

Impact of the Voters Choice Act (VCA) on Accessibility, Flexibility, and Security

The Voter's Choice Act has enhanced ways of making voting more accessible.

Accessibility

- Each county's voting systems have accessible features that allow for touchscreen and audio assistance.
- Accessible voting equipment and ballot marking devices are required when using the Vote Center model.
- Election materials are translated into languages required for each county.
- Ballor Marking Devices allow voters to increase font sizes or switch the languages in which the information is presented.
- Counties using the VCA Model are required to conduct Voter Education and Outreach by creating Language Accessibility Advisory Committees and Voter Accessibility Advisory Committees. These committees allows community members to share feedback and input on language and accessibility issues. The committees may also collaborate with the County's outreach staff on community events and presentations.
- Counties using the VCA model are also required to a conduct Voter Language Workshops in the languages required in each county under the federal and state voting rights laws. This allows community members to provide feedback and share input and suggestions on how to reach the communities that primarily speak the required languages in their county.
- Accessibility workshops are required to allow counties to demonstrate the use of accessible voting equipment and services. They allow community members to get information on what accessibility services will be available, specifically during the election period.
- Vote Centers are required to be in proximity to public transportation and disability access.
- An SOS ADA survey is conducted before selecting Vote Centers to ensure all accessible features are addressed.
- Voter Centers must meet transportation accessibility and community language requirements.
- Voter signage must be translated into required languages to inform voters of their rights and to allow voters fair participation in the election process.
- The VCA expands language services beyond the minimum precinct-level requirement under state law, making language access more broadly available throughout the county.

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- Gabriel Taylor

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Flexibility

Using the VCA model has allowed voters flexibility to choose when, where a how they vote. Here are some additional improvements:

- All voters receive a vote by mail ballot and every voter has the option to vote in person at any Vote Center within the County where they are registered. Some Vote Centers open ten days prior to the election and all Voter Centers are open from the fourth day prior through Election Day. In some counties, early in-person voting is available at designated locations as early as 29 days before the election.
- VCA enables more effective services for voters when elections are occurring under unusual or unexpected circumstances. For example, because voters can vote at any Vote Center within the County where they are registered, and over the course of an 11-day in-person voting period, an event such as a power outage or a public health emergency at one or in one area of the county would not prevent voting as voters have multiple additional options for casting their ballot.
- The VCA Vote Center model allows voters to customize their voting experience by choosing a Vote Center in a location and at a venue that meets their needs and that is in a location the voter feels represents the significance of their vote.
- Voters with disabilities have the opportunity to vote in locations and on days that work with their transportation and scheduling options.
- VCA counties have the option of scheduling mobile or flex Vote Center events at locations that serve voters who otherwise might face obstacles in voting in-person (i.e. assisted living facilities, remote geographic locations, facilities that provide day service to individuals with disabilities, or locations serving individuals experiencing homelessness.).
- In contrast to the traditional single day, single location in-person voting model the VCA allows voters with more ways and more days to vote.
- Vote Centers are open two weekends prior to Election Day to allow for extra time and dates for voters with traditional work week schedules.
- Formulas are put in place depending on the number of voters in each county to ensure there are enough Vote Centers and Official Vote by Mail Ballot Drop Boxes spread throughout the county.
- Vote Centers are open 11 days before the election with all Vote Centers throughout California open 4 days before the election for a minimum of eight hours of voting each day and from 7AM to 8PM on Election Day
- Voters can drop off their ballot at any Official Ballot Drop Box, any Vote Center or any USPS Collection Box in the state. Ballot are timely and valid if deposited by

8 p.m. on Election Day or postmarked by the USPS on or before Election Day and received by the seventh day following the election.

Security

In addition to the current procedures that revolve around election security such as tamper seals, chain-of-custody, routine back-ups and other standard protocols using the VCA model have added additional enhanced security measures:

- Vote Center staff can check registration in real-time through electronic pollbooks or rosters at any Vote Center in the county including the Registrar of Voter's office.
- This system is used to maintain eligible voter files, check in voters as they vote to prevent voters from voting twice at Vote Centers.
- Limited voter information is communicated through secure connections and encrypted files.
- Network access is only used for electronic pollbooks or rosters, and on a closed network (direct connect through the Vote Center location or through closed cellular or wi-fi connections).
- Voting equipment is not connected to the internet and is secured according to strict provisions of the California Voting Systems Standards.
- All electronic poll books are locked in a cage with a secure storage area.
- All devices are restricted to only what is required, and unnecessary features disabled.
- Increased Cyber protection to prevent unauthorized access to our systems.
- Counties partner with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to review protocols and share information to ensure the safety of voters and staff.
- Official Vote by Mail Ballot Drop boxes provide a secure, accessible means for voters to return their completed vote by mail ballots. The Official Ballot Drop box is secured and installed in public facilities and are typically available 24 hours with tamper evident seals and multiple locking mechanisms.