the Voter's Choice Act affect political campaigns?
- How can people submit feedback or opinions on election plans?
- How are people going to find out about the change?
- Where can people get information? Where can I get flyers and other materials?

SECTION 6: HOW TO GET HELP

Page 31

SECTION 7: RESOURCES

Page 32

Voter's Choice Act Fact Sheet

Custom Fact Sheet

Frequently Asked Questions

Voter's Choice Act Legal Digest and Checklists

10 Keys to Successful Collaboration

County Language Accessibility Advisory Committee Toolkit

How to Start a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee

Election Toolkit

The Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides

United States Election Assistance Commission Resources

Institute for Local Government Guides

Resources in Development



Introduction

Broad, diverse public participation can notably enhance counties' efforts to implement the California Voter's Choice Act (VCA). The potential benefits of engaging the public are numerous:

- Local voters and other experts can identify preferences and potential challenges for specific communities. With early stage public input, counties will be more likely to avoid surprises and challenges during the voting period.
- Voters and trusted community leaders can be the best messengers to educate the electorate about the new voting process. Community leaders who have been engaged in the implementation process and have a deeper understanding of how the VCA works are more likely to help educate their communities.
- Openness and transparency will build trust among voters who might otherwise be nervous or skeptical about changes to long-standing election practices.

Ultimately, robust public participation should result in the development of a better plan, increase voter turnout, and reduce voter confusion.

This guide was designed to support county election officials as they engage the public in implementation of the VCA, specifically in the development of Election Administration Plans (EAPs). Most election officials have extensive experience conducting voter outreach and detailed knowledge of the communities within their county. This guide is intended to build on that expertise by connecting best practices in community organizing with the requirements of the VCA. Additional recommendations related to the voter education and outreach requirements of the VCA will be made in a separate guide.

The first section of the guide outlines the VCA's legal requirements for public participation and ideas for developing your public input strategy. The next section considers strategies for expanding and diversifying your community contact list. The third section draws upon the expertise of diverse community organizers to recommend best practices for hosting effective public meetings specific to the VCA. That is followed by a section highlighting other ways to engage the public, such as using social media. Section five is similar to Voter's Choice California's (VCC) "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)," but has been customized for use by election officials. The next section discusses how the VCC coalition can support the efforts of election administrators implementing the VCA. The final section links to a number of additional resources that could be helpful to counties seeking to engage the public. The VCC plans to release recommendations regarding VCA voter education in a separate guide.

This guide was developed by [Voter's Choice California](#) (VCC), a coalition of civil rights groups, advocates for effective government, and community-based organizations committed to advancing effective implementation of the California Voter's Choice Act and broad, diverse voter participation. A project of the Future of California Elections, the VCC prepared this guide in consultation with the Secretary of State Voter's Choice Taskforce, election administrators, and other partners in the field. More information about the VCC is available on the VCC website and in section five of this guide. For additional information, please don't hesitate to contact us at VCC@futureofcaelections.org.



Section 1: Maximizing Opportunities for Public Participation

The VCA presents voters with multiple new options for casting a ballot. But for people hearing about it for the first time or for voters who have never voted by mail, the new process may seem confusing. That's why the VCA includes certain requirements that facilitate community engagement in the planning of a vote center election. In order to provide counties with flexibility, the law's authors included minimal baseline requirements in the bill with the expectation that counties would do considerably more to ensure full public participation and education. This section outlines the requirements and recommended best practices to ensure that public participation and realize the VCA's intent.¹

At a minimum, a participating county must:

- Conduct one public meeting with all required language communities to consult on the development of the EAP.
- Conduct one public meeting with representatives from and advocates for the disability community to consult on the development of the EAP.
- Establish both language and accessibility advisory committees that can communicate about planning for vote center elections.
- Post and publicly notice their draft EAP for 14 days of public comment.
- Notice and host one public hearing on the draft EAP.

Again, these requirements are merely a base. There are many important reasons to host additional formal and informal meetings with community leaders and the public. For example, people from different parts of the county can have differing voter experiences but may not wish to travel away from their communities for a public input session. Additionally,

¹ The VCA includes several additional public engagement requirements intended to prepare voters for new voting practices. Those requirements are not detailed here but will be included in a separate guide focused on public education.

some constituencies might feel more engaged and comfortable providing input at a meeting with other voters whose experiences and perspectives are similar to their own. Meetings held before you draft your EAP also can yield useful information and set the stage for constructive public participation in the EAP review and public education stages.

A well-planned public participation strategy can help election officials capture the information they need for a comprehensive EAP. Specifically, community members and stakeholders who represent different demographics and neighborhoods within the county can suggest where vote centers and ballot dropboxes should be located, what features vote centers should include, and how to most effectively educate voters in diverse communities.

The following are recommended best practices for maximizing opportunities for community input during your planning and outreach process.

[Establish your goals for engaging the public](#)

Before you begin mapping out your public participation plan, first identify how public participation can best inform the creation of your EAP.

Consider the value of community input on the following:

- **Vote Center and Dropbox Site Selection:** The VCA requires counties to assess 14 factors when selecting sites for vote centers and dropboxes (see sidebar on the following page for a quick reference). As you begin considering the placement of vote centers and dropboxes, identify which statutory factors would benefit from community input. To generate public input that is aligned with the 14 statutory site selection factors, encourage your Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC), Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), and members of the public to use a new algorithmic site selection tool under development by the UC Davis California Civic Engagement Project and their partners, DataKind. The tool, designed to provide election administrators with diverse data sets that can inform their site selection decisions, will also be available for the public to use to produce maps of their communities. Consider making the tool available on your website.
- **Outreach and Education Materials:** While the terms “vote center,” “mail ballot,” and “dropbox” are part of the election official vocabulary, these may be confusing concepts for new, infrequent, and even seasoned voters. Have the community review your outreach and education materials, including explanations that will be included on voter guides and sample ballots, to make sure they are clear and achieve your education goals. Use your LAAC to make sure translated materials are clear and consistent with your goals.

