

APPENDIX R – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

VCA Research FAQs

What is the California Voter's Choice Act? How will it change the way I vote?

The California Voter's Choice Act (VCA) fundamentally transforms elections to an All-Mailed Ballot/Vote Center Model. California Governor Jerry Brown signed this landmark bill into law on September 29, 2016. Under the law, all registered voters will be mailed a vote-by-mail (VBM) ballot beginning 29 days prior to Election Day, regardless of whether they have signed up as a VBM voter or not. Over 800 traditional neighborhood Polling Places countywide will be replaced by 25 11-day Vote Centers and 100 4-day Vote Centers, along with 78 Ballot Drop-off Locations. In addition to mailing back their voted ballot, voters can also go to any Vote Center to cast their ballot in person. Voters can also drop off their ballot at any Vote Center or Ballot Drop-off Location.

When is the first election that Santa Clara County will conduct under the California Voter's Choice Act?

On April 9, 2019, the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors authorized the Registrar of Voters to conduct elections under the Vote Center Model. The March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election will be the first election to be held under the California Voter's Choice Act.

Will all elections be conducted by this new model in the future in Santa Clara County?

This new model will affect all regularly scheduled elections. Special elections occurring on other dates may operate differently depending on the request of the jurisdiction(s) calling an election.

Why did Santa Clara County choose to adopt the Voter's Choice Act?

Santa Clara County adopted the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) to modernize elections to reflect the lives of today's voters, who are currently 78% vote-by-mail voters. VCA will make voting more convenient by providing voters with more options of how, when, and where to vote. Instead of being limited to voting at one designated Polling Place on Election Day, voters will now be able to vote in person at any Vote Center located in Santa Clara County as early as ten (10) days before Election Day; at the Registrar of Voters' office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112 as early as 29 days before Election Day; by mail; or by dropping off the voted ballot in an Official Ballot Drop-box.

What are the advantages of the Voter's Choice Act?

The Voter's Choice Act provides for more choices in voting options:

- Voters are now able to choose where, when, and how they vote
- Voters have more days to vote starting ten days before an election, including weekends and holidays
- Voters can register to vote and vote on the same day at Vote Centers
- Voters have more locations to vote before Election Day

What services will be provided to voters who primarily speak a language other than English?

The Registrar of Voters (ROV) provides services in eight languages. Four languages are federally mandated: Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, and Vietnamese. Two languages are state mandated, Khmer and Korean, and the remaining two languages, Hindi and Japanese, have historically been provided by the ROV. Official ballots, Conditional Voter Registration, Provisional Ballot Envelopes, and all Vote Center and Official Ballot Drop-box signage will be translated in all eight languages. County Voter Information Guides (CVIGs) will be available in the four federally mandated languages. Additionally, bilingual Vote Center staff may be available to support other languages and dialects spoken within the County.

What is a Vote Center?

A Vote Center is a universal Polling Place where any registered voter within the county may vote. There will be approximately 125 Vote Centers throughout Santa Clara County.

How are people going to find out about the change from Polling Places to Vote Centers?

The Registrar of Voters (ROV) will contact all registered voters in Santa Clara County in two (2) separate mailings to inform voters about the new election model, the upcoming election, and where they can find more information about these changes.

What voting assistance is available at a Vote Center?

Each Vote Center will be equipped with a minimum of three (3) ballot marking devices that have ADA compliant features to allow voters with disabilities to cast a ballot independently and privately. Voters can still bring up to two (2) people to assist them during the voting process, as long as they are not the voter's employer or union representative. Additionally, voters who would rather vote in the comfort of their home will also have the option to apply for and access the Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) system. RAVBM systems will send those voters an email with a link to download their Official Ballot, along with instructions on how to complete their ballot and return it to the ROV. Vote Centers will also have bilingual assistance, voters can call the ROV office at (408) 299-VOTE to find out what language assistance is available.

How do I find the closest Vote Center to me?

