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DEMOCRACY

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



About the Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID)

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

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Executive Summary

In the 2020 primary election, 15 California counties – consisting of half the state’s registered voter population – opted to conduct elections under the state’s Voter’s Choice Act (VCA). VCA counties send vote-by-mail (VBM) ballots to all registered voters, who can return them by mail, to a vote center, or at a secure ballot drop box. This voting model replaces neighborhood polling places with multi-service vote centers available to voters up to 10 days before Election Day. Voters can use any vote center in their county to cast their ballot, drop off their VBM ballot, or obtain other services. Under the VCA, counties are required to conduct outreach to community members to educate them about the changes in how, when, and where they can cast their ballots and to encourage the use of new voting options. Counties must also establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and a Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) to advise the elections office on electoral access for voters with disabilities and voters with limited English proficiency. This report examines how county elections officials informed voter groups of the significant changes brought about by the VCA, with a specific look at outreach to voters with disabilities. As part of this analysis, we also identify counties’ priorities for the siting of voting locations, along with the type of outreach conducted to inform voters of their county’s new voting locations.

This study addresses the following research questions:

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

For a discussion of the study’s methodology, please see page 11.

Key Findings about VCA Implementation in the 2020 Primary Election

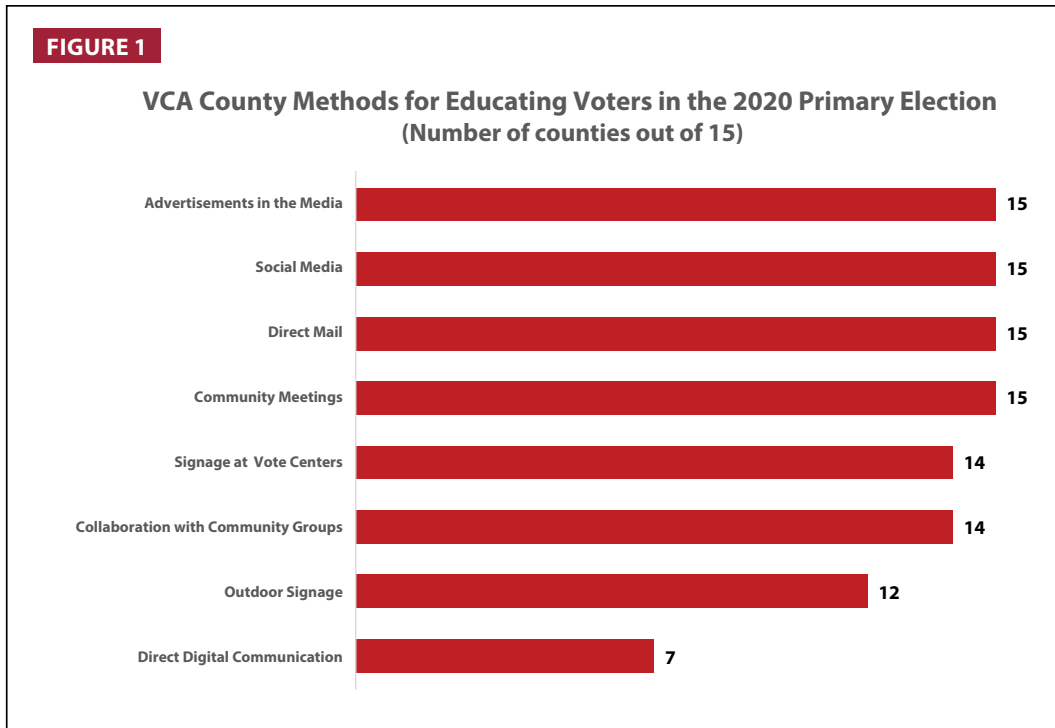
1. Voter Outreach and Education

VCA counties increased voter outreach and education efforts to inform voters about changes related to the VCA

Nearly all counties increased or adjusted their outreach and education campaigns for the 2020 primary election to inform voters about changes related to the VCA. Counties implementing the VCA for the first time in 2020 (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) generally made more significant adjustments to the voter outreach and education strategies than did counties that first adopted the VCA in 2018 (Madera, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, and San Mateo).

VCA counties employed multiple methods to inform voters about VCA-related election changes

As shown in the figure below, all VCA counties reported that they advertised in traditional and social media outlets, sent voters direct mail, and hosted community meetings to inform residents of the VCA. Additionally, nearly all counties posted signage at vote centers and collaborated with community groups; most VCA counties also reported posting outdoor signage (e.g., bus, billboard) and about half of the counties reported reaching out to community members through direct digital communication (e.g., email, personalized text message).



All VCA counties reported having a plan to inform voters with disabilities about voting method changes

All VCA counties had a plan to inform voters with disabilities about voting changes and most counties used more than six different types of methods to reach voters with disabilities. Counties most commonly informed voters with disabilities through community meetings, direct mail, and social media. One-third of the counties had a dedicated staff person to serve voters with disabilities.

VCA counties targeted outreach to historically underserved groups

In addition to a general outreach campaign that reached all demographics countywide, nearly two-thirds of counties also targeted outreach and education efforts to non-English language groups, voters with disabilities, young voters, and/or seniors. Further, one-third of counties specifically targeted outreach to Black, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated voters, using varied methods including hosting events, collaborating with community partners, and through online and radio advertisements.

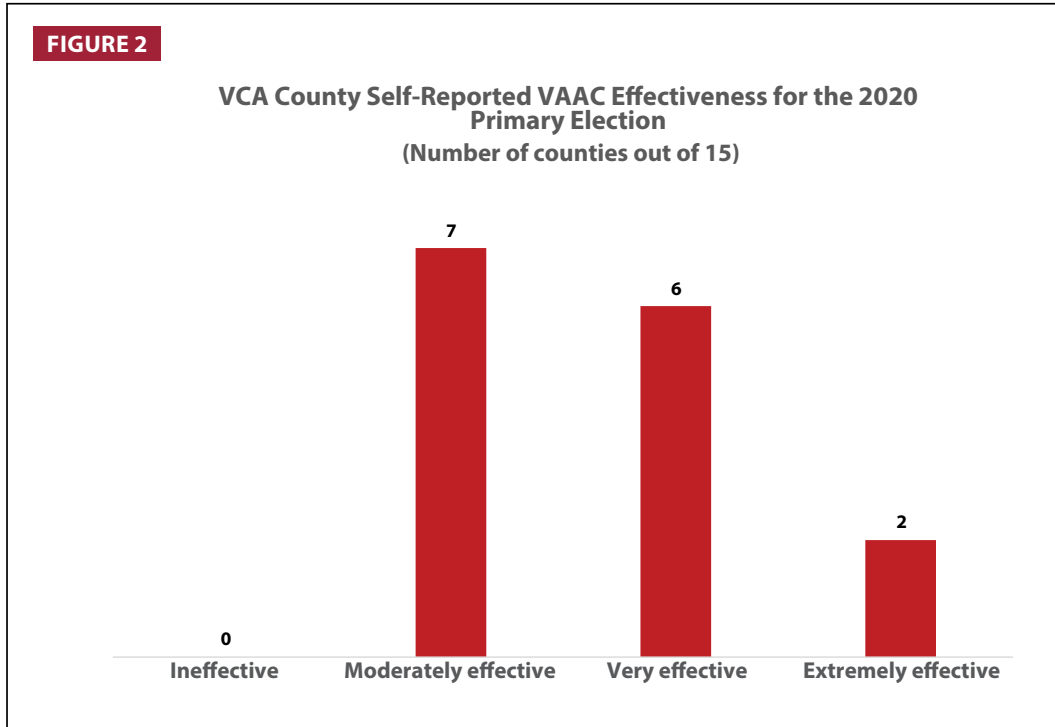
Some VCA counties were unsure of the most effective communication methods

Just over one-third of VCA counties reported that they either did not know which outreach methods were most effective for different voter groups or did not think that different types of information had an effect on different groups. The remaining counties found that translating voter material was effective in reaching language minority groups, digital communications were effective for reaching young voters, and that printed materials were effective with older voters. Previous research by CID found that only one-third of voters in VCA counties were aware of voting changes during the 2020 primary election.

2. Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee & Community Partnerships

Some Voting Accessibility Advisory Committees were more effective than others

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) implementation varied widely in terms of when the committees began meeting and how often they met leading up to the primary election. Over half of the counties reported that they perceived their VAAC as very or extremely effective; less than half of the counties reported moderate effectiveness of their VAAC. Counties reported that their VAAC helped provide knowledge and feedback, assisted their county with VCA implementation, and aided voter outreach.



All VCA counties worked with various stakeholders on VCA implementation

All VCA counties reported that they met or collaborated with community leaders and voter advocacy groups to discuss VCA changes. All VCA counties also partnered with community groups, government agencies, private groups, and/or media to enhance voter outreach and education efforts. The following table summarizes types of assistance counties reported receiving from these different groups; bold-type indicates that the majority of VCA counties reported that type of assistance.

Types of Education and Outreach Assistance from County Partners Reported by VCA Counties			
Community Groups	Government Agencies	Private Groups	Media Organizations
✓ Outreach	✓ Outreach	✓ Outreach	✓ Outreach
✓ Resources	✓ Resources	✓ Resources	✓ Resources
✓ Feedback	✓ Feedback	✓ Feedback	✓ Feedback

VCA counties reported that collaborating with stakeholders enhanced VCA-implementation

Even beyond supporting outreach and education, collaboration with community stakeholders provided benefits to VCA counties. VCA counties reported that such collaboration increased their knowledge or resources for implementing their Election Administration Plan. In addition, counties reported that stakeholder collaboration influenced community trust and assisted with siting locations or poll worker recruitment.

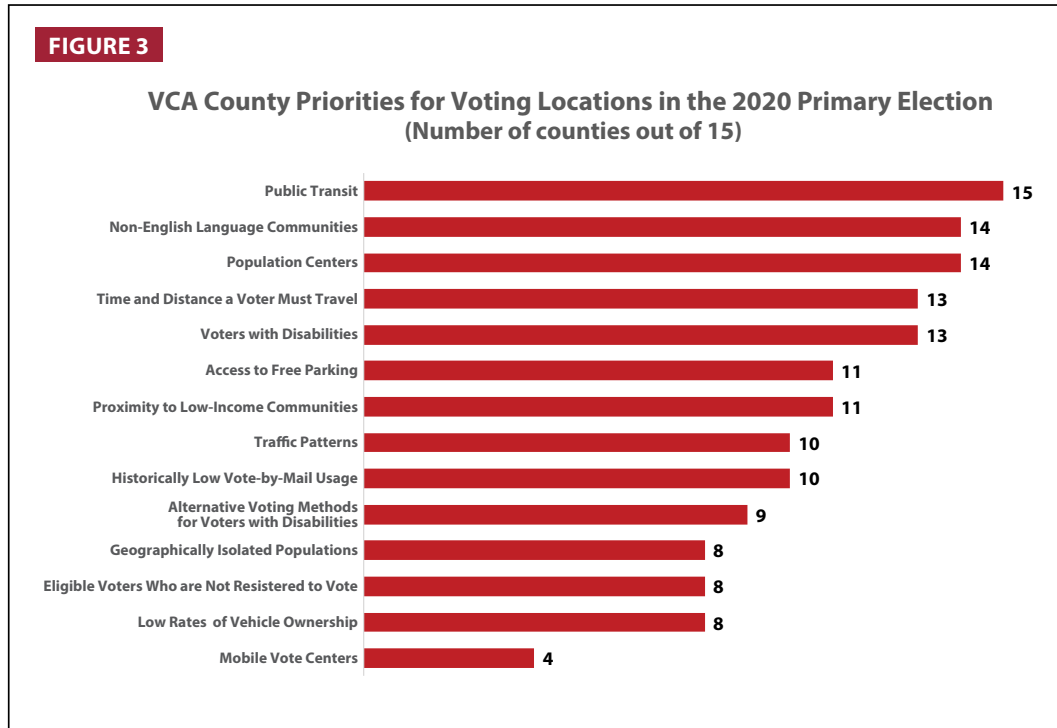
In addition to noting benefits, multiple VCA counties made the following suggestions for improving partnerships:

- Increase engagement from community members, particularly groups representing youth voters, voters with disabilities, and non-English language groups.
- Increase time spent collaborating with partners by increasing meeting attendance, length of meetings, and overall time spent with partners, including the VAAC and LAAC.