- **Outreach Plans:** Community members can suggest cost-effective means of meeting the public service announcement requirements of the VCA, how best to use social media, and how community events or other local outlets might present additional outreach opportunities.
- **Engaging Community Leaders:** People who engage in the required public input process can become important partners and messengers as you shift to educating voters about the upcoming change to the voting process. Think about how you might maintain relationships with community leaders, your LAAC and VAAC, and other stakeholders who demonstrate a heightened interest in the election. Email updates, social media, and a designated section on your website where the public can get updates on materials, vote center placement, or changes to the EAP are easy ways for you to stay connected to the community and ensure your message is getting out to the broader public.
- **Voter Experience:** In focus groups, voters have identified notable concerns about how they will experience voting under the VCA. Will there be long lines at vote centers? Will vote centers feel bureaucratic and unwelcoming? What if they are reluctant to vote by mail? Consult with diverse sets of voters to learn what their concerns might be and if there are ways you can enhance the overall voting experience. This is a great opportunity to connect with voters in new ways that can boost everyone's confidence in our elections.

Thinking through your goals for public participation will help you tailor your plan for engaging the public and streamline your communication with the public. By doing so, you will obtain the information from the community that is critical to your EAP and the success of your vote center election.

Get public input on the 14 factors for vote center and dropbox locations:

1. Proximity to public transportation
2. Proximity to communities with historically low vote-by-mail usage
3. Proximity to population centers
4. Proximity to language minority communities
5. Proximity to voters with disabilities
6. Proximity to communities with low rates of household vehicle ownership
7. Proximity to low-income communities
8. Proximity to communities of eligible voters who are not registered to vote and may need access to same-day voter registration
9. Proximity to geographically isolated populations including Native American reservations.
10. Access to accessible and free parking
11. Distance and time a voter must travel by car or public transportation
12. Need for alternate methods for voters with disabilities for whom vote-by-mail ballots are not accessible
13. Traffic patterns
14. Need for mobile vote centers

Establish and engage your LAAC and VAAC early in the process

The VCA requires participating counties to establish a formal Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) and a formal Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC).² The goal of such committees is to help you build a relationship with and get advice from leaders and experts in the communities that may face the greatest obstacles to voting. Counties with formal LAACs and VAACs report that the committees have helped them better understand the barriers to voting that language minority groups and people with disabilities face, improved their ability to do outreach and education in those communities, enhanced their poll worker recruitment, and allowed them to address issues before the election.

The VCA does not require a county to establish its LAAC and VAAC until October 1 of the year before the first vote center election. The LAAC or VAAC are not required to meet until April 1 of the year of the first vote center election. However, LAACs and VAACs can be key partners in the development of your EAP. For example, LAAC and VAAC members can:

- Provide important input on things to consider before you draft your EAP.
- Provide feedback on your draft EAP.
- Recruit community leaders to attend and help with outreach for public meetings and public comment periods.
- Identify accessible locations for public meetings, vote centers, and dropboxes.
- Make suggestions for language assistance and review translations of outreach and education materials.
- Recommend strategies for reaching diverse voters during the public education period.

There are great resources available to help you establish or improve your existing LAAC and VAAC:

- State LAAC [toolkit](#)
- Disability Rights California's [guide to creating a VAAC](#)
- VCC's [Vote Center Disability and Language Access Requirements Checklist](#)
- Disability Rights California's outline of all VCA [accessibility requirements](#) for voters with disabilities.

The VCC is available to provide assistance in LAAC and VAAC outreach efforts. You can also reach out to the Secretary of State's [LAAC](#) and [VAAC](#) for assistance. See section six for more information on support and resources available from the VCC and the Secretary of State's office.

² Counties with fewer than 50,000 voters may establish a joint advisory committee on language and accessibility.

Hold public consultation meetings

In this section, we outline the key stages when public participation will help you implement the Voter's Choice Act for maximum effectiveness and voter participation: the consultation period before you draft your county's Election Administration Plan, the public comment period and public meeting on the draft plan, and the publication of the final plan. We describe below both the statutory requirements for public participation and recommendations for additional best practices we believe will enhance your process.

First stage: Getting community input before you draft your EAP

The importance of community input early in your planning process for a vote center election cannot be overstated. Learning about past voter experiences, barriers to voting, and the unique challenges that language minority groups and voters with disabilities face is critical to ensuring a successful transition to vote center elections. Understanding the confusion and misperceptions that surround elections—and especially a major change to how elections are conducted—will help you create an EAP that will successfully guide you, your staff, the community, and other county stakeholders through the transition to a new and exciting way of conducting elections and voting.

The VCA requires a minimum of two meetings that give the public the opportunity to provide input *prior* to your drafting of your EAP: one meeting that includes representatives from the language minority groups in your county and another that includes representatives from the disability community and organizations that advocate on behalf of people with disabilities. Each of these meetings must be publicly noticed at least 10 days prior to its scheduled time.

If you have a LAAC and VAAC in your county, ask them to help you plan these required meetings. If you do not yet have a LAAC or VAAC, this is a great opportunity to engage members of those communities and begin the recruitment process for your formal advisory committees. The VCC and the Secretary of State's office can assist you with outreach to the language and disability communities in your county.

The VCA specifies that county elections offices develop their draft plans "in consultation with the public." While the law goes on to provide details related to language minority communities and people with disabilities, your outreach during the pre-drafting stage also should engage other community leaders and constituencies to get their input. Consider convening a broader "voter outreach" advisory committee or holding a workshop focusing on a specific underserved group (e.g., rural voters) relevant to your county. This is a great opportunity to begin building your list of community leaders, organizations, and other stakeholders who will be important partners in the outreach and education needed to ensure that the vote center elections are a success. See section two for more information and best practices for engaging a broad cross-section of the community.