Beginning 30 days before each election, a list of Vote Centers and Ballot Drop-off Locations will be available in the County Voter Information Guide (CVIG) and on the Registrar of Voters' website at <https://www.sccgov.org>

Can anyone in the State of California vote at a Santa Clara County Vote Center?

No, only those that are registered or are eligible to register to vote in Santa Clara County may vote at a Vote Center in Santa Clara County.

Are Vote Centers open on weekends or holidays?

Vote Centers will be open as early as ten (10) days before Election Day. This includes two (2) weekends and holidays as they fall.

How many Vote Centers is Santa Clara County required to have?

The number of Vote Centers is determined by the number of registered voters in the County 88 days before Election Day. Based on our projected registration totals for 2020, Santa Clara County is required to provide 23 Vote Centers for 11 days and up to 94 Vote Centers for 4 days. To better serve voters, Santa Clara County is aiming to provide 25 Vote Centers for 11 days and 100 for 4 days.

What keeps a person from voting twice by going to a different Vote Center?

The State of California has implemented a statewide voter registration database referred to as VoteCal. All counties will be able to determine if a voter has already voted anywhere in the State of California. Santa Clara County will be utilizing electronic pollbooks (e-pollbooks) to interact with this database and research voter registration in near real time.

I have been going to my neighborhood Polling Place for years. Can I still vote at my former Polling Place on Election Day?

No, unless your former Polling Place is now a Vote Center.

I did not request to be a permanent vote-by-mail voter, why did I receive a vote-by-mail ballot?

With the passage of the California Voter's Choice Act (VCA), and approval by the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, every registered voter in Santa Clara County, starting with the March 2020 election, will automatically be mailed a vote-by-mail ballot, beginning 29 days before an election. This allows voters to decide how, when, and where to vote.

What is an Official Ballot Drop-box?

An Official Ballot Drop-box is a secure, accessible, and locked receptacle available for voters to drop off vote-by-mail ballot envelopes beginning 29 days before the election. Drop-boxes will be available during their respective locations' regular business hours. No postage will be needed when using the drop-box.

How many Official Ballot Drop-boxes is Santa Clara County required to have?

The number of Official Ballot Drop-boxes is determined by the number of registered voters in the County 88 days before Election Day. Based on projections for registered voters by the March 2020 election, Santa Clara County is required to have approximately 78 Drop-boxes. To better serve voters, Santa Clara County is aiming to provide 89 Ballot Drop-off Locations, in addition to 10-15 located at some fire stations.

Will the Official Ballot Drop-boxes be secure?

Official Ballot Drop-boxes are secured, locked, and made of durable material to withstand vandalism, removal, and inclement weather. Ballots are collected from drop-boxes by Registrar of Voters staff on a regular schedule. Ballots will be picked up on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays starting 25 days before Election Day. Starting ten (10) days before Election Day, ballots will be picked up daily.

How does the County select Vote Centers and Ballot Drop-box locations?

The County is working with the community to take suggestions and input on Vote Center and Ballot Drop-box Locations. Please email voterschoice@rov.sccgov.org with suggestions for possible locations. Before use, all locations are surveyed by the Registrar of Voters Office to ensure they are accessible to voters with disabilities. Once a location is surveyed, our office will work directly with the site to confirm availability for the required timeframe established by California Elections Code 4005.

Where can I drop off my voted ballot?

Ballots can be dropped off at any Vote Center, Ballot Drop-off Location or the Registrar of Voters' office located at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112.

What are the criteria that are considered for selecting Vote Centers and Ballot Drop-box locations?