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

Counties balanced several priorities when selecting vote center locations

As shown in the chart below, all VCA counties said that being in close proximity to public transportation was a priority in choosing locations of vote centers. Other common priorities included proximity to language minority communities, population centers, voters with disabilities, and the time and distance a voter would travel to reach the vote center.



Most VCA counties prioritized voters with disabilities in siting voting locations

Nearly all VCA counties reported that voters with disabilities were a priority for their siting process. Having an accessible location and meeting ADA requirements were the most important factors when considering siting priorities for voters with disabilities.

Voters with disabilities were prioritized when training vote center staff

All VCA counties reported that they provided disability-related training to vote center staff. The content for staff training in all counties was developed internally, informed by the VAAC, and/or informed by Disability Rights California or other partnerships. Most counties included sensitivity training, accommodations for voters with disabilities, and/or computer or procedure training.

The Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail option was not heavily used by voters

All VCA counties reported having information about Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) on their county website, in voter guides, or at county hosted events. However, over two-thirds of VCA counties reported that RAVBM was used by fewer than 100 voters, including zero voters in Amador and Napa counties and approximately 10 voters each in Los Angeles and Madera counties. Santa Clara County reported by far the highest RAVBM usage—by 2,875 voters.

Summary

The VCA requires counties to engage in extensive outreach and to provide an accessible voting experience for all voters. In order to meet these requirements, county elections offices reported a variety of activities including hosting events, increasing digital and print advertisements, collaborating with community partners, and targeting outreach to voters with disabilities and other groups. However, two-thirds of voters were still unaware of voting changes in their county.

Overall, VCA counties successfully collaborated with stakeholders to enhance the VCA implementation process. Nearly all counties conducted community meetings and met with and had ongoing collaboration with community leaders. Further, nearly all counties said collaboration with stakeholders improved some aspect of the process, including by increasing knowledge, resources, community trust, outreach efforts, or siting locations. However, nearly all counties also indicated that the collaborative process could be improved in future elections by increasing participation.

For voters with disabilities, the most commonly used methods for outreach and education included traditional outreach activities (e.g., county website, voter guide, mailings, and public meetings), utilizing partnerships with community groups, and through media (e.g., digital, print, or radio advertisements and social media). In addition to outreach and education, VCA county elections offices also provided training to vote center workers to specifically serve the needs of voters with disabilities.

All counties balanced several priorities when selecting vote location sites, including the needs of voters with disabilities. Some counties had challenges identifying sites that were available for the early voting period (up to 10 days prior to election day) that is required by the VCA. Some counties utilized community partners to help identify locations.

Recommendations

1. Increase investments in voter outreach and education and streamline messaging across counties to have a greater impact.

Despite extensive outreach campaigns, two-thirds of voters were unaware of voting changes in the 2020 primary election.

- Counties should go above and beyond VCA voter outreach and education requirements and put extensive staff time and resources towards informing voters about voting changes related to the VCA.
- Effective voter messaging should be done in collaboration with neighboring VCA counties or community partners; high-use materials from county elections offices need to have plain and accessible language, quality translations, and readability by voters with disabilities and other historically underrepresented voting groups.
- Counties should devote time and resources to test effective voter messaging for different voting groups so they can increase targeted messaging, and so county financial resources have the greatest impact. Previous research by CID showed that different voting groups – including voters with disabilities, voters of color, young voters, rural voters, and senior voters – have different preferences for how and where they cast a ballot, which should be considered when developing outreach campaigns.
- Counties should include wide-reaching outreach efforts to inform voters about changes to vote center and drop box locations, including through one-on-one contact with voters. Changing voting locations can be confusing and discouraging for voters and can possibly impact voter trust. Making sure they know about the changes in advance can help ease the transition, especially for voters who may have to travel farther to vote. To have the greatest impact, these outreach efforts should take place in collaboration with community stakeholders and at existing community events.

2. Develop a VCA community coalition early in the VCA implementation process in order to help build a strong voter outreach effort.

When engaged, community partners can provide the counties with significant feedback, provide useful knowledge, and assist with outreach and siting.

- Connect with community groups as early as possible to ensure they are aware of their county's adoption of the VCA and recruit them to participate in implementation and voter outreach efforts. Surveyed elections administrators reported wanting longer-term engagement and additional assistance with implementation from stakeholders in the 2020 primary election. Developing a coalition early on in the VCA process may assist counties in getting the long-term support that will allow stakeholders to take more actionable steps to enhance the VCA implementation process.
- Increase engagement by significantly expanding the number and type of organizations involved in a county's VCA efforts, particularly from communities underrepresented among potential voters in a county. Community partners can help elections officials identify ways to target diverse voting groups. Over half of the counties said there were specific voting groups that they would like to include in future elections, and counties also highlighted the importance of stakeholders in helping them reach Black, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated voters.
- Counties reported that siting can be especially challenging when transitioning to the VCA since some voting locations must be available for up to 10 days of early voting. Community members can play an essential role in identifying locations and in recruiting and training vote center staff.

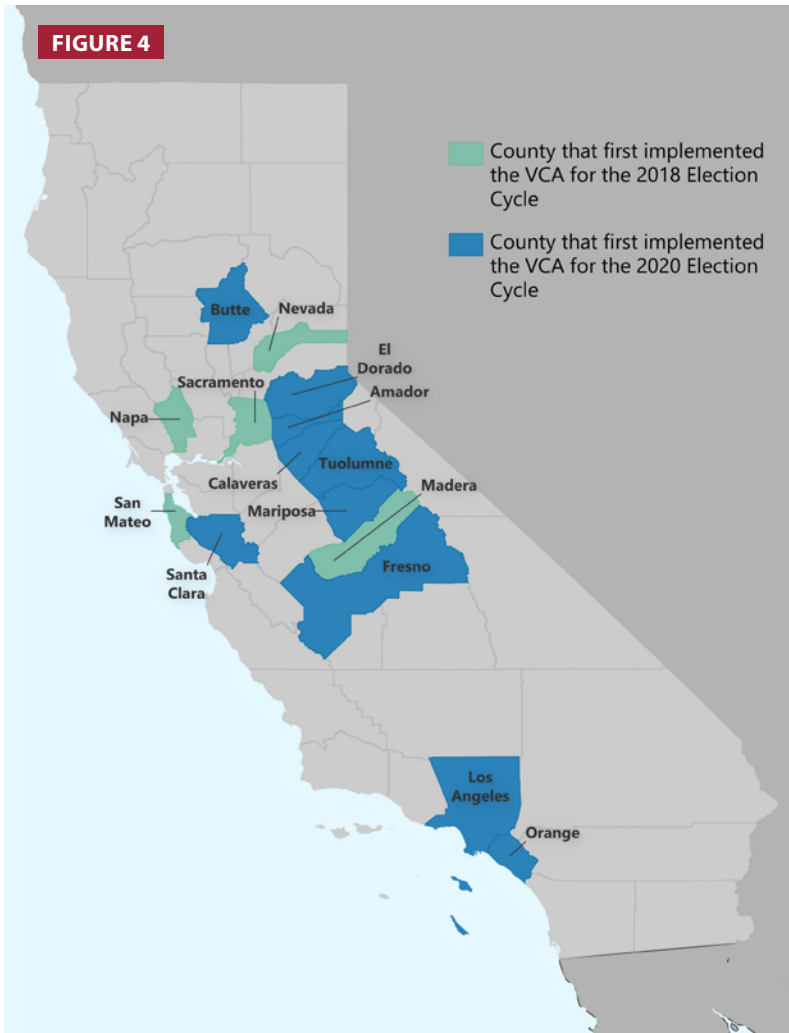
Introduction

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

Glossary

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

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



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

In each of the following sections of this report, we provide an analysis of VCA counties' activities related to outreach and education, the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and other partnerships, and priorities for siting locations. The report also includes efforts specific to voters with disabilities and historically underrepresented groups in VCA-adopting counties during the March 3, 2020 primary election.

CID previously published a related statewide report: *California's Changing Electorate: A 2020 Post Election Analysis of Voting Behavior*, as well as a sister report for the 2020 General Election: *Voter Outreach and Education in Counties Adopting the California Voter's Choice Act*. Future reports in this series will include an analysis of interviews with voters within California's Black, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated communities.

County Survey Methodology

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

Findings are based on a survey of the elections offices in all 15 VCA-adopting counties. The 58-question online Qualtrics XM survey was fielded to all VCA-adopting county elections offices. The survey questions were a combination of open-ended and multiple choice. These data are limited to the records kept by counties. As is common with surveys collecting self-reported data, a small number of counties completing the survey did not answer some survey questions (noted as N/A in each data table below), a dash (-) is used to signify that a respondent did not select an option. For open-ended questions a dash (-) is also used when a respondent does not mention a specific topic. Counties may have also given incomplete responses which may have unintentionally excluded some of their activities during the 2020 primary election. Data from the open-ended questions were analyzed by creating categories that align with the survey responses so a dash (-) does not definitively indicate that a county did not engage in or consider a topic. Additionally, any unique perspectives or robust responses were quoted or described in the body of the report.

2020 Primary Election Context

The 2020 primary election was especially noteworthy due to a highly competitive Democratic primary race for U.S. President coupled with the California State Legislature's decision to move the state's primary election up three months to March 3rd (Super Tuesday) in order to provide California voters with greater influence over the early stages of the presidential primary. Additionally, we note that California's presidential primary voting rules, which allow for crossover voting, created unique election administration and voter education challenges.² In addition to the significant changes voters experienced in VCA-adopting counties, the 2020 primary also saw several other state election reforms (although perhaps less visible to most county voters) that came into effect statewide. These included, most notably, the expansion of conditional voter registration to every polling place in the state.

Further, the primary was held approximately two weeks before the state entered the pandemic lockdown and just as awareness of COVID-19 was growing among the public. While some counties reported minor challenges maintaining voting location staff due to fears of contracting COVID-19 from voters, elections officials largely did not need to adjust their administration of the election at any level near what was needed during the general election.

Voter's Choice Act

The Voter's Choice Act is an optional elections model for counties in California and 15 California counties (approximately half the state's registered voter population) conducted elections under this model in 2020. In VCA counties, every registered voter is mailed a VBM ballot, which voters can mail in or return at a ballot drop box or an established vote center. At vote centers, which replace traditional neighborhood polling places, voters can also cast their ballots in person, access conditional voter registration, receive replacement ballots, use accessible voting machines, and access additional resources, such as language assistance. While there are fewer vote centers than polling places by design, vote centers are open to voters for up to 10 days prior to Election Day and available for all voters to utilize countywide.³

VCA counties are required to develop and adopt an Election Administration Plan (EAP), which details how the county intends to meet all the VCA requirements, including extensive outreach and education to inform voters about the new voting model.⁴ In their EAPs, counties are required to specify how they will provide an accessible voting experience for individuals with disabilities and non-English language groups. Counties must engage in targeted outreach to voters with disabilities and state-mandated language communities. Counties must also establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) to advise the county elections office as it relates to access to the electoral process for these groups. Some non-VCA counties also have a VAAC and/or LAAC.

Prior to publishing EAPs, the counties must hold consultation meetings with voters with a disability and language groups and open the EAP (in accessible formats) to public comment.⁵ The California Secretary of State must review education and outreach plans in the EAP and accept, reject, or accept the plans with modifications.