Second stage: Public comment period and meeting on the draft plan

Once you have your draft EAP, the VCA requires that you publish the draft and accept public comments for a period of 14 days. The EAP draft must be posted on your website in the languages the county is required to provide under state and federal law. Recommended best practices for ensuring participation from the public during the comment period include:

- Sending the EAP draft directly to people who attended the pre-drafting LAAC and VAAC meetings. Send the draft to any other community leaders you engaged in the pre-drafting process. Ask them to encourage their communities to provide feedback.
- Clearly explaining to the public the methods by which they can submit public comment: in writing, via email, or at the scheduled public meeting.
- Using your county resources to notify the public that a draft EAP has been posted and is open for public comment.
- Using Public Service Announcements (PSAs), language media, and social media to let the public know the EAP has been posted.

In addition to the 14-day public comment period, you are required to host one public meeting on the draft plan and to provide notice of that meeting at least 10 days prior to its scheduled time. Depending on the size of your county, we strongly recommend hosting additional public meetings to increase public participation, maximize public education opportunities, build trust and relationships in the community, and to be transparent and inclusive in the transition to vote center elections. We recommend holding a series of meetings targeted to receive input from diverse constituents, including different geographic segments, age groups, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. To accomplish this, you may need to budget extra time and funding for the public comment period.

Once your public meetings are scheduled, consider making information available to the public that will help them understand the goals of your EAP and encourage helpful feedback, including:

- Vote center and drop-off locations that were considered but ultimately not used. This will give the public the opportunity to comment on alternative locations they prefer, rather than speculate about places that are not really possible.
- Data sources that were used to form the draft plan, including which data were considered and a summary of what you learned during the pre-draft stage. Consider using maps to display graphically how data and input informed specific location choices.
- Which criteria were used to select the vote center sites, dropboxes, and temporary vote center sites if you have them.

Third stage: Second draft EAP

As you evaluate public input and modify your plan accordingly, consider how to meaningfully respond to input from the public to maximize transparency. For example, the second draft plan could include a section explaining the changes to the plan and responding to comments that ultimately were not accepted. If significant changes are made to the draft EAP, consider holding additional public meetings and extending the comment period to give the public a full opportunity to evaluate the new plan. Share the revised plan directly with your LAAC, VAAC, and community outreach list. Explain your revisions to them and ask them to confirm that the revised plan reflects their input.

Fourth stage: Final EAP

Once the final plan is complete, for the sake of transparency, consider including a section that demonstrates how and where public input was considered, which data were used, and the alternatives that were considered and why they were not included. If you change or finalize vote center and dropbox sites after your plan is finalized, provide the public with a link to get updates and give feedback. Continue to consult your network of community leaders for input if you need to make changes to your plan.

VCA legal requirements and recommended best practices

For your reference, the chart below outlines the VCA requirements alongside the recommended best practices:

<u>VCA Requirements</u>	<u>Recommended Best Practices</u>
Establish a LAAC and VAAC by October 1 of the year before the first vote center election. Hold first LAAC and VAAC meetings by April 1 of the year of the first vote center election.	Establish a LAAC and VAAC as early as possible and begin meeting with them regularly, if possible before and during the drafting of the EAP. Utilize the LAAC and VAAC toolkits on the SoS website. Solicit recommendations from community partners for help with LAAC and VAAC recruitment.
Host one meeting with representatives of language minority communities and one meeting with representatives of the disability community to consult on drafting the EAP, each publicly noticed at least 10 days beforehand.	Work with your LAAC and VAAC on planning the public consultation meetings. If you do not have a LAAC and/or VAAC, use this as an opportunity to recruit community members to the required LAAC and VAAC. Use the pre-drafting period to build your community outreach list and get public input from other community leaders and constituencies in your county.

VCA Requirements	Recommended Best Practices
<p>Post the draft EAP online in all of the languages your county is required to offer under state and federal law and accept public comment for at least 14 days before a public meeting to consider the bill.</p>	<p>Ensure the public comment period is publicized and consider a longer comment period in order to hold public meetings that meet the needs of your county.</p>
<p>Hold one public hearing on the draft EAP. The hearing must be publicly noticed at least 10 days beforehand on the websites of the clerk of the county board of supervisors and the county elections official.</p>	<p>Consider holding additional meetings or hearings to ensure a wide range of the public has an opportunity to attend and comment. Work with the partners you have established in the development of the EAP to help get the word out about the hearings. Hold hearings in a variety of community locations. Ensure the meetings are accessible to people with disabilities. Ensure that simultaneous translation is offered.</p>
<p>Consider and incorporate public input, amend and publicize the updated EAP, and accept public comment for 14 days before adopting a final plan.</p>	<p>Send the new draft EAP directly to your LAAC, VAAC, and community contact list. Let the public know why changes to the draft EAP were made, and why some suggested changes were not made. If the plan is dramatically altered, consider extending public comment and hosting additional public meetings.</p>
<p>Post final plan in all of the languages your county is required to offer under state and federal law. If vote center and dropbox sites change after the plan is finalized, the public must be notified and the EAP must be amended.</p>	<p>To enhance transparency and build public confidence, include an explanation of why your plan incorporated some input but not other, what data you relied on in vote center placement, etc. If there are last minute changes to the EAP, send updates to the network of interested partners you have developed.</p>



Section 2: Identifying Public Participants

In this section we outline ideas to help election administrators seeking to expand their existing lists of community leaders who engage with their office. Diverse outreach lists can help you refine your EAP, populate LAACs and VAACs, and educate the public about new voting processes.

Create a diverse outreach list

As you develop your VCA outreach list, consider ways to diversify the input you receive. Start with organizations and colleagues with whom you have existing relationships and ask them to help you expand your list of community contacts. Consider reaching out to the following types of organizations:

- Organizations serving people with disabilities
- Organizations serving African American communities
- Organizations serving Asian American communities
- Organizations serving Latino communities
- Organizations serving Native American communities
- Organizations that focus on voter engagement and participation
- School-based organizations, such as Parent Teacher Associations and school boards
- Municipal governments and services, such as libraries, city councils, utilities
- Local political party clubs and county central committees
- Service organizations, such as Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary
- College/student organizations
- Business associations, such as chambers of commerce and young professionals clubs
- Religious organizations, such as interfaith councils and PICO chapters
- Organizations with local relevance, such as a beach-related organization in a coastal community or a wine-growers association or 4H in a rural community
- Labor unions
- Social service agencies and nonprofits, such as food banks and 211 call centers

Engage partners

In each county implementing the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) in 2018, Voter's Choice California (VCC) is identifying leaders and organizations who might be interested in participating in VCA planning and public education. VCC can make recommendations of organizations and leaders in your county that may supplement your existing outreach list.