California Elections Code 4005 refers to several criteria that must be considered when selecting Vote Centers and Ballot Drop-box Locations. These include:

- Proximity to public transportation
- The distance and time a voter must travel by car or public transportation
- Free and accessible parking
- Traffic patterns
- Communities with historically low vote-by-mail usage
- Population centers
- Language minority communities
- Voters with disabilities
- Communities with low rates of household vehicle ownership
- Low-income communities
- Communities of eligible voters who are not registered to vote and may need access to same-day voter registration
- Geographically isolated populations
- Ability for voters with disabilities to cast a ballot privately and independently
- The possible need for mobile Vote Centers in addition to the number of Vote Centers established and the need for additional Vote Centers to be open for a shorter period of time

I have a location that might serve as a Vote Center or Ballot Drop-box Location, how do I let you know?

We are always looking for potential Vote Center or Ballot Drop-box locations to serve the community. All potential locations must be surveyed by the Elections Office to ensure accessibility, as well as other requirements are met. To recommend a location or obtain more information about the requirements for serving as a Vote Center, please contact us by email or phone at voterschoice@rov.sccgov.org or (408) 299-VOTE.

Does the Santa Clara County Registrar of Votes' office offer any mobile apps for voters to use?

Yes, the SCCVOTE Mobile App is available for free download to mobile devices (i.e. Apple, Android). Some of the features provided are:

- Quick and easy access to register to vote online
- Verifying your voter registration status
- Finding the closest Vote Center and Ballot Drop-box Location starting 28 days before an election

ROV - Voter Registration FAQs

How do I register to vote?

There are various ways to register to vote in Santa Clara County:

- Register online using the following link: www.registertovote.ca.gov
- Complete a Voter Registration Form (available at most government offices, public libraries, post offices, and the Register of Voters (ROV) office)
- Request a Voter Registration Form be mailed to you by calling the ROV office at (408) 299-VOTE or toll-free at (866) 430-VOTE

Can I use my P.O. Box, business, or mail drop address as my address when I register?

No, you may use your P.O. Box, business or mail drop-box address as your mailing address only. A residence address is required to determine your voting districts.

I am homeless. How do I register?

A residence address is required to determine your voting districts. If you do not have an address that includes a house number and street name, you must provide a description of the location you consider your home or domicile (such as cross streets or landmarks) so we can establish your precinct. If you provide cross streets or landmarks, you must also provide a mailing address, such as a P.O. Box, business, or mail drop-box address, for the Registrar of Voters Office to mail your election materials. A residence address is still required on the registration form.

What identification is required to register?

A California driver's license or state ID is required the first time you register to vote in California. Applicants who do not have either can provide the last four digits of their Social Security number.

How do I know my registration was received?

A Voter Notification Card will be mailed to you within six weeks of the date you submitted your registration. Please contact our office at (408) 299-VOTE, if you haven't received notification.

How do I check my voter registration status?

To check your voter registration status:

- Visit the Secretary of State (SOS) website using the following link:
<https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov>
- Access Santa Clara County's Voter Registration Lookup tool using the following link: <https://eservices.sccgov.org/rov/>
- Call the Registrar of Voters' office at (408) 299-8683

When is it necessary to re-register?

You must re-register whenever you change your:

- Name
- Residence address
- Political party

Why is it important to keep my voter registration current?

Your voter registration should have your current residence and mailing address to ensure that you receive the correct ballot material. Election mail is not forwarded.

I did not vote in the last election; do I need to re-register?

You are registered to vote as long as you remain at the same address and have voted within the last four years. To check your registration status, visit the Registrar of Voters' website at the following link:
<https://eservices.sccgov.org/rov/> or call the office at (408) 299-VOTE.

I missed the registration deadline (15 days before Election Day), can I still vote?

Yes, you can take advantage of the new Conditional Voter Registration options, available 14 days before, and on, Election Day. Conditional Voter Registration is offered at the Registrar of Voters' office and at Vote Centers and will allow applicants to register and vote provisionally.

What is Conditional Voter Registration (CVR)?

If potential voters did not register to vote by the 15-day voter registration deadline, in most elections, they may conditionally register to vote and cast a CVR ballot at the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112, during the period of 14 days prior to and

including, Election Day, or at any of our Vote Centers as early as ten (10) days before, and including, Election Day.