Vote-by-Mail Use in California

California Assembly Bill 1520, in 2001, gave Californians the ability to register as a permanent Vote-by-Mail (VBM) voter and since then VBM use has steadily increased in the state.⁶ Registered voters with this status receive a VBM ballot in every election without needing an excuse or having to request such a ballot. In the 2016 primary, prior to the first county implementation of the VCA, VBM ballots comprised 58.9% of all votes cast, up from 26.1% of ballots in the 2002 primary.⁷

Figures 2 and 3 show the percent of VBM primary election ballots cast and counted over time in VCA counties (regardless of the method of return) and highlights that most VCA counties had VBM rates higher than the state rate, prior to adopting the VCA. All five counties that implemented the VCA in 2018 had use rates far above the statewide average in the 2018 primary, ranging from 92% in Madera to 99% in Napa, but VBM use rates in counties that first implemented the VCA in 2020 varied more significantly in their voters' experiences with VBM – ranging from 45% in Los Angeles to 83% in Tuolumne.⁸ It should be noted that between 2010 and 2012 Napa County converted a large number of registered voters to permanent VBM status.

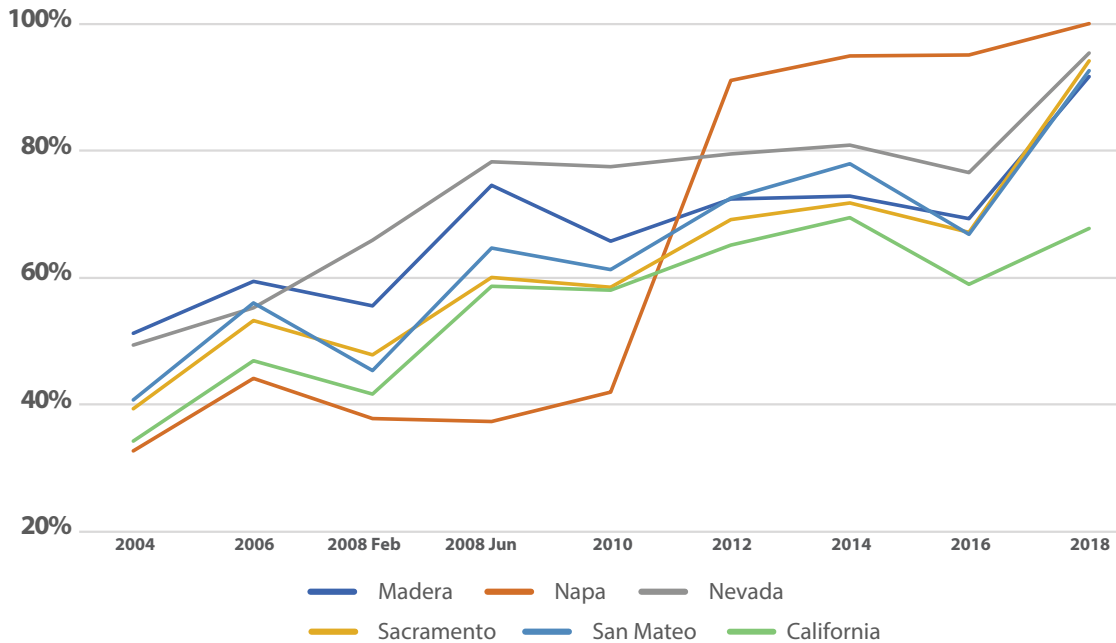
We note that while VBM is widely used in California, there are notable differences in voting preferences across racial and ethnic groups.⁹ Figure 4 shows that in VCA counties in the 2020 primary election, Latino voters voted in-person at nearly twice the rate of Asian-American voters. In contrast, Asian-American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

Los Angeles County

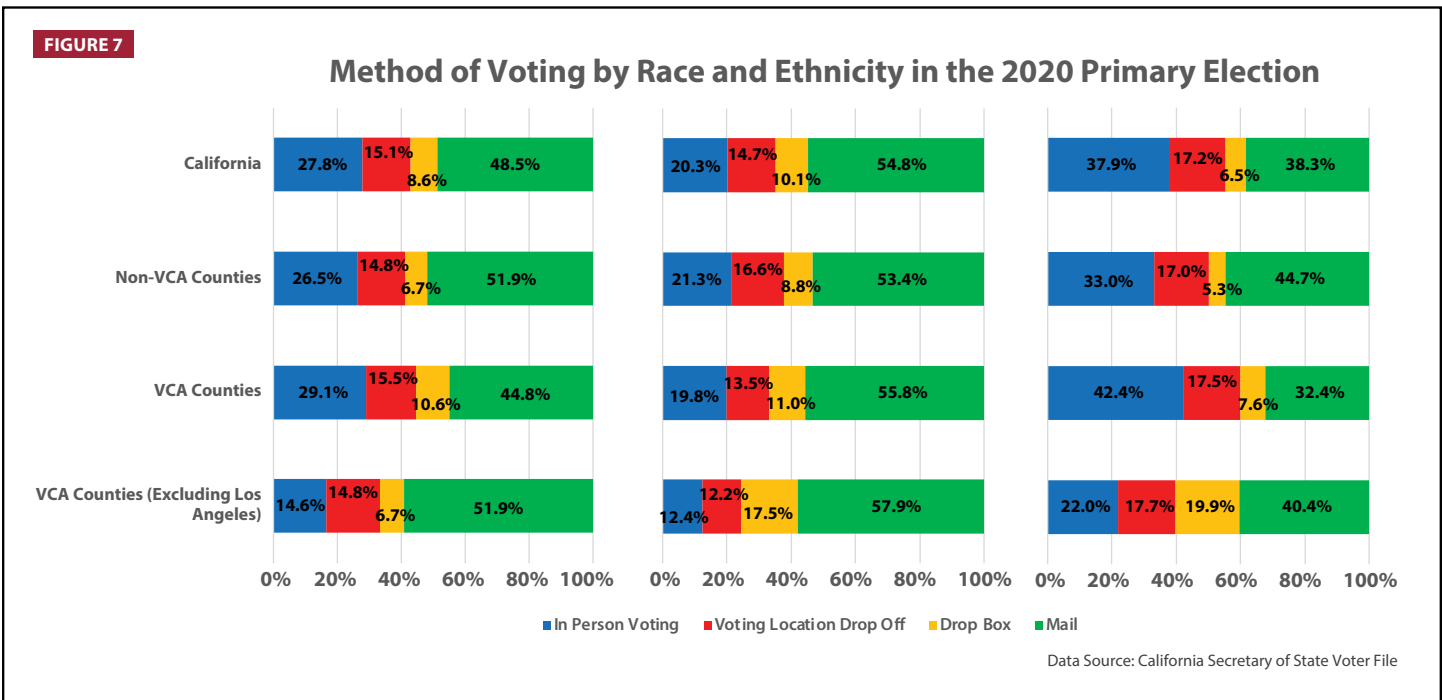
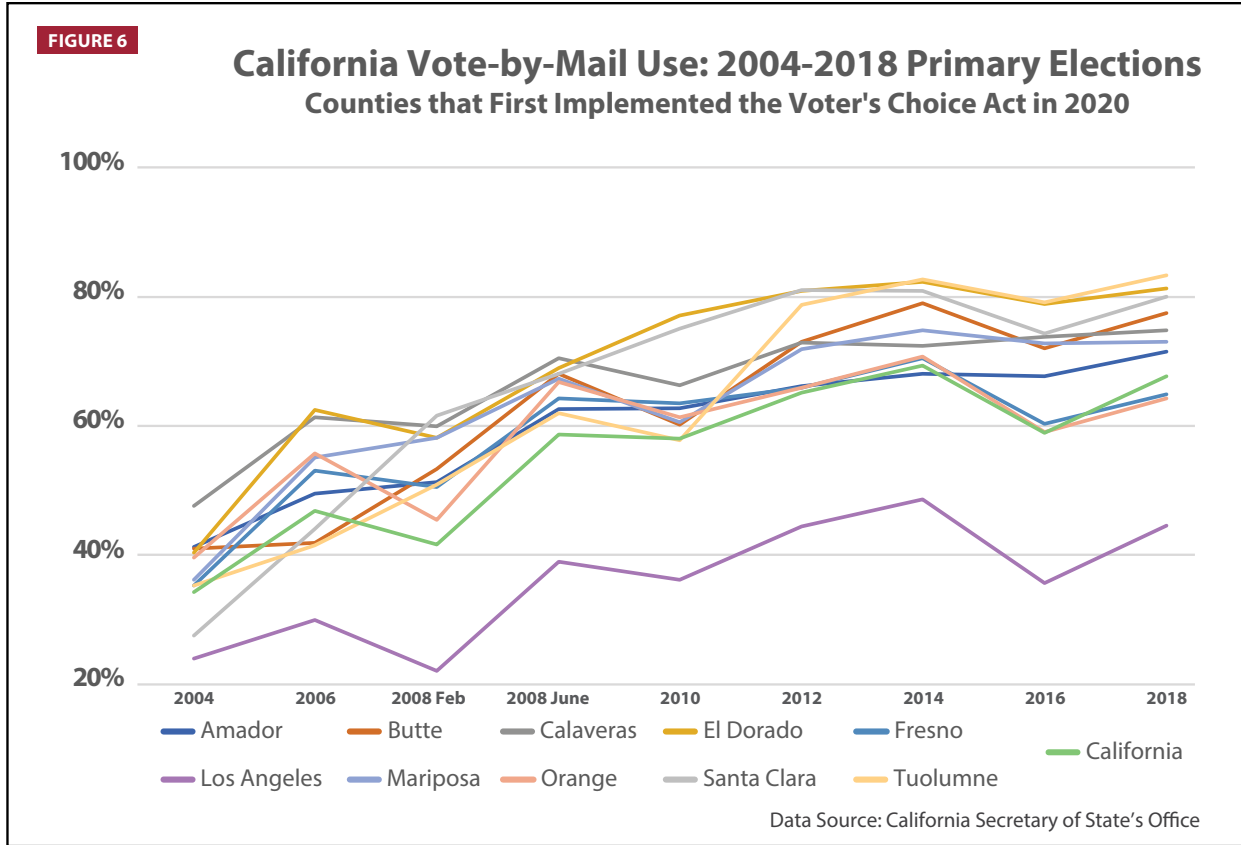
Los Angeles County was the only VCA county not required by law to mail all registered voters a VBM ballot (only to voters enrolled as permanent VBM users) in the 2020 primary election.¹⁰ In the 2020 primary, 63.3% of Los Angeles County’s registered voters were sent a VBM ballot. Additionally, the county was required to offer more voting locations per voter and to consider voter travel times during the primary. This policy decision may have influenced the VBM use rates seen in the county and the content of outreach efforts. Further, Los Angeles County has had historically lower VBM use rates compared to other VCA counties.

FIGURE 5

California Vote-by-Mail Use: 2004-2018 Primary Elections
 Counties that First Implemented the Voter's Choice Act in 2018



Data Source: California Secretary of State's Office



Demographic Variation Across VCA Counties

The VCA is an election reform model with a goal to better serve the needs of voters and to increase voting access for historically underrepresented groups, including voters with disabilities, racial and ethnic groups, and language minority groups. The diversity of county populations is an important component in the assessment of the VCA's success. Counties adopting the VCA have populations that range from small and rural (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, and Tuolumne) to two of the largest metropolitan counties in the state and nation (Los Angeles and Orange).

Tables 1 and 2 show the distinct racial and ethnic demographics of the population of VCA counties, as well as specifically for those eligible to vote (adult citizens).¹¹ Table 3 shows the variation in the proportion of the population that reported a disability as well as data on the foreign-born and limited English proficient populations in a county. Unfortunately, due to limitations in the data, we cannot break out the population with a disability by demographic subgroup.

In Table 1, we see the diversity of VCA counties across Latino, Asian-American, and Black populations. Madera (57.8%), Fresno (53.1%), and Los Angeles (48.5%) have a significantly larger Latino populations compared to the California average (39.0%). The Asian-American populations in Santa Clara (36.3%) and San Mateo (28.3%) counties are nearly double that of the statewide average (14.3%). Conversely, the white (non-Latino) populations in Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Nevada, and Tuolumne are also over twice the statewide average (37.2%).