For example, the VCC has collected contact information for hundreds of nonprofits in California that might be able to support VCA implementation efforts. We can provide you with a spreadsheet of these organizations for your county. Additionally, organizations within the VCC coalition are reaching out to their own memberships and partners to identify interested leaders and groups in VCA counties. VCC also is developing a multitude of outreach materials that counties are free to use or adapt for their own outreach efforts.

Most counties regularly invite community leaders to forward outreach messages to their networks. You might consider expanding the set of leaders you enlist for this purpose. Consider soliciting the help of your LAAC and VAAC members and other community leaders such as members of county commissions, local elected officials, and nonprofit leaders. Besides being able to share and publicize information about meetings, community organizations can provide extra encouragement to community members to attend meetings.

As part of your collaborative effort, you can request community leaders and LAAC and VAAC members to forward your outreach materials with an introductory message specific to their constituencies (they might appreciate sample copy). You can also ask allies to send personal notes to promising contacts, send follow-up emails with updates, and post information to social media. If you seek specific commitments from partners, they may be more likely to generate leads. For example, you could ask a community leader to commit to contacting five people with personalized requests for participation.

Personalize invitations

The best way to get individuals involved is to personally invite them and get their commitment to participate. Community members need to understand why their input is essential and valued in this important process. Relying solely on advertisements is typically not effective. Ideally, the invitation would come directly from you via email, mail, or phone, and would specify why you are reaching out to this particular individual. Consider attaching information about the VCA, such as the Secretary of State and VCC's [Fact Sheet](#).

SAMPLE MESSAGE

Our county is modernizing its voting process, and voters will experience a new way to vote starting in 2018. As we work to make this effort a success, I'm reaching out to see if we can get your input. [Insert sentence indicating why you are reaching out to this specific individual.] We would benefit from your perspective, and you would be able to inform how voting sites are selected and ensure voters in your community learn about the change. Will you join us for a public meeting on xx date at yy time at zz location?

VCC calendar of events

The VCC website and [events calendar](#) is another resource available to you and your organization as you advertise your meetings. The calendar is updated daily with news of official county meetings and deadlines as well as events and trainings organized by the public. To place an event on the calendar, just email VCC@futureofcaelections.org.

Other methods

A number of additional methods for engaging voters and community leaders, including recommendations for using social media, are detailed in section four of this guide.



Section 3: How to Run a Great Meeting

Most election officials have extensive experience conducting public outreach and making community presentations. With this section we aim to reaffirm officials' existing practices within the context of the VCA and suggest new practices that might increase opportunities for individuals and groups to provide meaningful input at public meetings.

Planning a public meeting

To maximize effective community participation in public meetings, we recommend the following practices:

- **Timing:** Schedule public meetings for the evening and for at least a two-hour period to ensure community members can attend after work. Weekend meetings should also be considered.
- **Location:** The locations should be easy to access by public transportation and provide ample parking. The meetings should take place at a central location in the county or in multiple locations around the county, allowing for geographic inclusion. You can encourage more diverse participation by holding meetings in underrepresented neighborhoods, particularly at sites familiar to one or more targeted constituencies.
- **Accessibility:** Meeting locations should meet all accessibility requirements. Meeting notices should make the public aware that interpreters and disability-related accommodations, such as American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters, will be available upon request. Translations of materials that will be discussed at the meeting must also be provided in covered languages and alternative formats (such as large print, CD, MP3, and electronically).

- **Comfort:** Make sure participants have access to water and bathrooms. If possible, consider providing snacks, especially if the meeting is at dinner time. If the county does not have resources available, consider inviting a community partner to provide snacks. Also consider providing or asking a community partner to provide child care.
- **Remote participation:** If possible, consider providing more than one way for community members to participate. For example, explore the idea of using a video-conferencing tool like Skype or conference call line for those that cannot attend in-person. Other options include encouraging participation via social media or by submitting questions and ideas in advance. See section four of this guide for additional suggestions.
- **Social media:** Twitter and other forms of social media can be used to engage those unable to attend the meeting as well as those in the room. A robust social media plan includes communication before, during, and after the meeting. Consider creating a Twitter hashtag that will allow people to follow the conversation and submit questions in real-time. Advertise the hashtag during the meeting and encourage participants to use it to engage and educate their communities. Be sure to follow up and answer any questions posed via social media. For additional social media tips, please see section three of this guide.

Meeting facilitation

A well-planned and facilitated meeting can elevate the effectiveness and volume of feedback the public provides, increasing the likelihood that public input will strengthen an EAP. If possible, we recommend enlisting a staff member or third-party facilitation expert to guide the conversation, perhaps after an introduction from the election official. The facilitator's sole job is to make the meeting run smoothly and ensure people are heard. Among other benefits, enlisting a facilitator can:

- Free county representatives to participate in the conversation and actively listen to input.
- Bring a layperson's perspective and utilize plain language when describing the new system.
- Encourage open communication and make members of the public feel more comfortable making recommendations.
- Facilitate a free flow of information while maintaining focus on productive conversations.
- Enhance the election official's ability to respond to challenging questions or negative feedback if they arise.

Regardless of who facilitates the meeting, the facilitator must remain neutral to all points of view shared in the meeting.

The following practices will help you generate robust public participation, diverse perspectives, and useful feedback at community meetings.