When did CVR go into effect?

Conditional Voter Registration went into effect January 1, 2017, after the statewide voter registration database was certified.

Will my CVR be treated the same as all other registrations?

Yes, your Conditional Voter Registration will be treated and processed the same as all other registrations.

Can a CVR ballot be mailed to me?

No, a CVR ballot can only be issued in person at the County Registrar of Voters Office or at any Vote Center beginning ten days before an election, as well as on Election Day.

What do I need to do to cast a CVR ballot?

Potential voters must complete a Voter Registration Form and then cast their ballot at the Registrar of Voters' office or any Vote Center within the County. Please note, the Conditional Voter Registration ballot cannot be taken from the premises and returned at a later date. A Conditional Voter Registration ballot is a provisional ballot that will be processed upon verification of the Conditional Voter Registration.

Will I be able to check whether or not my CVR ballot has been counted?

Yes, to check the status of your ballot call our office at (408) 299-VOTE or visit the Secretary of State's website using the following link:

www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-status

I became a new citizen after the registration deadline, can I still register to vote?

Yes, persons who become naturalized citizens after the close of registration (15 days prior to Election Day) may only register and vote at the Registrar of Voters Office between the 14th day and the close of the polls at 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. New citizens must present a Certificate of Naturalization which must have a naturalization date that is after the closing date of registration and they must declare that they have established residence in Santa Clara County by providing their affidavit and certificate from the citizenship ceremony.

How do I cancel my voter registration in Santa Clara County?

Voter Registration can be cancelled through the following methods:

1. Print, complete, and sign the Voter Registration Cancellation Request Form using the following link provided by the Secretary of State (SOS):
<https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/pdfs/cancellation-request-form.pdf>
2. Print, complete, and sign a Voter Action Request Form (VARF) using the following link:
https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Documents/VARF_318.pdf
3. Draft a written request with your name, address, birth date, and signature stating that you no longer want to be registered in Santa Clara County:
 - a. Mail to County of Santa Clara Registrar of Voters, 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112,
 - b. Email as a scanned attachment to voterinfo@rov.sccgov.org, OR
 - c. Fax the document to (408) 998-7314.

How do I notify the Elections Office that a voter is deceased?

The Elections Office receives monthly updates from the State of all deaths within Santa Clara County. To request a deceased voter's registration be cancelled, immediate family members may call our office at (408) 299-VOTE.

I believe I am registered but can't find my record using the Voter Registration Lookup tool.

When using Santa Clara County's Voter Registration lookup tool, enter your residence address and birth date in mm/dd/yyyy format. If you are still unable to locate your record, please call our office at (408) 299-VOTE, for verification.

May I sign a petition if I am not registered to vote?

No, you must be a registered voter with your current address on file for your signature to be valid on a petition.

I have been receiving political mail and phone calls at my home. Where are they getting my information?

This information can be obtained from a variety of sources, including the voter registration list. Current law allows voter registration data to be provided to authorized persons or groups and used for election, governmental, scholarly, or political research purposes. If you would like to remove your phone number from your registration, please call our office at (408) 299-VOTE.

Why is Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) involved in voter registration?

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 permits persons conducting business at a DMV office to register to vote or update voter registration information. This act, often referred to as the "Motor Voter Law", allows the public to register to vote or update their voter registration during a driver's license or

identification (ID) card transaction at the DMV. If an applicant completing a driver's license, ID card, or change of address transaction, either online, by mail, or in person, they will be automatically registered to vote by the California Secretary of State (unless they choose to opt out). This law also allows the pre-registration of eligible residents of California, ages 16 or 17 years old, so that they may be automatically registered to vote when they turn 18 years of age.

Is it true that voter registration lists are used to select citizens for jury duty?

Yes, Jury Duty Summons are pulled from the voter registration files and DMV records.