Table 2 shows the distribution of adult citizens eligible by race and ethnicity in VCA counties. The percentage of Latino eligible voters in VCA counties is lower (32.2%) than that of the total Latino population in VCA counties (39.9%), highlighting that Latino eligible voters are underrepresented among eligible voters. At the same time, there is greater representation for non-Latino white (40.8% compared to 33.2%), Asian-American (18.1% compared to 17.4%), and Black eligible voters (7.4% compared to 5.7%).

In Table 3 we see the proportion of each VCA county that is foreign-born, limited English proficient, and those with a reported disability.¹² The foreign-born population ranges from 4.8% in both Calaveras and Tuolumne to 39.2% in Santa Clara and the limited English proficient population ranges from 2.1% in Calaveras to 25.3% in Los Angeles. The percentage of residents with a disability ranges from 8.0% in Santa Clara County to 21.1% in Calaveras County.

Overall, eligible voters in counties adopting the VCA in 2020 are more racially and ethnically diverse, and have higher proportions of the population who are foreign-born and who are limited English proficient than California at large. However, Tables 1-3 show that diversity varies across VCA counties and the larger metropolitan areas tend to be more racially diverse and have higher percentages of residents that are foreign-born and identify as limited English proficient as compared to most smaller counties adopting the VCA which tend to have higher percentage residents that have a disability. Tables 1-3 should be considered when considering voter education and outreach efforts, as well as voting location siting priorities.

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Eligible voter population defined as adult citizens

**Table 3: Selected Demographics
Voter's Choice Act Counties**

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

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

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

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

VCA Counties' Voter Outreach and Education Efforts in the 2020 Primary Election

Key Takeaways:

- Nearly all counties increased their outreach and education campaigns to inform voters about changes related to the VCA. Counties that implemented the VCA for the first time in 2020 generally made more significant changes to their outreach efforts than counties that first adopted the VCA in 2018.
- VCA outreach and education budgets, as well as time allotment varied significantly between counties.
- All VCA counties reported that they: advertised in traditional and social media outlets, sent voters direct mail, and hosted community meetings to inform residents about changes related to the VCA.
- Most VCA counties used more than six different types of methods to inform voters with disabilities about the 2020 primary election.
- One-third of counties specifically targeted outreach to Black, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated voters, using diverse methods including hosting events, collaborating with community partners, and through online and radio advertisements.

Election Administration Plan and Outreach Budget

Counties adopting the VCA for the first time must create an Elections Administration Plan (EAP), which details how the county intends to meet all requirements of the VCA – including extensive outreach and education to inform voters about the new voting model. The California Secretary of State (SOS) must review the education and outreach plans and accept, reject, or accept the EAP plans with modifications. Table 4 shows that in addition to accepting or rejecting, 11 counties reported that the SOS provided feedback on their draft EAPs. Counties are also required to hold EAP consultation meetings with voters with disabilities and language groups, and open the EAP (in accessible formats) to public comment before it is finalized. The number of public comments on EAPs ranges from 0 in Butte and Mariposa to 171 in Santa Clara County. As a reminder Madera, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, and San Mateo first adopted the VCA in the 2018 election

cycle and were joined by Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara and Tuolumne in 2020. Please note EAP dates, as listed on Table 4, were recorded from information found on counties' websites but counties may have published EAPs at an earlier date.

Voter's Choice Act Election Administration Plan Requirements

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

Table 4: VCA County Elections Administration Plan (EAP) in the 2020 Primary Election

	SOS Feedback on EAP	Date EAP was Finalized or Uploaded to County Website*	Number of Public Comments	" Eligible Voters (February 2020)**"
Amador County	Yes	2020	1	27,959
Butte County	No	August 28, 2019	0	169,009
Calaveras County	Yes	October 26, 2020	1	36,048
El Dorado County	No	2019	3	144,429
Fresno County	Yes	December 5, 2019	30	605,557
Los Angeles County	Yes	February 1, 2020	50	6,184,428
Madera County	Yes	November 1, 2019	2	90,838
Mariposa County	Yes	2019	0	14,850
Napa County	Yes	January 14, 2020	1	92,164
Nevada County	No	March 2, 2020	5	77,963
Orange County	Yes	April, 2020	3	2,024,656
Sacramento County	No	January 9, 2019	5	1,026,609
San Mateo County	Yes	January, 2020	5	507,291
Santa Clara County	Yes	June, 2020	171	1,202,250
Tuolumne County	Yes	January 30, 2020	1	40,693

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

*Date recorded from information found on counties' websites.

**Eligible voters as of 15-day Report of Registration, February 2020 Primary Election.

Nearly all counties increased or adjusted their outreach and education campaigns to inform voters of changes related to the VCA during the 2020 primary election (Table 5). Counties implementing the VCA for the first time in 2020 primary election (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) made notable adjustments to the voter outreach and education strategies. Table 5 shows that in response to the open-ended question, “How did your office adjust their voter outreach and education strategies to meet the Voter’s Choice Act (VCA) Election Administration Plan (EAP) requirements for the 2020 primary election?” counties most commonly reported increasing events, meetings, or workshops and by increasing print, digital, or radio advertisements. Three counties each increased partnership or had a dedicated staff or consultant focused on outreach. Two counties reported targeting specific voting groups: Orange County targeted voters with disabilities and Los Angeles and Orange counties targeted voters with language access needs. Tuolumne reported it “adjusted its strategy to target many different types of groups in the county. Including groups of various social groups, age, and focus.” More generally, Butte noted that it conducted an outreach campaign that was “unrivaled in previous years.”

As Madera, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, and San Mateo first adopted the VCA in the 2018, these counties generally did not make as many changes as the counties that first adopted for the VCA for the 2020 primary election. For example, Napa and Sacramento adjusted their EAPs following public input and the 2018 election cycle, while Nevada did not update its EAP but hosted several public radio talks to discuss issues that commonly confused voters in 2018. San Mateo had a robust strategy and increased several methods of outreach including direct mail, online forums, virtual contacts, and targeted texting; San Mateo also adapted messaging relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. Madera did not change its outreach strategy for the 2020 primary election.

As a reminder, the tables in this report reflect activities that counties reported on the CID survey. As is common, survey responses may not capture all activities that counties undertook.

Table 5: VCA County Adjustments to Voter Outreach and Education for the 2020 Primary Election

	Dedicated Outreach Staff or Consultant	Increased Digital Outreach	Increased Traditional Outreach	Increased Outreach to Historically Underserved Groups	Increased Partnerships	Increased Public Events, Meetings, or Workshops	Unspecified Changes
Amador County	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Butte County	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-
El Dorado County	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-
Napa County	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-
Nevada County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
San Mateo County	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-
Santa Clara County	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
	3/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	3/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	3/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, “How did your office adjust their voter outreach and education strategies to meet the Voter’s Choice Act (VCA) Election Administration Plan (EAP) requirements for the 2020 primary election?”

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

County elections offices also allocated staff time and funding specified for outreach-related activities in order to meet the requirements of the VCA in California’s 2020 primary election. In nine out of the 15 VCA counties – Butte, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara – there was a specific staff person dedicated to the county’s education and outreach efforts (Table 6). Total staff hours spent on education and outreach ranged from 40 hours in Amador County to 500+ hours in El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties. Madera and Mariposa did not track hours spent specifically on outreach and education.

Please note, since elections budgets are complex and the VCA counties used differing methods to calculate education and outreach budgets, we included notes provided by counties regarding budget breakdowns. However, since the CID survey did not require budget descriptions, we do not have this additional information for all counties. Additionally, Napa, Nevada, and San Mateo provided their budget per voter, while all other were calculated by CID based on county provided budget data and the 15-day Report of Registration (registered voters) for the 2020 primary election.¹³

Table 6 shows that spending on voter outreach efforts ranged from \$2,441 in El Dorado County to over six million dollars in Los Angeles County. El Dorado County stated “We spent \$2,441 on outreach at the time of the March Primary. It was however not specific to that election. It is for many elections to come.” Nevada County reported spending \$3,000 on education and outreach and noted “It’s hard for me to be accurate because ‘voter outreach and education’ isn’t a line item in our budget—it’s intermingled with line items like ‘mailings,’ ‘advertisements,’ and ‘legal notices.’” Butte County reported “I do not have data specific to labor, nor what percentage of other expenses could be attributed to VCA outreach. For example, some of our Voter Information Guide was dedicated to VCA outreach. The direct to voter VCA mailers cost approximately \$65,000 in printing and postage.” Additionally, the budget cost per registered voter ranged from \$0.04 (Nevada) to \$4.98 (Mariposa). Santa Clara County’s budget information will be provided by the county and posted on this [CID’s webpage](#) at a later date.

Table 6: VCA County Voter Outreach and Staffing Budget in the 2020 Primary Election

	Dedicated VCA Staff Person	Total Staff Hours for VCA Outreach	Education & Outreach Budget*	Calculated per Registered Voters**	Education & Outreach Spending*
Amador County	-	40	\$14,250	\$0.60	\$15,000
Butte County	Yes	80	-	-	\$65,000 for VCA mailers + postage
Calaveras County	-	200	\$55,000	\$1.84	\$57,000
El Dorado County	Yes	500+	-	-	\$2,441
Fresno County	-	500+	-	-	\$461,427 for education and outreach + \$413,618 was spent on services/supplies + \$47,809 was spent on labor
Los Angeles County	Yes	500+	\$7,000,000	\$1.26	\$6,250,000
Madera County	-	-	\$15,000	\$0.24	\$25,000
Mariposa County	Yes	-	\$60,000 total election budget	\$4.98	\$60,000 total election budget
Napa County	Yes	45	\$2,500	\$0.05	\$2,500 + around \$35,000 for VCA mailers & postage
Nevada County	-	100	\$3,000	\$0.04	\$3,000
Orange County	Yes	500+	\$403,804	\$0.20	\$2,393,703 total spent (utilized grant funding to allow for higher spending than originally budgeted)
Sacramento County	Yes	57	\$75,000 (not including staff time or direct mailers)	\$0.40	\$75,000 + \$250,000 for VCA mailers & postage
San Mateo County	Yes	500+	\$450,000	Around \$2.40	\$437,517
Santa Clara County	Yes	500+	N/A	N/A	N/A
Tuolumne County	-	80	\$20,000	\$0.61	\$14,471

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category (e.g., did not have a dedicated staff person, did not track hours, or did not have an outreach budget).

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

** Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, and San Mateo provided their budget per voter, all other were calculated by Center for Inclusive Democracy based on county provided budget data. Registered voters as of 15-day Report of Registration, 2020 primary election.

Outreach Methods

VCA counties are required to include outreach and education plans in their EAPs, which will include how they inform voters about VCA-related voting changes. In this section of the report, we ask counties about the outreach they actually conducted (not what they planned) during the 2020 primary election. The outreach plans must include methods to educate voters with disabilities and language minority communities. Under the VCA, counties are required to conduct outreach in the media (e.g., newspaper, radio, TV, and social media) and through official county elections materials

(e.g., direct mail and election office websites). Counties are also encouraged to conduct outreach through community partners, outdoor signage, and public service announcements.

In the 2020 primary election, all VCA counties reported engaging in advertising campaigns in both traditional and social media outlets. Table 7 shows that all counties also reported hosting community meetings to inform residents about the VCA and all counties except Tuolumne directly collaborated with community groups on VCA-related outreach. All counties, except for Amador, Napa, and Santa Clara, reported that they posted outdoor signage (e.g., bus, billboard, etc.) to reach voters. Only seven counties (Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Napa, Orange, and San Mateo) reported informing community members about the VCA through direct digital communication (i.e., electronic delivery of relevant communications to specific recipients).