- **Agenda setting and facilitation:** Thoughtful agenda planning is key to soliciting meaningful feedback. Before the meeting, be sure to prepare and disseminate a clear agenda that helps community members understand the questions you will ask during the meeting and the types of feedback that would be most helpful for them to provide. Identify specific goals you want to achieve in the meeting. Articulate those in advance and during the meeting, and work toward achieving them before adjournment. Also articulate the ground rules for constructive participation and return to them if needed during the meeting. All decision-making meetings should be open to the public and, to the extent possible, scheduled at a time and location convenient and accessible to the public.
- **Share information:** In addition to soliciting input from the public, these meetings provide opportunities for you to communicate your approach to interested parties. Consider sharing your own goals, decision-making process and criteria, constraints, and other key factors in your implementation effort. This may set the stage for more constructive feedback and reduce potential community concerns after decisions have been made.
- **Flexible questions:** It might be challenging for voters not experienced in election administration to jump right into suggesting specific voting locations or volunteer ways they can help with VCA implementation. Consider exercises and questions you can ask to facilitate effective input. The following questions are structured to help generate useful responses:
 - What do you like about the way you vote currently? What difficulties do you experience with voting?
 - How do you feel about the new system? What do you like or not like?
 - How do you want to feel when you are voting?
 - Which of the three methods of voting do you think you will use? When you consider yourself voting in that way, do you envision any complications or challenges?
 - What time of day is ideal for voting? What would make you feel good about your experience at a vote center? What might create a negative experience for you?
 - How does your community access information about elections and voting? (e.g., specific media outlets, specific places like worship services)
 - Where do you go to get information about community events? Online? Facebook? A local paper?

- Whose advice do you listen to? How about others in your community?
- Where do you go on a weekly or daily basis that might be a convenient place to drop your ballot? (e.g., kids' school, specific grocery store)
- Are there spaces in your neighborhood that are used for public meetings or where people feel most comfortable attending meetings?
- Are there places where you or members of your community might feel uncomfortable going to a meeting?
- Do the materials describing the VCA make sense to you? What is confusing about the materials? What changes would you recommend?

Don't be afraid to ask follow-up questions to better understand a participant's response.

- **Soliciting active participation:** Remember, this is a great opportunity to get input on vote center placement, feedback on your outreach and education materials, suggestions for public meeting times and locations, and ideas for creative and expanded outreach to voters. It's also a chance to learn how you can address any challenges voters might perceive or face with a new election system. Provide opportunities in the meeting for participants to lead meeting discussion and/or activities. For example, small group discussions ensure everyone has a chance to speak and provide feedback while giving meeting participants the opportunity to take a more prominent role. Another good way to capture ideas from every individual at a meeting is to ask each participant to complete a survey. Consider using technological platforms to better collaborate with meeting participants. These might visualize common themes such as with word clouds or identify preferences such as through instant polling.
- **Accessibility for voters with disabilities:** Be mindful to serve the needs of all your community members, including those with disabilities. [This detailed guide](#) provides comprehensive recommendations for making every element of your meeting accessible.
- **Language accessibility:** Making the meeting more accessible to various language communities will ensure that participants understand the details of the new system, can generate the most effective input for your county, and will more likely result in participants engaging and educating their communities after the meeting. Consider facilitating the meeting in the language spoken by the community the meeting is targeting. If the meeting will be held in English, you can provide interpretation services upon request in all the languages needed or covered under state and federal law. Ensure that all of your meeting materials are translated.

- **Materials:** Make sure you have sufficient copies of all meeting documents to share with participants, including copies of the agenda, exercises, any draft or sample outreach materials, and presentation slides. It would also be helpful to include basic information about the Voter's Choice Act, such as the Secretary of State and VCC's [fact sheet](#). As noted above, these should be made available in all of the languages targeted for the specific meeting.
- **Follow up:** Reaching out to participants after your meeting is critical as it confirms that you've heard their input and lays the groundwork for their ongoing assistance during the public education phase. After a meeting, email participants with a summary of what you heard during the meeting and any related actions you plan to take. Let participants know how they can access the next draft of the EAP or learn about other decisions you plan to make. Thank them for their participation and offer suggestions for how they can stay engaged and educate their communities about the changes ahead.



Section 4: Other Ways to Engage the Public

While public meetings are an effective (and mandatory) means of learning from the public, there are many other ways to cultivate public participation as you implement the Voter's Choice Act. The following engagement methods can help you collect important input from a diverse cross section of your electorate outside of official and informal meetings with the public.

- **Your website:** Dedicate a page on your website to explaining the new voting process in your county. On that page, provide residents with the opportunity to engage. This might include a comment form, survey questions, or sample social media messages they can share.
- **Surveys:** As noted under "soliciting active participation" in section three of this guide, surveys are an excellent way to collect input from your electorate. Links to your survey can be shared widely through social media, on the websites of other government agencies, and via community organizations and leaders. You can also use the introduction of a survey to generate media stories.

- **Advisory votes:** Consider asking county voters to weigh in on very specific decisions, such as:
 - Would you rather have a dropbox at the gas station, the library, or the grocery store?
 - Would you rather vote near where you live, work, attend school, run errands, or spend time on the weekends?
- **Social media:** As noted under “social media” section three, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram can be used to engage and educate your electorate—those who are unable to attend the meeting as well as those in the room. Use these platforms to ask voters questions and encourage them to provide feedback. Depending on the resources available to your organization, there are several approaches you can take:

If you have a dedicated social media point person: Create a robust social media plan that includes communication before, during, and after the meeting. Consider creating a location specific #hashtag to ask questions, monitor posts, and respond to comments across platforms. Here a few platform-specific recommendations:

- **Twitter:** Advertise the hashtag before and during the meeting to encourage participants to follow the conversations and submit questions in real-time. Live tweet from the meeting. Write a Twitter poll and encourage its dissemination. Respond to the questions and comments that are tweeted before, during, and after the meeting in real-time.
- **Facebook:** Ask voters questions and encourage them to provide feedback. Consider Facebook Live as an easy way to live stream the meeting for those who are unable to attend.
- **Instagram:** Ask voters to post images of where they want to vote or where their community congregates. Consider sponsoring a contest to tap into people’s creativity.

If you have limited resources for social media: If you do not have a dedicated staff member for social media, decide on which platform you have the most community members engaged and focus your efforts there. Use that platform to educate your electorate and promote meeting attendance.