Why am I receiving multiple Jury Duty Summons?

If your name appears differently on your driver's license than your voter registration record, you may receive multiple notices. To remedy this situation, complete and return a new Voter Registration form to the Registrar of Voters Office with your name printed as it appears on your driver's license, or complete a new voter registration online at the following link: www.sos.ca.gov.

The Jury Commissioner may select jurors from lists provided by the DMV and the County Elections Office. Updating your voter record to match your driver's license or ID may eliminate multiple summons.

ROV – Vote-by-Mail FAQs

When should I expect my ballot to arrive?

Ballots are mailed beginning 29 days before an election. If you have not received your ballot two weeks before an election, please call our office at (408) 299-VOTE.

I am temporarily out of the county or state. Can I get my ballot mailed to a different address?

Yes, call the Registrar of Voters' office at (408) 299-VOTE, and a ballot will be mailed to the temporary address.

How do I get a replacement ballot?

Call the Registrar of Voters' office at (408) 299-VOTE to request a replacement ballot. Replacement ballots are also available at any Vote Center located in Santa Clara County, or at the Registrar of Voters' office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112.

Do I need postage to mail my ballot?

No, the County will pay for postage.

How can I find the status of my ballot?

The status of your ballot will be available beginning 29 days before each election. You may check the status of your ballot using the following link:

<https://eservices.sccgov.org/rov/?tab=ab>

How do I vote if I'm in the military or living overseas?

Military and overseas voters have the option to apply for and access the Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) system, which sends voters an email with a link to download their Official Ballot, along with instructions on how to complete their ballot and return it to the Registrar of Voters office.

If the ballot has not arrived by four (4) weeks before the election, contact the Registrar of Voters' office for a replacement by: phone (408) 299-VOTE or (866) 430-VOTE, fax (408) 998-7314 or email votebymail@rov.sccgov.org.

When is the last day to return my ballot?

Voted ballots sent through the mail must be postmarked on, or before Election Day, and received by the Registrar of Voters' (ROV) office no later than three (3) days after the election. Drop your ballot off at any Santa Clara County Ballot Drop-off Location or Vote Center, or at the ROV office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112, no later than 8:00pm on Election Day.

My son/daughter is away at school. Can I pick up their ballot?

A ballot will automatically be mailed to their mailing address. They may call the Registrar of Voters' office at (408) 299-VOTE to have a ballot mailed to their address. If you need to pick up a replacement ballot for them, you may do so with a signed request from your son or daughter authorizing you to do so.

I lost the envelope for my ballot, what do I do? How can I send it in?

Voters can pick up a new ballot envelope at any Vote Center or Ballot Drop-off Location in Santa Clara County or at the ROV office located at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112. Replacement ballot envelopes are accepted at any ballot drop-box in Santa Clara County. Be sure to fill out the requested information and sign where indicated. Use a plain envelope and include the following on the outside: Name, residence address, and signature. Include the following statement, "I declare under penalty of perjury that: I am a resident of Santa Clara County, California, from which I am voting; I am the person whose name appears on this envelope; I have not applied for and do not intend to apply for a ballot from any other jurisdiction for this election." Place and seal the voted ballot in the envelope with the information above. Insert the voted ballot envelope into a separate outgoing envelope and mail it to the ROV.

ROV – Candidate Services FAQs

Who are my elected representatives?

Information on elected representatives can be accessed by calling the Registrar of Voters' office at (408) 299-VOTE, or using the following link:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Documents/Office-Holders-List.pdf>

How can I run for an elected office?

You can find information on how to run for an elected office at the following link:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Pages/CandidateINFO.aspx>

Where can I find past election results?

You can find past election results at the following link:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Resources/Pages/PastEResults.aspx>

How do I place a measure on the ballot?

You can find information on measures using the following link:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Pages/Recalls.aspx>

How do I recall an elected official?

You can find information on recalls using the following link:

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Pages/Recalls.aspx>