Table 7: VCA County Outreach Methods by County Elections Officials in the 2020 Primary Election

	Collaboration with Community Groups	Advertisements in the Media	Outdoor Signage	Social Media	Signage at Vote Centers	Direct Mail	Direct Digital Communication	Community Meetings
Amador County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Total	14/15 Counties	15/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	15/15 Counties	14/15 Counties	15/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	15/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Outreach Methods for Voters with Disabilities

VCA counties are required to make additional efforts to inform voters with disabilities about their voting options.

Table 8 shows that the most common methods for informing voters with disabilities about voting changes in the 2020 primary was through community meetings followed by social media and direct mail. Over two-thirds of VCA counties collaborated with community groups representing people with disabilities, posted signage at vote centers, and advertised in the media. Only five counties (Amador, Calaveras, Los Angeles, Napa, and Orange County) utilized direct digital communication.

Table 8: VCA County Methods for Educating Voters with Disabilities in the 2020 Primary Election

	Collaboration with Community Groups	Collaboration with Groups Focused on Voting Accessibility	Advertisements in the Media	Outdoor Signage	Social Media	Signage at Vote Centers	Direct Mail	Direct Digital Communication	Community Meetings
Amador County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
San Mateo County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Total	10/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	11/15 Counties	9/15 Counties	13/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	13/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	14/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

CID also asked counties the open-ended question, "How did your office inform voters with disabilities about voting method changes for the 2020 primary election?" Table 9 shows that 12 counties reported using traditional elections office outreach (e.g., county website, voter guide, mail, public meetings), seven counties utilized digital media or advertisements, 11 counties noted partnerships with community groups, and seven counties noted communicating with voters with disabilities through their VAAC. We note here that counties may not have listed all outreach methods when answering open-ended questions.

Table 9: VCA County Outreach Methods for Informing Voters with Disabilities about Voting Changes in the 2020 Primary Election

	Elections Office Outreach	Through Media, Advertisement, Social Media	In Collaboration with Community Groups	Via the VAAC
Amador County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Butte County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	-	-	-
El Dorado County	-	-	Yes	-
Fresno County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	-	-	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	-	Yes
Total	12/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	11/15 Counties	7/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Counties first implementing the VCA in 2020 – including Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne – were required to host workshops for both voters with disabilities and voters with limited English proficiency. All VCA counties hosted at least one workshop for voters with disabilities leading up to the 2020 primary (Table 10). Los Angeles County reported hosting 66 workshops, Orange County hosted four workshops (second most of all VCA counties), while the remaining VCA counties hosted between one and three workshops. Three counties hosted more than 10 workshops for voters with limited English proficiency: Fresno (11 workshops), Los Angeles (22 workshops), and Orange (12 workshops). Santa Clara hosted eight workshops for voters with limited English proficiency and the remaining counties hosted between one and four workshops.

Table 10: Workshops Conducted by VCA County Elections Offices in the 2020 Primary Election

	Eligible Voters (February 2020)*	Number of Workshops for Voters with Disabilities	Number of Eligible Voters per Workshop (Voters with Disabilities)**	Number of Workshops for Voters with Limited English Proficiency	Number of Eligible Voters per Workshop (Voters with Limited English Proficiency)**
Amador County	27,959	2	13,980	2	13,980
Butte County	169,009	3	56,336	3	56,336
Calaveras County	36,048	2	18,024	2	18,024
El Dorado County	144,429	3	48,143	2	72,215
Fresno County	605,557	1	605,557	11	55,051
Los Angeles County	6,184,428	66	93,703	22	281,110
Madera County	90,838	1	90,838	1	90,838
Mariposa County	14,850	1	14,850	1	14,850
Napa County	92,164	1	92,164	1	92,164
Nevada County	77,963	1	77,963	1	77,963
Orange County	2,024,656	4	506,164	12	168,721
Sacramento County	1,026,609	3	342,203	4	256,652
San Mateo County	507,291	1	507,291	4	126,823
Santa Clara County	1,202,250	3	400,750	8	150,281
Tuolumne County	40,693	1	40,693	1	40,693

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

*Eligible voters as of 15-day Report of Registration, February 2020 Primary Election.

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

Outreach Methods for Historically Underserved Groups

One of the goals of the VCA is to better serve the needs of voters and to expand voting access for historically underrepresented groups, therefore, understanding the voter outreach efforts for various demographic groups is an important component in the assessment of whether implementation was successful. As required by the VCA, all counties conducted an outreach campaign to voters, however, the reach to specific groups varied significantly. In response to the open-ended survey question, “What was the demographic and geographic reach of voter outreach and education in the 2020 primary election?” Table 11 shows that nine counties (Amador, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) indicated that their outreach efforts targeted at least one specific voter group beyond a general audience.

Additionally, about half of VCA counties gave general responses including, “Countywide and all demographics” while the other half of counties shared specifics regarding their outreach efforts such as, “We partnered with the Community Leaders Coalition/Voter’s Choice Napa (CLC/VCN) to target underserved populations such as the disabled, youth, language minorities and seniors.” San Mateo reported outreach programs including a mass texting campaign to young voters and a flyer program in languages that reached beyond the county’s legal requirements. El Dorado worked with a community partner and used radio communications to reach its Latino community. In addition to the groups already mentioned, Los Angeles County reported that they reached out to experienced voters, new voters, voters experiencing homelessness, and incarcerated voters. We note here that larger, more demographically diverse counties tended to have a more targeted outreach approach. Please refer to Tables 1-3 for demographic data by county.

Table 11: VCA County Demographic and Geographic Reach of Voter Outreach in the 2020 Primary Election

	Non-English Language Groups	Racial or Ethnic Groups	Residents with Disabilities	Youth	Seniors
Amador County	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Butte County	-	-	-	-	-
Calaveras County	-	-	-	-	-
El Dorado County	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	-	-	-	-	-
Mariposa County	-	-	-	-	-
Napa County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	-	-	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	-	-
Total	7/15 Counties	2/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	6/15 Counties	7/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

After reviewing counties' survey responses to Table 11 (above), CID determined that survey question, "What was the demographic and geographic reach of voter outreach and education in the 2020 primary election?" did not fully capture elections offices' outreach, especially for Black, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated voters. To obtain additional information, we followed-up to ask counties about their outreach efforts (e.g., workshops or meetings) and targeted communication specifically to these groups (Table 12). As is common with open-ended survey questions, responses may not capture all the activities undertaken by election offices, thus discrepancies exist between the Tables 11 and 12.

Table 12 shows that two-thirds of VCA counties (Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) reported that they did not specifically conduct outreach efforts for Black, Indigenous, or formerly incarcerated voters in the 2020 primary election. Los Angeles and Orange counties reported reaching out to all three groups, while Butte reached out to both Black and Indigenous voters. Fresno and Sacramento reported reaching out to Black voters. Napa did not target these groups but noted that their community partners did.

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

- Having representatives from groups as part of the VAAC (Butte),
- Presentations for Native American tribes (Butte),
- PSA outreach on local radio stations (Butte),
- Unique regional posters in neighborhoods that are predominately Black (Fresno),
- Advertisements in media geared towards Black voters (Sacramento),
- Hosted or attended events for Black voters (Orange and Sacramento),
- Printed materials shared by community partners (Sacramento),
- Worked with the ACLU and sheriff to provide information to incarcerated individuals (Orange).

Table 12: VCA County Specific Outreach and Targeted Communications Efforts in the 2020 Primary Election

	Black	Indigenous	Formerly Incarcerated	Did Not Specifically Target
Amador County	-	-	-	Yes
Butte County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Calaveras County	-	-	-	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	-	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	-	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	-	-	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	-	-	Yes
Napa County	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	-	-	-
San Mateo County	-	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	-	-	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	Yes
Total	5/15 Counties	3/15 Counties	2/15 Counties	10/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey. Table was created from responses to the following two open-ended questions: 1) “Did your office specifically conducted outreach efforts (e.g. workshops or meetings) to Black, indigenous, or formerly incarcerated voters?” 2) “Did your office specifically targeted communications efforts to Black, indigenous, or formerly incarcerated voters?”

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

Delivery Effectiveness

To glean insights regarding the most effective methods for reaching voters, CID asked counties “Were certain types of information more effective for different types of voters (e.g., racial and ethnic minorities, voters with disabilities, voters with language needs, young voters, older voters)?” Despite the extensive voter outreach campaigns employed by VCA counties, six counties (Butte, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Sacramento, and Tuolumne) reported that they either did not know which types of outreach methods were most effective for different voter groups or did not think that different types of information had an effect on different groups (Table 13).

For the counties that reported effective methods, Calaveras, Fresno, Orange, Santa Clara, and San Mateo counties indicated that a requirement of the VCA – translating languages – was effective for language minority groups, while one-third of counties (Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, and Orange) said digital communications (e.g., email, social media, online ads) were effective. Fresno and Orange counties added that online methods were specifically useful for reaching young voters. Conversely, Calaveras noted that printed materials (e.g., voter guide, flyers, mailers) were effective for connecting with older voters and, while El Dorado and Los Angeles more generally found printed materials effective. Sacramento found that “Voters with language needs often want more information about the services offered at Vote Centers, where they can use a translated reference ballot and receive assistance in their preferred language. Voters with disabilities have a number of paths to cast their ballot as they wish, so information about our RAVBM system, at-home voting [...], and our accessible Vote Centers was important.”

Counties also noted methods as effective but did not specify to which voters those methods were best employed. Amador, Nevada, and Orange counties reported that public meetings were effective for their outreach goals, with Amador noting that this was because county staff could answer questions and convey more information to attendees than through advertisements or mailers. Additionally, Los Angeles County commented that, “educational information and messages performed best across all demographics and languages.” Calaveras noted that a mass email campaign was effective in their county and was supplemented by posting flyers at libraries and post offices, as well a Spanish translated voter guide.

Table 13: VCA County Effective Information Delivery Methods for the 2020 Primary Election

	Events/ Meetings	Digital Communication	Print	Language Specific	Clear Messaging	Don't Know
Amador County	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
Butte County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
El Dorado County	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Los Angeles County	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Madera County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Napa County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-	-	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Sacramento County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
San Mateo County	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Santa Clara County	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	-	-	Yes
Total	3/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	4/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	1/15 Counties	6/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Voters' Knowledge of Election Changes in the 2020 Primary Election

CID surveyed 6,109 eligible voters in VCA counties to learn about their voter experience during the 2020 primary election. Despite significant outreach conducted by counties, the survey found that only 32.9 of eligible voters in VCA counties knew that their county had made voting changes during the 2020 primary election. Voters with disabilities in VCA counties were somewhat more informed with 46.3 reporting that they knew about voting changes. Voters in VCA counties were more knowledgeable than California voters in non-VCVA counties where only 21.0% were aware of voting changes.¹⁴ These data also varied by race, ethnicity, and age. Please see online appendix for detailed information.

Did your county change the options for how and where you could cast your ballot in the November 2020 primary election? VCA Counties		
	Eligible Voters	Eligible Voters w/Disabilities
Yes	32.9%	46.3%
No	32.1%	23.6%
Don't Know	35.1%	30.1%

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committees and Community Partnerships in the 2020 Primary Election

Key Takeaways:

- A majority of VCA counties reported that their VAAC provided community knowledge and feedback and supported voter outreach and education efforts.
- All counties rated their VAAC as at least moderately effective with two counties rating their VAAC as extremely effective.
- All VCA counties partnered with community groups, government agencies, private groups, and/or media organizations in their efforts to provide public outreach and education about the election.
- Over two-thirds of counties said that stakeholder collaboration enhanced EAPs, outreach and education, and siting locations, however, some counties also wished that stakeholders took a more active role or provided consistent engagement throughout election cycles.

Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)

As noted earlier, all VCA counties are required to establish a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), consisting of members of the community, to advise the county elections office on electoral access for voters with disabilities. The SOS recommends that counties utilize the VAAC in the following three ways: 1) Provide an opportunity for voters with disabilities and people who represent the disability community to provide feedback on the voting process including on voting material or websites, at polling places, and procedurally; 2) Create ongoing communication and cooperation with community groups ensuring that elections officials can resolve issues as they arise; and 3) Provide outreach to individuals and groups to promote awareness of voters with disabilities as well as seniors.¹⁵

Voter's Choice Act VAAC Requirements

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

The ways in which the VAACs contributed to the VCA implementation process varied widely across counties. Table 14 shows that most VCA counties said their VAACs contributed to voter outreach efforts, as well as to their offices' knowledge about the community. Twelve counties said the VAAC assisted with community outreach, seven counties reported assistance with VCA implementation including helping to inform their decisions on site selection, and 11 counties said VAAC members provided community knowledge and feedback. With regard to improving services for voters with disabilities: six counties said their VAAC aided voter outreach, eight said they assisted with VCA implementation, and 11 counties said their VAAC helped provide knowledge and feedback (Table 15). A majority of VAACs (10 out of 15 counties) helped in multiple capacities.

Additionally, all counties found collaborating with their Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) helped improve community outreach, administrative implementation, or feedback on how to best serve their communities (Table 16). For example, in Los Angeles County the LAAC "amplified messaging and provided resources and tools to community." Calaveras VLAAC (combined VAAC and LAAC) "helped decode the best methods of outreach, and disseminated information to their respective communities."

Table 14: VAACs Role in the Education and Outreach Strategy for the 2020 Primary Election			
	Community Outreach	Administration Implementation	Community Knowledge and Feedback
Amador County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Butte County	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	-	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	-
Fresno County	Yes	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	-	-
Mariposa County	-	-	Yes
Napa County	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	-	-
Santa Clara County	-	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes
Total	12/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	11/15 Counties

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What roles did the VAAC play in your county's education and outreach strategy for the 2020 primary election?"
A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category."

Table 15: VAACs Role in Improving Services for Voters with Disabilities for the 2020 Primary Election			
	Community Outreach	Administration Implementation	Community Knowledge and Feedback
Amador County	-	-	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	-	Yes
Fresno County	-	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles County	-	-	Yes
Madera County	-	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	-	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	-	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	-	Yes
Tuolumne County	-	Yes	Yes
Total	6/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	11/15 Counties

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Table 16: Role Played by the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee for the 2020 Primary Election

	Community Outreach	Administration Implementation	Community Knowledge and Feedback
Amador County	Yes	-	Yes
Butte County	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	-	Yes
Fresno County	-	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-
Nevada County	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total	10/15 Counties	10/15 Counties	9/15 Counties

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

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

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

VAAC Implementation and Effectiveness

As outlined above, VCA counties' VAACs are mandated to meet certain requirements. VAAC meetings, participation, and effectiveness as self-reported by the counties varied significantly across counties during the 2020 primary election (Table 17). VAAC meetings began as early as January 2018 and as late as August 2020. The number of VAAC meetings ranged from one meeting in Mariposa, Napa, and Nevada counties to nine meetings in El Dorado and Sacramento. The number of people present at VAAC meeting attendance also varied from two people in Mariposa and Napa to 30-40 people in Los Angeles. All counties solicited agenda items prior to VAAC meetings, and all counties excluding Butte, Napa, San Mateo, and Tuolumne had a webpage with information about upcoming VAAC meetings.

Counties were asked how effective they found their VAAC and seven counties (Amador, Calaveras, El Dorado, Mariposa, Nevada, Sacramento, and Tuolumne) reported "moderately effective", six counties (Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) reported it was very effective, and Butte and Napa regarded their VAAC as extremely effective. In response to the open-ended survey question (Table 18), "Please explain the effectiveness of the VAAC for the 2020 primary election cycle?" Butte, Orange, San Mateo, and Tuolumne said their VAACs were effective with community outreach or hosting events; Calaveras, Los Angeles, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara noted that the VAAC assisted with administration implementation; and eight counties (Calaveras, Fresno, Los Angeles, Napa, Orange, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) referenced community knowledge and feedback. Amador, Mariposa, Nevada, and Sacramento – all of which rated the effectiveness of their VAACs as moderate – were unsure or did not think the VAAC was helpful to the VCA implementation. El Dorado responded that they had a difficult time getting the public involved. Madera rated their VAAC as very effective but did not answer this question.

Table 17: VCA County Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) for the 2020 Primary Election

	First VAAC Meeting 2020 Primary Election	Number of VAAC Meetings	Average VAAC Meeting Attendance	Public Input on Agenda Items	Dedicated VAAC Page on Website	Self-Reported VAAC Effectiveness
Amador County	June 2019	4	5-7	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
Butte County	August 2020	2	5	Yes	-	Extremely effective
Calaveras County	January 2018	5	4	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
El Dorado County	May 2019	9	8	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
Fresno County	July 2019	4	10-20	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Los Angeles County	March 2019	5	30-40	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Madera County	December 2019	3	4	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Mariposa County	February 2020	1	2	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
Napa County	February 2021	1	2	Yes	-	Extremely effective
Nevada County	January 2020	1	2-3	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
Orange County	March 2019	3	8	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Sacramento County	January 2019	9	5	Yes	Yes	Moderately effective
San Mateo County	May 2019	4	7	Yes	-	Very effective
Santa Clara County	Fall 2019	4	8-13	Yes	Yes	Very effective
Tuolumne County	August 2019	5	5	Yes	-	Moderately effective

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

A dash (-) indicates a county answered - or answer wasn't in that survey category."

Table 18: Factors in the Effectiveness of the VAAC for the 2020 Primary Election

	Community Outreach	Administration Implementation	Community Knowledge and Feedback
Amador County	-	-	-
Butte County	Yes	-	-
Calaveras County	-	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	-	-	-
Fresno County	-	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	-	Yes	Yes
Madera County	-	-	-
Mariposa County	-	-	-
Napa County	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	-	-	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	-	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes
Total	4/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	8/15 Counties

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Outreach Partnerships

In addition to relationships formed via the VAAC, VCA counties engaged community leaders to help inform voters about VCA related election changes. Nearly all counties (except Nevada) reported conducting community meetings and meeting with community leaders and advocacy groups to discuss VCA changes (Table 19). With the exception of Tuolumne, all counties created what they indicated was an ongoing collaboration with community leaders and voter advocacy groups to discuss VCA changes.

Table 19: VCA Collaborative Education Strategy for Informing Voters About VCA-Related Changes in the 2020 Primary Election

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

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

To glean further insights about the role of partnerships during VCA implementation, counties were asked to describe how their partnerships with community groups, government agencies, media entities, and private groups enhanced their outreach strategies for the 2020 primary election. Their responses were organized as follows (Table 20):

- i. **Community groups:** Over two-thirds of VCA counties (Butte, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) indicated that community groups were helpful with outreach. Six counties (Amador, Calaveras, Fresno, Napa, Sacramento, and San Mateo) reported that community groups provided feedback. Seven counties (Butte, El Dorado, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, and San Mateo) said these groups provided resources.
- ii. **Government agencies:** Nearly all counties said government agencies (e.g., as part of city, county, or state government) helped with outreach; Calaveras, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Napa, and San Mateo elaborated and said that partnering with other agencies or neighboring municipalities helped amplify messaging. Amador and Fresno said that government agencies provided feedback. Eight out of 15 VCA counties (Butte, Los Angeles, Madera, Nevada, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara County) said government agencies provided resources in the VCA implementation process; while Tuolumne did not partner with government agencies.
- iii. **Private groups:** Amador, Butte, Nevada, Orange, San Mateo, and Santa Clara said private groups were helpful for outreach and advertisements; Amador, Calaveras, and Fresno reported that they helped by providing feedback on the implementation process; and Butte, Los Angeles, Sacramento, and San Mateo said they provided resources including vote center locations and volunteers. On the other hand, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, and Tuolumne either did not collaborate with private groups or did not find the collaboration they undertook with private groups useful.
- iv. **Media organizations:** Every VCA county utilized media organizations for outreach and advertisements and El Dorado, Fresno, San Mateo, and Tuolumne said it helped them to reach new or hard-to-reach voters. Calaveras and Fresno said that media groups provided feedback, and San Mateo County noted that media entities offered them free ad space.

Table 20: Partnership Enhancement on VCA Voter Outreach Strategy for the 2020 Primary Election

	Community groups			Government Agencies			Private Groups			Media Entities		
	Outreach	Feedback	Resources	Outreach	Feedback	Resources	Outreach	Feedback	Resources	Outreach	Feedback	Resources
Amador County	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-
Butte County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Calaveras County	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-
El Dorado County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Fresno County	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
Madera County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Mariposa County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-
Orange County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-
Total	12/15 Counties	6/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	12/15 Counties	2/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	6/15 Counties	3/15 Counties	4/15 Counties	15/15 Counties	2/15 Counties	1/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Benefits and Challenges of Partnerships

VCA counties are required to engage in a higher level of collaboration than non-VCA counties, and while this can improve outreach efforts and VCA implementation, working collaboratively also requires additional time and resources. When asked about the most effective roles played by stakeholders in VCA implementation, counties could select from a list of choices (Table 21). Two-thirds of VCA counties – Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Fresno, Los Angeles, Napa, Orange, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne – found providing EAP feedback to election staff was essential. Nearly all counties (except Nevada and Tuolumne) noted collaboration on education and outreach efforts in the community was the most effective role played by stakeholders. Amador, Butte, Calaveras, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Napa, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Tuolumne all reported that stakeholders input on the voting location siting process was effective for implementation. Eleven counties – all except Fresno, Mariposa, Orange, and Tuolumne – reported being part of a coalition for outreach and education was one of the most effective roles played by stakeholders.

We also asked counties the open-ended question, “Other than voter outreach and education, how did collaboration among various stakeholders influence the VCA implementation process for the 2020 primary election?” and the responses were split between general and specific answers. Half of the counties generally stated that they received feedback on the EAP or VCA implementation. The other half of the counties noted more specific attributes such as increased community trust and assistance with siting location or poll worker recruitment (Table 22). Several counties (seven out of 15 counties) noted numerous ways that stakeholders enhanced VCA-implementation. Nevada County noted that since it had been a VCA county for several elections that stakeholders did not have much of an impact for the 2020 primary election.

Please note, responses to open-ended survey questions often do not fully capture all aspects of county or partner actions, therefore, there may be discrepancies between county responses on Table 21 and Table 22 due to differing responses for the multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Additionally, stakeholder involvement in the VCA may evolve over time with stakeholders either taking smaller or larger roles as VCA elections continue. As a reminder, Madera, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, and San Mateo first implemented the VCA in the 2018 election cycle, while Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara and Tuolumne did so in 2020.

Table 21: Most Effective Roles of Played by Stakeholders on VCA Implementation in the 2020 Primary Election

	EAP Feedback	Collaborative Outreach and Education	Siting Location and Voting Site Feedback	Being Part of a Coalition for Outreach and Education
Amador County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	-	Yes	-	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	-	Yes	-	Yes
Mariposa County	-	Yes	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	-	-	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Sacramento County	-	Yes	-	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Total	10/15 Counties	13/15 Counties	10/15 Counties	11/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

The CID survey asked "What were the most effective roles played by various stakeholders in VCA implementation for the 2020 primary election?" Respondents could mark all that apply from a list of choices.