- **Twitter:** Promote the meeting using a location-specific hashtag. Ask questions and respond to posts in a timely fashion. Consider writing a Twitter poll and encourage its dissemination.
- **Facebook:** Advertise the meeting. Ask voters questions and encourage them to provide feedback.

Sample social media posts: Below are some sample social media posts you can use and encourage people to share. With each one, try to insert a URL where voters can find more information. Don't forget to create your own hashtag (#). Reference your county to minimize confusion with non-VCA counties.

- You decide where you vote. You decide when you vote. You decide how you vote. The **#VotersChoiceAct** is coming to **#NevadaCounty**.
 - In 2018, **#SanMateoVoters** will get to vote at any vote center in the county. Where should we put them? Help us decide.
 - In 2018, all **#NapaVoters** will receive ballots in the mail. How do we prepare your community for the new system? Tell us here: xxx
 - Every vote counts. What would make it easier for YOU to vote? Tell us how we can design the best voting experience for all of our voters.
 - **#SacramentoCounty** is redesigning its elections process. We need you to help design it. Participate in our meetings.
 - Thank you to all of our meeting participants last night! Did you think of any additional ways to improve our voting system? Tell us here. **#SutterVotes**
 - If a voting center were at XX location, would that make it easier for you to vote? **#NevadaElections**.
- **Traditional/ethnic media:** Don't forget to reach out to traditional and ethnic media to pitch stories about the changes ahead and how they will affect local residents. These stories can be used as education tools and to recruit public input. Ask media outlets to link to your surveys, public comment forms, etc. VCC expects to develop sample media advisories you can use. We may also be able to recommend ethnic media contacts in your community.
 - **Individual conversations:** One of the most reliable sources of input is the organic conversations you and your staff will have with local leaders and individuals. Consider how to capture that input, such as sharing a tracking spreadsheet that is updated regularly. Think about how to weight the comments so that underrepresented communities have an equal voice.



Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions with Sample Responses for Election Officials

Below are some of the most common questions about the VCA we have heard from voters and community leaders in our outreach efforts and in diverse focus groups around the state. Every election official will answer these questions differently based on their own perspectives, electorates, and processes. Before holding public meetings, we suggest you consider your answers to each of these questions. To get you started, we've prepared some basic responses you can adapt for your purposes.

Note, the responses below aim to express the perspectives of election officials. The VCC has also prepared a more general FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions), which is available on our [website](#) and as a [handout](#) for public distribution.

1. Why are we switching to this new process?

The Voter's Choice Act gives voters more options so they can choose when, where, and how they vote. By adopting the VCA, state lawmakers and election officials are hoping to increase voter turnout by making voting more convenient.

2. How will the new voting process work?

Every registered voter will receive a ballot in the mail one month before the election. Voters will have three options: (1) return their ballot by mail postmarked no later than Election Day, (2) place it in one of the secure dropboxes located throughout their county, or (3) vote in person at a vote center.

At vote centers—which will replace polling places—you can drop off your ballot or request a replacement ballot and vote in person. You also may register to vote and cast a ballot the same day. Professional staff will be trained to support all voters, including those with disabilities and those who may need language assistance. All vote centers will be open from the Saturday before Election Day through Election Day at 8 p.m. Some will be open a full 11 days, including the two weekends before Election Day.

3. Will vote centers be open on the weekends?

Yes. All vote centers will be open the weekend before Election Day, and some will be open for two weekends.

4. What if I lose my ballot or make a mistake?

You can visit a vote center and request a replacement ballot.

5. What is a dropbox?

A dropbox is a secure, locked structure where voters may deliver their ballots from the time they receive them by mail up to 8 p.m. on Election Day. Election officials will place dropboxes in convenient, accessible locations, including places close to public transportation routes. Voters are encouraged to recommend potential dropbox locations to election officials.

6. Can I vote at any vote center?

All eligible [insert county] voters can cast their ballot at any vote center in our county. If you are eligible but not yet registered to vote in [insert county], you can register at any vote center in the county and vote the same day. [insert county] voters also can return their ballot to any dropbox in the county.

7. Why can't we use my polling place?

In some cases, former polling places will be used as vote centers. However, many former polling places will no longer be in use. Polling places under the VCA must be available for 4 to 11 days and meet other requirements. Many traditional polling places may not be available, accessible or meet other requirements under the VCA.

8. What if I've moved since the last time I registered to vote?

You might not receive a ballot in the mail, but you may still vote. Visit any vote center in your county to register at your new address and vote.

9. What if I'm not registered to vote?

You will not receive a ballot in the mail, but if you are [eligible to vote](#), you may still do so. Visit any vote center in your county to register and vote the same day.

10. How will the vote centers look and feel?

Vote centers will be well-organized, professional, and accommodate voters with disabilities. [Add details that reflect your plans locally.]

Note: In focus groups, voters frequently ask this question and indicate they worry vote centers will feel like unfriendly, faceless bureaucracies.

11. Who decides where the vote centers and dropboxes will be located? What are the criteria?

The county elections office will decide where to place vote centers and drop boxes based on [14 criteria](#) outlined in state law. These include considering where the population lives, access to public transit and parking, how frequently a community votes by mail, and accessibility for people with disabilities. We also must consider

which sites are available for up to 11 continuous days of voting. As we make these decisions, we want to hear from a wide variety of people within our diverse county so we ensure every community has access to the polls.

12. Will vote centers be accessible to people with disabilities?

Yes, all vote centers will be accessible to people with disabilities. Counties participating in the VCA also are required to create a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) if they do not have one already. A VAAC is comprised of voters with disabilities and is integral during the planning process to make voting accessible in the transition to a vote center model. Please let us know if you are interested in joining the VAAC.

13. What about voters who speak languages other than English? Will they be able to use the vote centers?

Yes, vote centers will accommodate voters with limited English proficiency. We will have well-trained staff at every location prepared to support voters with translated voting materials in languages required by law. To the greatest extent possible, we aim to have multilingual staff and volunteers available to help voters at vote centers.