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

Table 22: Impact of Stakeholder Collaboration on the VCA Implementation for the 2020 Primary Election

	Feedback on EAP/VCA Implementation	Improved Community Trust	Assisted with Siting Locations	Recruited Vote Center Staff
Amador County	-	Yes	-	-
Butte County	-	Yes	Yes	-
Calaveras County	-	Yes	-	-
El Dorado County	Yes	-	-	-
Fresno County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Madera County	-	Yes	-	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	-	-	-	-
Orange County	Yes	-	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Santa Clara County	-	-	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	-	-
Total	8/15 Counties	7/15 Counties	6/15 Counties	2/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

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

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

VCA counties also made numerous suggestions of how collaborations could be improved in the future. Table 23 shows that Calaveras, Fresno, Madera, Sacramento, and Santa Clara counties all reported that they would like to see increased participation from community partners or community members. Santa Clara shared a concrete suggestion noting that it would be helpful if collaborators introduced more of their co-workers and peers since participants rarely attended every meeting. Nevada and San Mateo said VAAC and LAAC meeting attendance and/or membership could have been improved in the 2020 primary election. Los Angeles and Orange counties both said that with community assistance establishing siting locations could be improved. Amador, Fresno, Mariposa, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne said they would have liked to have done more outreach or had more meetings. For example, Mariposa specifically mentioned the need for in-person meetings. Tuolumne reported “A more robust social media presence could have been used to share information.” Santa Clara added that outreach could be improved if they had stronger relationships with state agencies in the county – including the DMV, Social Service Agencies, Covered California – so they could streamline messaging to voters. San Mateo said that while collaboration was successful, they desired more partnerships from language minority communities. Alternatively, Butte, El Dorado, Napa, and San Mateo counties reported that improvements to partnerships were not needed.

Table 23: VCA County Collaborative Improvements for the 2020 Primary Election

	More Participation from Community Partners or Community Members	More Robust LAAC/VAAC Meetings or Membership	Siting Locations and Vote Centers	Increased Outreach or Public Meetings	Collaborated Well/ No Improvements Needed
Amador County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Butte County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	-	-	-	-
El Dorado County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	-	-	Yes	-	-
Madera County	Yes	-	-	-	-
Mariposa County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Napa County	-	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	-	Yes	-	-	-
Orange County	-	-	Yes	-	-
Sacramento County	Yes	-	-	-	-
San Mateo County	-	Yes	-	-	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	-	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	-	-	Yes	-
Total	5/15 Counties	2/15 Counties	2/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	4/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

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

In response to the open-ended question (Table 24), “What groups in your county were missing from voter outreach and education efforts for the 2020 primary election (i.e. are there groups you would like to see involved in future elections)?” Butte, Calaveras, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Napa, Orange, and Sacramento said that they included all groups in their outreach and education campaigns. Calaveras added that although no groups were missing, reaching the rural parts of the county was difficult. Two counties referenced groups associated with youth voters – Amador and Santa Clara – with Amador noting that City Council and School Board meetings touch a lot of voters and Santa Clara referenced educational organizations, high school principals, and young voters. Six counties (El Dorado, Fresno, Nevada, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne) said non-English language groups. El Dorado specifically mentioned the “Language community on the west slope.” San Mateo reported that they were “pleased to see a rise in turnout among nearly every voter group” but also noted that certain language groups are still not represented on their LAAC. One county each mentioned rural voters, voters with disabilities, and specific racial or ethnic groups (Jakarta Movement and Mi Familia Vota). Santa Clara noted “We did not provide a lot of voter outreach and education to our formerly incarcerated voters, or voters without a fixed address. Efforts are currently being assessed to reach these voters.”

Table 24: Groups Missing from VCA Voter Outreach and Education Efforts for the 2020 Primary Election

	Youth Affiliated Groups	Non-English Language Groups	Additional Groups	All Groups Included
Amador County	Yes	-	-	-
Butte County	-	-	-	Yes
Calaveras County	-	-	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	-	Yes	Yes	-
Fresno County	-	Yes	-	-
Los Angeles County	-	-	-	Yes
Madera County	-	-	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	-	-	Yes
Napa County	-	-	-	Yes
Nevada County	-	Yes	-	-
Orange County	-	-	-	Yes
Sacramento County	-	-	-	Yes
San Mateo County	-	Yes	-	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	-	Yes	-	-
Total	2/15 Counties	6/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	7/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

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

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

Priorities for Siting Locations in the 2020 Primary Election

Voting Location Site Selection

Key Takeaways:

- Nearly all counties prioritized selecting vote centers that were near: public transportation, population centers, language minority communities, and voters with disabilities.
- Having an accessible location and meeting ADA requirements were especially important when considering siting priorities for voters with disabilities.
- A majority of VCA counties spent one to two hours training vote center staff on how to serve voters with disabilities; training included sensitivity training, procedure training, and equipment training. Training protocol was sourced from the VAAC, community partners, or other government agencies.
- The number of Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) ballots cast varied widely by county, and while all counties provided information on RAVBM in voting materials, five counties did additional advertisements in the media.

Under the VCA, vote centers replace traditional neighborhood polling places and while there are fewer vote centers than polling places by design, vote centers offer voters access to additional services and any voter can utilize any vote center in their county. At vote centers, voters can cast their ballots in person, drop off their completed Vote-by-Mail (VBM) ballots, access conditional voter registration, receive replacement ballots, and access resources such as early voting, language assistance, and accessible voting machines. The VCA requires a minimum number of one drop box per 15,000 voters, one 11-day vote center per 50,000 voters, and one 4-day vote center per 10,000 voters. As a reminder, Los Angeles County was required to offer additional voting locations and had to consider travel time in the primary since they did not mail every voter a vote-by-mail ballot.

Voters' Choice Act Vote Center Siting Location Considerations

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

For the 2020 primary election, all counties balanced several priorities in order to best serve their voters based of the VCA recommended list. All 15 VCA counties said that being in close proximity to public transportation was a priority for siting locations (Table 25). With the exception of Fresno and Santa Clara, all counties prioritized considering the time and distance a voter would have to travel to vote and two-thirds of counties considered traffic patterns. Other top priorities included being close to: population centers, language minority communities, voters with disabilities, low income communities, free parking, communities with historically low VBM usage, communities with low rates of vehicle ownership, eligible voters that are not registered to vote, and geographically isolated populations. El Dorado, Los Angeles, Orange, and San Mateo were the only counties to report considering the placement of mobile voter centers.

Table 25: VCA County Priorities for Siting Locations in the 2020 Primary Election

	Public Transit	Historically Low Vote-by-Mail Usage	Population Centers	Non-English Language Communities	Voters with Disabilities	Low Rates of Vehicle Ownership	Proximity to Low-Income Communities	Eligible Voters Who are Not Registered to Vote	Geographically Isolated Populations	Access to Free Parking	Time and Distance a Voter Must Travel	Alternative Voting Methods for Voters with Disabilities	Traffic Patterns	Mobile Vote Centers
Amador County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	-	Yes	-
El Dorado County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Mariposa County	Yes	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	-	-	-
Napa County	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	Yes	-	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	Yes	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	-	-	-
Total	15/15 Counties	"10/15 Counties"	14/15 Counties	14/15 Counties	13/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	"11/15 Counties"	"8/15 Counties"	"8/15 Counties"	"11/15 Counties"	13/15 Counties	"9/15 Counties"	10/15 Counties	4/15 Counties

*Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey.

The CID survey asked, "What location characteristics were prioritized when choosing vote center locations for the 2020 primary election?" Respondents could mark all that apply from a list of choices. A dash (-) indicates a county answered no or answer wasn't in that survey category."

Voting Location Site Selection for Voters with Disabilities

The CID survey also asked VCA counties about their siting priorities in the 2020 primary, specifically for voters with disabilities. Nearly all counties reported prioritizing ADA requirements and acquiring accessible voting locations (Table 26). Calaveras, El Dorado, Los Angeles, Madera, Orange, Sacramento, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne counties specifically reported prioritizing access to free parking, although other counties may have considered parking when they described prioritizing an accessible location or ADA requirements. To provide voters with some level of consistency, Mariposa and Nevada counties prioritized locations that were used by the county in a previous election.

Table 26: VCA County Priorities for Siting Locations Specifically Relating to Voters with Disabilities for the 2020 Primary Election

	ADA Requirements	Accessible Location	Free Parking	Consistency with Previous Locations
Amador County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Fresno County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Madera County	-	Yes	Yes	-
Mariposa County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	-	Yes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	-	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Total	14/15 Counties	15/15 Counties	8/15 Counties	2/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Vote Center Planning for Voters with Disabilities

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

In addition to selecting accessible sites as noted above, nearly all counties reported having a specific plan to inform voters with disabilities about voting method changes in the 2020 primary election (Table 27). El Dorado, Los Angeles, Nevada, Orange, and San Mateo counties all had a dedicated staff person that served voters with disabilities. Training time for vote center staff that were focused on how to serve voters with disabilities ranged from 30 minutes in Amador to 23 hours in Los Angeles, with most VCA counties (Butte, Calaveras, Fresno, Napa, Orange, Sacramento, San Mateo, Tuolumne) reporting between one to two hours.

Counties also ensured that vote center staff were trained on best practices for serving voters with disabilities. For 11 counties, disability-related training included sensitivity training, 14 counties had training that included voting options, and eight counties provided computer or procedure training (Table 28). Content for staff training was either internally produced or informed by the county VAAC (12 out of 15 counties), Disability Rights California or other partners (11 out of 15 counties), or the California Secretary of State's office and other government agencies (seven out of 15 counties) (Table 29).

Table 27: VCA County Elections Plans Specifically Related to Voters with Disabilities in the 2020 Primary Election Staffing

	Plan to Inform Voters About VCA-Related Voting Changes	Dedicated Staff	Vote Center Staff Training Hours
Amador County	Yes	-	30 minutes
Butte County	Yes	-	2 hours
Calaveras County	Yes	-	1.5 hours
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	1.25 hours
Fresno County	Yes	-	1 hour
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Leads: 23 hours; Clerks: 9 hours
Madera County	Yes	-	3 hours
Mariposa County	Yes	-	4 hours
Napa County	Yes	-	1 hour
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	30 minutes
Orange County	Yes	Yes	2 hours
Sacramento County	-	-	1 hour
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	1-2 hours
Santa Clara County	Yes	-	3+ hours
Tuolumne County	Yes	-	1 hour
Total	14/15 Counties	5/15 Counties	-

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

Table 28: Vote Center Staff Training in Regards to Disability Accessibility for the 2020 Primary Election

	Sensitivity Training	Options for Voters with Disabilities	BMD or Procedure Training
Amador County	Yes	Yes	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	Yes	Yes
El Dorado County	Yes	Yes	-
Fresno County	-	Yes	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes	-
Mariposa County	-	Yes	-
Napa County	-	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	-
Santa Clara County	-	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Total	11/15 Counties	14/15 Counties	8/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

Table 29: Content Source for Vote Center Staff Training Regarding Disability Accessibility for the 2020 Primary Election

	Internally/VAAC	DRC or Other Partnership*	SOS/State/City/County Agencies
Amador County	-	Yes	-
Butte County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Calaveras County	Yes	-	Yes
El Dorado County	-	Yes	Yes
Fresno County	Yes	-	Yes
Los Angeles County	Yes	-	-
Madera County	-	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	-	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes	-
Nevada County	Yes	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes	-
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes	-
Santa Clara County	Yes	Yes	Yes
Tuolumne County	Yes	Yes	-
Total	12/15 Counties	11/15 Counties	7/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

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

*DRC is the acronym for Disability Rights California.

Ballot Accessibility: Remote Access Vote-by-Mail and Ballot Marking Devices

The VCA requires counties to offer the option of Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) so that voters with disabilities, military voters, or overseas voters can vote by mail electronically and remotely. Additionally, voters with disabilities have the option to read and mark the ballot on their computer using their own accessible technology. Voters using RAVBM are able to print and mail in their ballot or return it to a secure drop box or voting location. For voters who preferred or needed to vote in-person, VCA counties are required to have three accessible Ballot Marking Device (BMD) voting systems per vote center, which allow voters with disabilities to vote in person privately and independently (Table 30).