14. I don't have a car. How will I get to a vote center?

We are committed to making vote centers accessible by public transit, and the law requires it. When choosing vote center locations, we will use data on bus and train routes as well as input from community members. We want to hear from you where you think it would be most convenient for those using public transportation to vote. Additionally, all voters have the options of returning their ballots by mail or in the dropboxes we will place throughout the county. You also can help us determine where to place dropboxes, such as near community centers and transit lines.

15. Are there going to be long lines at the vote centers?

Lines at vote centers are not expected to be long. In fact, they may be shorter than lines at current polling places because voting will be spread over many more days. In our planning, we will consider factors that affect wait times, such as the length of the ballot and the types of equipment we are using. We also expect that many new features of vote centers will speed up the process. For example, we plan to use computers to check people in instead of paper registration rolls.

16. Who made the decision to switch to this new process?

State legislators and the Secretary of State designed the Voter's Choice Act with extensive input from community groups that represented a wide range of California voters. Our office carefully considered the VCA and decided it was a good fit for our county because [insert your top reasons such as "it gives voters more flexibility" or "it

will save our taxpayers money”]. Before deciding, we consulted many voters and community leaders. We are committed to continuing to involve the public as we work out key details like where to place vote centers.

17. Will this make it harder for me to vote in person?

Most voters will have to travel farther than in previous elections to reach a vote center where they can vote in person. However, in many other respects, the law makes it easier to vote:

- You get to choose when you vote. Vote centers will be open four to 11 days, including on the weekends.
- You can vote at any vote center in our county, which means you can vote where you work, where you go to school, or where you run errands.
- You will be supported by well-trained professional staff.
- You can register to vote or update your registration at a vote center.
- You will automatically receive a vote-by-mail ballot and can use it to vote any time in the month before the election.

18. Is this an attempt to disenfranchise voters?

No. In fact, the VCA may increase voter turnout. The law is modeled after a similar program in Colorado. When Colorado made the switch, voter turnout increased quite a bit. We hope the same happens here. Still, it is very important that we make sure voters know about the new system. That’s why we’re excited to work with you and other residents to get the word out in all of our communities.

19. Why can’t I vote close to home?

The toughest adjustment is going to be the transition away from traditional, neighborhood polling places. But we think the trade-off is worth it given all we will gain: more voting days, the flexibility to vote anywhere in the county, automatic vote-by-mail ballots, more accessible options for people with disabilities, and more.

20. Why will I be mailed a vote-by-mail ballot when I didn’t ask for one?

State lawmakers designed the Voter’s Choice Act to increase voter turnout and make voting more convenient. One convenience for voters in participating counties is no longer needing to request a vote-by-mail ballot. If you don’t want to vote by mail, you may visit a vote center and ask to vote in person.

21. Will I need to show photo identification at the vote center?

California voters are not required to show identification at their polling place. However, if you are a newly registered voter, you may be asked to show identification the first time you vote, per federal law. Acceptable forms of

identification include a copy of a recent utility bill, the sample ballot booklet you received from your county elections office, or another document sent to you by a government agency. Other examples include your passport, driver license, official California identification card, or student identification card. For more information on identification to use when you vote for the first time check [the complete list](#) or call the Secretary of State's toll-free voter hotline at (800) 345-VOTE (8683).

Please note that every individual has the right to cast a provisional ballot even if he or she does not provide documentation.

22. Could this make it easier for people to commit voter fraud?

No. The Voter's Choice Act vastly improves protections against potential voter fraud:

- When a voter uses a vote center, we will verify in the statewide voter database that no other votes have been cast by that voter.
- The VCA nearly eliminates the need for provisional ballots, which also enhances security.
- The process will likely increase the use of vote-by-mail, which requires voters' signatures to match official records.
- Voters' signatures at vote centers will be captured electronically and compared to records in the event of a challenge to their eligibility.
- Vote centers will be staffed by trained professionals with strong knowledge of the law and proper voting procedures.
- The Voter's Choice Act requires the use of new voting equipment with enhanced security standards.

23. Will the dropboxes be secure?

Yes. Dropboxes must be secure and locked. We expect ours to ... [describe planned features such as how they will be constructed, whether there will be video surveillance, etc.]

24. Will the Voter's Choice Act cost taxpayers more money?

Some counties will need additional resources to purchase new equipment necessary to participate in the Voter's Choice Act, such as secure dropboxes. But over time, counties should save a considerable amount of money because we will need to purchase and maintain far fewer voting machines. We estimate it will save us _____ in the first year and _____ in subsequent years.

25. How might the Voter's Choice Act affect political campaigns?

The Voter's Choice Act will improve the capacity of campaigns to target and track voters:

- All voters will receive vote-by-mail ballots at the same time, enabling greater predictability and consistency in campaign calendars.
- Campaigns will be able to access real-time data from vote centers to learn who has cast their ballots.
- The Voter’s Choice Act should nearly eliminate the use of provisional ballots, which will provide campaigns with more visible data on voter patterns and behavior.
- With fewer sites reporting and few provisional ballots, participating counties should be able to provide election results more quickly.

26. How can people submit feedback or opinions on election plans?

[Outline your county’s specific plans.]

27. How are people going to find out about the change?

- [Outline key elements of your plan such as:] We will contact each voter directly—such as by mailing a postcard—at least twice. We will aim to generate stories in local newspapers and other media outlets, including ethnic media. We will participate in community events and send information to local organizations to share with their members.
- We are eager to learn from community members specific ways we can reach voters. Are there particular events we should hold, organizations we should contact, or listservs where we should send messages? Who are the influential leaders in your community we can ask to talk about the new system or send social media messages? Where and how does your community receive information?

28. Where can people get information? Where can I get flyers and other materials?

We will contact each voter at least twice to ensure they know about the changes.