RAVBM usage varied across VCA counties in the 2020 primary election. Table 31 shows that RAVBM usage ranged from zero in Amador and Napa counties to 2,875 in Santa Clara. El Dorado reported “We issued 437 RAVBM’s, only 91 of them were accessed.” Fresno County reported fewer than 20 RAVBM ballots and explained that “Several hundred voters indicated interest [in RAVBM] but did not provide sufficient information to participate. Fewer than 200 voters had RAVBM materials distributed to them. Less than 20 returned a completed RAVBM package.” Los Angeles County reported issuing 200-300 but only 10 RAVBM ballots were returned. Mariposa (60 RAVBM ballots) and Nevada (around 200 RAVBM ballots) both reported that a vast majority, if not all, of their returned RAVBM ballots came from military or overseas civilians. Orange County attributed its relatively high RAVBM usage (489 RAVBM ballots) to its “...extensive outreach and marketing efforts to raise public awareness of the changes to voting elections as a result of transitioning to vote centers.” Additionally, while all counties reported including information about RAVBM in traditional elections office outreach including in voter guides and at events, only Los Angeles, Madera, Napa, Sacramento, and San Mateo counties reporting sharing this information through external advertisements (Table 32).

We note that while nearly all counties reported having information about RAVBM available on their county elections websites, there were differences in how easy it was to find the information. The CID team examined the VCA county websites and found that only Amador and Fresno had information about RAVBM directly on their election’s homepage, while seven counties (Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Nevada, Sacramento, San Mateo, and Santa Clara) had this information on a sub-menu on the homepage (Table 33). CID was unable to find RAVBM information on the websites of Butte, Mariposa, Napa, and Tuolumne, however, some of these counties provided links to the SOS RAVBM webpage. Additionally, it is also possible that this information existed somewhere on the sites and was not located by the CID team. Further, we do not have data on how RAVBM-related content might have changed on county websites over time. Overall, the county elections websites of Calaveras, Orange, Sacramento, and Santa Clara were all clear and particularly easy to navigate.

Table 30: Type and Model of Ballot Marking Device (BMD)

Amador County	ES&S ExpressVote
Butte County	Dominion ICX
Calaveras County	Hart Verity TouchWriter
El Dorado County	Dominion ICX
Fresno County	Dominion ICX
Los Angeles County	VSAP BMD
Madera County	Dominion ICX
Mariposa County	Dominion ICX
Napa County	Dominion ICX
Nevada County	Hart Verity TouchWriter
Orange County	Hart Verity TouchWriter
Sacramento County	Dominion ICX
San Mateo County	Dominion ICX
Santa Clara County	Dominion ICX
Tuolumne County	Dominion ICX
Total	10/15 Counties

Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table 31: VCA County Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) Usage in the 2020 Primary Election

	Type of RAVBM	RAVBM Application on County Website	Number RAVBM Cast
Amador County	Democracy Live	Yes	0
Butte County	Dominion ImageCast	-	Approximately 40 (excluding UOCAVA)
Calaveras County	Democracy Live	Yes	104 views
El Dorado County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	91
Fresno County	Democracy Live	Yes	Approximately 20
Los Angeles County	VSAP RAVBM	Yes	10
Madera County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	Approximately 10
Mariposa County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	60
Napa County	Dominion ImageCast	Yes	0
Nevada County	Democracy Live	Yes	Approximately 200
Orange County	Democracy Live	Yes	489
Sacramento County	Democracy Live	Yes	52
San Mateo County	Democracy Live	Yes	72
Santa Clara County	Democracy Live	Yes	2,875
Tuolumne County	Dominion ImageCast	-	Approximately 40

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

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

Table 32: VCA County Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) Outreach in the 2020 Primary Election

	Election Office Outreach Materials	Media or Advertisements
Amador County	Yes	-
Butte County	Yes	-
Calaveras County	Yes	-
El Dorado County	Yes	-
Fresno County	Yes	-
Los Angeles County	Yes	Yes
Madera County	Yes	Yes
Mariposa County	Yes	-
Napa County	Yes	Yes
Nevada County	Yes	-
Orange County	Yes	-
Sacramento County	Yes	Yes
San Mateo County	Yes	Yes
Santa Clara County	Yes	-
Tuolumne County	Yes	-
Total	15/15 Counties	5/15 Counties

"Data Source: CID County Elections Office Survey

Table was created from responses to the open-ended question, "What information was available from your office about RAVBM and where could voters with disabilities find this information?"

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

Table 33: Number of Clicks on VCA County Elections Website to Access RAVBM Information

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

Data Source: CID collected data April, 2021. Please note, we do not have data on how RAVBM-related content might have changed on county websites over the course of the 2020 election period. For counties with a dash (-), we could not find information about RAVBM on their website, however, they may have provided an external link to information about RAVBM on the SOS website.

Conclusion

In the 2020 primary election, 15 counties representing nearly 50% of California registered voters conducted elections under the VCA. As required by the law, county elections offices reported engaging in numerous education and outreach efforts including the establishment of both a VAAC and LAAC to inform voters about VCA-related election changes and to increase voting participation from historically underserved groups.

VCA counties engaged in diverse outreach campaigns that reached voters through direct mail, community meetings, advertisements, social media, outdoor signage, signage at vote centers, and through collaboration with community groups. For voters with disabilities, traditional outreach activities (e.g., county website, voter guide, mail, and public meetings) were the most commonly used method for sharing information, followed by utilizing partnerships with community groups and through media (e.g., digital, print, or radio advertisements and social media). Larger, more populous VCA counties (Los Angeles, Orange, and Sacramento) generally had greater funding and employed more diverse outreach methods when compared to counties with smaller populations (Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, and Tuolumne).

Around half of the counties also reported targeting specific voting groups such as language minority groups, voters with disabilities, or youth voters. While counties were generally uncertain which types of information were most successful in reaching specific voting groups, there was some consensus across counties that translated materials were seen as useful for non-English language groups, digital outreach was successful with younger voters, and print was effective for seniors. However, despite the outreach and collaboration that occurred in VCA counties, only around one-third of voters in VCA counties (as identified by a CID eligible voter survey) knew that voting changes had occurred in the 2020 primary election indicating that additional outreach efforts are needed.

VCA counties also utilized partnerships with various groups to enhance the VCA-implementation process. Nearly all counties conducted community meetings and met with and had ongoing collaboration with community leaders. Most counties reported that collaboration with stakeholders improved some aspect of the implementation process – including increased knowledge, resources, community trust, outreach efforts, or siting locations. However, a majority of counties also indicated that the collaborative process could be improved in future elections with counties requesting more participation from partners or improvements to their VAACs and LAACs.

In addition to outreach and education, VCA county elections offices also prepared for the 2020 primary election by securing voting locations and recruiting and training elections staff. While counties chose voting the locations based on the needs of their community, the most common priorities included proximity to public transportation, population centers, and language minority communities. The most prioritized factors with regard to voters with disabilities were locations that were accessible and met ADA requirements. Additionally, elections offices provided training to vote center workers, specifically with regard to voters with disabilities. For a majority of counties, vote center training entailed sensitivity training, voting options for voters with disabilities, or computer or procedure training. Training content was acquired both internally, as well as through their VAAC, and Disability Rights California or other community partnerships.

Recommendations

1. Increase investments in voter outreach and education and streamline messaging across counties to have a greater impact.

Despite extensive outreach campaigns, two-thirds of voters were unaware of voting changes in the 2020 primary election.

- Counties should go beyond the VCA's voter outreach and education requirements and allocate additional staff time and resources towards informing voters about voting changes related to the VCA.
- Effective voter messaging should be done in collaboration with neighboring VCA counties or community partners; high-use materials from county elections offices need to have plain and accessible language, quality translation, and readability by voters with disabilities and other historically underrepresented voting groups.
- Counties should devote time and resources to test effective voter messaging for different voting groups so they can increase targeted messaging, and so county financial resources have the greatest impact. Previous research by CID showed that different voting groups – including voters with disabilities, voters of color, young voters, rural voters, and senior voters – have different preferences for how and where they cast a ballot, which should be considered when developing outreach campaigns.
- Counties should include wide-reaching outreach efforts to inform voters about changes to vote center and drop box locations, including through one-on-one contact with voters. Changing voting locations can be confusing and discouraging for some voters, possibly impacting their trust in elections. Making sure they know about the changes in advance can help ease the transition, especially for voters who may have to travel farther to vote. To have the greatest impact, these outreach efforts should take place in collaboration with community stakeholders and at existing community events.

2. Develop a VCA community coalition early in the VCA implementation process in order to help build a strong voter outreach effort.

When engaged, community partners can provide the counties with significant feedback, provide useful knowledge, and assist with outreach and siting.

- Connect with community groups as early as possible to ensure they are aware of their county's adoption of the VCA and recruit them to participate in implementation and voter outreach efforts. Surveyed elections administrators reported wanting longer-term engagement and additional assistance with implementation from stakeholders in the 2020 primary election. Developing a coalition early on in the VCA process may assist counties in getting the long-term support that will allow stakeholders to take more actionable steps to enhance the VCA implementation process.
- Increase engagement by significantly expanding the number and type of organizations involved in a county's VCA efforts, particularly from communities underrepresented among potential voters in a county. Community partners can help elections officials identify ways to target diverse voting groups. Over half of the counties said there were specific voting groups that they would like to include in future elections, and some counties also highlighted the importance of stakeholders in helping them reach Black, Indigenous, and formerly incarcerated voters.
- Counties reported that location siting can be especially challenging when transitioning to the VCA since some voting locations must be available for up to 10-days of early voting. Community members can play an essential role in identifying locations and in recruiting and training vote center staff.

Available Resources for VCA Implementation

- Disability Rights California: VAAC Toolkit for Elections Officials <https://www.disabilityrightscalifornia.org/publications/vaacs-how-county-elections-offices-can-start-a-voting-accessibility-advisory-committee>
- Future of California Election: Public Participation: A Guide for Election Officials Implementing the California Voter's Choice Act <https://futureofcaliforniaelections.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/VCC-Public-Participation-Guide-for-Election-Officials.pdf>
- California Secretary of State: VCA Quick Start Guide <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vca/2020/toolkit/sos/quick-start-guide-1.0.pdf>
- California Secretary of State: VCA Starter Kit <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vca/2020/toolkit/sos/vca-starter-kit-1.0.pdf>
- League of Women Voters of California VCA Toolkit for Community Organizers Voter's Choice California - Voter's Choice Act Implementation: Building a VCA Coalition Voter's Choice California: Strategies for Voter Education and Outreach Under the Voter's Choice Act <https://voterschoice.org/wp-content/uploads/VCA-Report-1.pdf>

Notes

1. For more information on the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450
2. For more information about the timing of the March 3rd, 2020 Primary in California, please see: https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201720180SB568
3. For additional details on the requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450 and <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vca/toolkit/starter-kit.pdf>
4. For additional details on the Election Administration Plan requirements of the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB450
5. For a full list of VCA-county EAPs, see: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voters-choice-act/vca-counties>
6. See the California Secretary of State's 2016 general election voter participation report for more information: <http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/sov/2016-general/sov/03-voter-participation-stats-by-county.pdf>
7. For historical vote-by-mail usage in California, see the California Secretary of State's website at: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/vote-mail#hist>
8. See California Secretary of State's report of voter participation statistics, 2004-2018 primary elections.
9. For information on California voting method trends by demographics, see: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b8c7ce15d5dbf599fb46ab/t/5f6127245614705a77b48263/1600202534081/CID+Survey+Report+FINAL.pdf>
10. For more information on this temporary exception for Los Angeles County in the California Voter's Choice Act, see: http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201520160SB45
11. See California Secretary of State's report of voter participation statistics, 2004-2018 primary elections.
12. Disability population calculation: The percent of residents with disabilities out of the total population, ACS 2015-2019 5-year estimates. Percent limited English proficient population calculation: The percent of the population that has limited English proficiency, ACS 2015-2019 5-year Limited English proficiency is defined as people who speak English "less than very well"
13. See California Secretary of State's 15 Report of Registration for the 2020 general election: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ror/15day-presprim-2020/county.pdf>
14. For more information of California voter's knowledge regarding the 2020 primary election, see CID report: <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/57b8c7ce15d5dbf599fb46ab/t/5f6127245614705a77b48263/1600202534081/CID+Survey+Report+FINAL.pdf>
15. For more information on VAACs, see County Voting Accessibility Advisory Toolkit: <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/pdfs/guide-create-local-vaac.pdf>