Voters can also learn about the new system:

- On **our website**: [list URL]
- **Secretary of State Alex Padilla’s website**:
<http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voters-choice-act/>
- Or at **Voter’s Choice California**, a coalition of community-based organizations which has fact sheets and many other materials you can use to engage and educate your community: www.voterschoice.org



Section 6: How to Get Help

The VCC is working locally in all participating counties, including establishing regional implementation hubs. The hubs aim to support the efforts of election administrators, identify diverse local stakeholders and prepare them to participate effectively in the planning process, and help ensure voters in each county know how to cast their ballots.

The VCC and its regional hub can support your county in a number of ways, including:

- Providing checklists of key tasks and legal requirements.
- Sharing recommendations for developing an effective EAP.
- Developing a representative list of community-based groups and leaders in your county.
- Recommending diverse leaders and organizations to participate in Language Accessibility Advisory Committees (LAACs), Voting Accessibility Advisory Committees (VAACs), and public input groups.
- Recruiting youth leaders to support your effort.
- Providing recommendations for educating your diverse voter population, including voters with disabilities.
- Providing a media toolkit with sample press releases, social media posts, etc.
- Publicizing your public meetings, including on the Voter's Choice California website calendar of events.
- Reviewing and providing custom feedback on voter outreach materials, using a plain-language lens and well-researched design principles.
- Reviewing translations of your multilingual materials.

The VCC welcomes additional ideas for how we might be of assistance. Please contact us at VCC@futureofcaelections.org.



Section 7: Resources

A. [Voter's Choice Act Fact Sheet](#)

This one-page fact sheet clearly describes the changes voters will experience once their county implements the Voter's Choice Act.

B. [Custom Fact Sheet](#)

The VCC can customize the statewide fact sheet for any county. Customization can include adding your county's logo, website, and contact information. Some counties might also want to add specific information about their plans. For a custom, county-specific version of the fact sheet, please contact VCC@futureofcaelections.org.

C. [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

This set of Frequently Asked Questions is available on the [VCC website](#) and as a [public handout](#). Questions are informed by focus groups and extensive conversations with diverse constituencies. They range from basic elements of the VCA, to rationale for the change, to potential political implications. Section five of this guide features an adaptation of the FAQ, customized as talking points for election officials.

D. [Voter's Choice Act Legal Digest and Checklists](#)

The following legal digest outlines all statutory requirements in the Voter's Choice Act. Below that are compliance checklists for each key component of the law. These checklists are in PDF format; to access an interactive Excel version, email us at VCC@futureofcaelections.org.

- [Voter's Choice Act Legal Digest \(PDF\)](#)
- [Key to Voter's Choice Act Digest Abbreviations](#)
- Checklist 1: [VCA Public Participation Checklist](#)
- Checklist 2: [VCA EAP and Voter Ed & Outreach Plan Checklist](#)
- Checklist 3: [VCA Disability & Language Access Requirements Checklist](#)
- Checklist 4: [VCA Vote Center & Ballot Drop Off Location Algorithm Checklist](#)
- Checklist 5: [VCA Voter Notification Checklist](#)
- Checklist 6: [VCA SoS Report to Legislature Checklist](#)

E. [10 Keys to Successful Engagement](#)

These tips, published California State University Sacramento's Center for Collaborative Policy, outline key elements of successful collaboration that may serve election officials as they engage diverse stakeholders throughout the public participation process.

[F. County Language Accessibility Advisory Committee Toolkit](#)

Developed by the California Secretary of State's Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC), this toolkit offers guidelines and practices to help county elections offices establish a LAAC, including tips for recruiting members, organizing meetings, and a sample application form and outreach materials.

[G. How to Start a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee \(VAAC\)](#)

This guide by [Disability Rights California](#) outlines the process for creating a VAAC, including information on recruiting members, contacting community based organizations, suggested topics for meetings and the specific requirements related to counties implementing the VCA. The California Secretary of State's office has also published [a guide](#) on VAACs, including best practices for creating and maintaining a VAAC at the city and county levels. For more general information on how to make voting accessible, the U.S. Election Assistance Commission has an informative guide full of tips and resources [here](#).

[H. Election Toolkit](#)

The Election Toolkit is a library of free and low-cost tools to support election officials in promoting civic engagement and making voting easier. The tools come with step-by-step instructions and include resources such as election infographics, social media guides, basic web analytics, and a usability testing kit. The materials were designed "by, with, and for election officials" with support from the Knight Foundation, Center for Technology and Civic Life, and Center for Civic Design.

[I. The Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides](#)

The *Best Practices Manual* provides research-based recommendations to help make voter information more effective, inviting, and useful. This manual was specifically created as an easy-to-use resource for election officials and community groups working to engage and educate California voters. It was developed by the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund in partnership with the Center for Civic Design, with support from the James Irvine Foundation.

[J. United States Election Assistance Commission Resources](#)

- [Communicating with the Public](#) – Offers suggestions regarding planning, timelines, and materials that an election official may use to communicate with the public, such as how to prepare a communication strategy and developing and distributing communication materials.
- [Building Community Partnerships](#) – Explores the types of partnerships election officials can foster within their communities and best practices on how to manage a community partnership after it has been established.

- [2017 Language Access for Voters Summit](#) – Includes presentations and videos from this convening of election officials, voting rights groups, and other experts who shared best practices and tools for effective language assistance.

K. Institute for Local Government Resources

- [Principles of Local Government Public Engagement](#) – Ten indicators of effective public engagement practices that may serve as guidelines for elections offices in the design of public engagement processes and strategies.
- [Expand Your Agency’s Community Networks](#) – An inventory of various kinds of community organizations to help broaden the reach of public engagement efforts.
- [Effective Public Engagement through Strategic Communication](#) – This tip sheet offers public officials comprehensive advice on strategies for communicating with their constituencies.
- [Increasing Access to Public Meetings and Events for People with Disabilities](#) – Provides general guidelines in areas such as wheelchair access, effective communication, and meeting announcements.

L. In Development

The VCC is developing several additional resources including a comprehensive guide to diverse public outreach around the Voter’s Choice Act, a media toolkit, and a PowerPoint explaining VCA to the public. These resources will be available on our website, www.voterschoice.org, under the section “For Election Administrators.” The Secretary of State also is developing a number of materials that we will link to here once available.