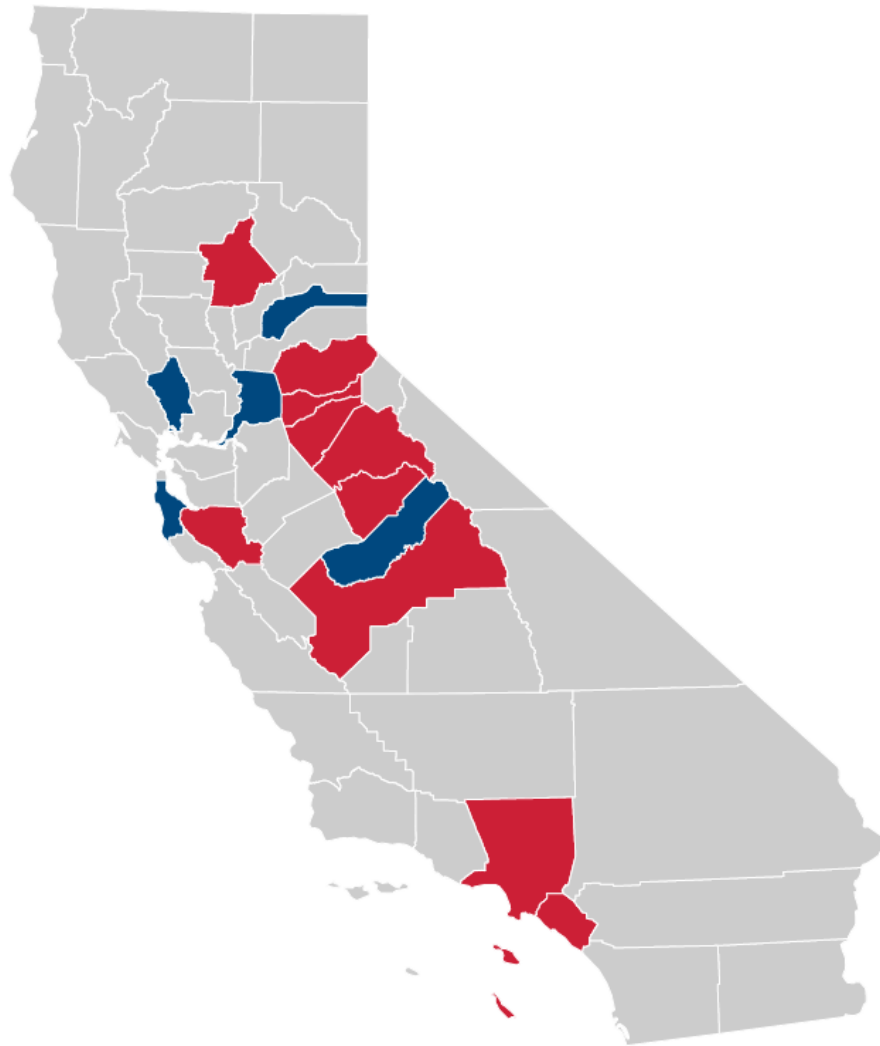


The Voter's Choice Act Toolkit

A Local League Guide to Share the New Days and Ways to Vote

Prepared by the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund
September 2020



November 2020 General Election Update

Due to the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, California has taken several steps to maximize public safety and ensure accessibility for the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election.

For this election, all registered voters in California will automatically receive a ballot in the mail and will also have access to in-person voting locations.

Counties may choose among three ways to run their elections. The most recent report as to each county's plans can be found [here](#).

1. **Traditional.** The county will mail a ballot to every registered voter and retain the same ratio of voting locations as used in past elections.
2. **Consolidated Voting Locations.**
 - The county will mail a ballot to every registered voter.
 - In-person voting locations, in a minimum ratio of one for every 10,000 voters, will be established.
 - In most Consolidated Voting Location counties, **in-person voters must go to their assigned location or the elections office to vote.** There may be some counties that offer “**Super Consolidated Voter Service Centers**” where voters may visit any voting location in the county.
 - Consolidated locations will open no later than Saturday, October 31, but some may open earlier in the month.
 - A minimum of one secure ballot dropbox for every 15,000 voters must be provided; at least one of which must be accessible to voters for no less than 12 hours a day.
3. **Modified Voter's Choice Act.** The same as the consolidated voting location model, with the one difference being that people may vote in-person at any Vote Center in the county.

As counties identify voting locations, your League may find the [Center for Inclusive Democracy's Voting Location Siting Tool](#) helpful. This tool identifies areas where voting locations are likely to have the most success in serving voters.

The table starting below shows how recent executive orders and emergency legislation will impact implementation of the Voter's Choice Act in the 2020 General Election. **VCA counties can choose to exceed these minimum requirements.** Secretary of State guidance on the executive orders may be found [here](#).

Question	Pre-COVID-19	November 2020
When are VCA counties required to open Voter Centers?	Starting 10 days before Election Day, one vote center is required for every 50,000 registered voters. Starting 3 days before E-Day, one vote center is required for every 10,000 registered voters.	VCA counties must provide at least one Vote Center per 10,000 registered voters beginning Saturday, October 31 (4 day Vote Centers). VCA counties are no longer required to open 11 day Vote Centers, but are encouraged to exceed minimum requirements.
Will Vote Centers be accessible for people with disabilities?	Each Vote Center is required to have at least 3 accessible voting machines and must comply with the accessibility requirements in the ADA, HAVA & VRA.	No Change
Will Vote Centers offer assistance for voters who speak languages other than English?	Vote Centers must post information about availability of language assistance and in-language ballots. If a Vote Center is identified as needing language assistance through public input then it must be staffed by poll workers who speak the language(s).	No Change

Question	Pre-COVID-19	November 2020
How many Ballot Dropboxes are VCA counties required to have?	VCA counties are required to have one ballot Dropbox per 15,000 registered voters, and not fewer than two regardless of the number of registered voters. Ballot Dropboxes must be open no less than 28 days before E-Day.	No Change
Will there be other in-person voting opportunities (besides Vote Centers)?	Some counties have used roving Vote Centers and pop-up Vote Centers to reach voters in rural areas.	No Change. Note that counties are encouraged to set up drive-through locations for ballot drop-offs and other voter services.
Are VCA counties required to conduct in-person public meetings or workshops to prepare an Election Administration Plan (EAP)?	<p>VCA counties are required to hold at least one public meeting with representatives from language minority communities, one public meeting with people with disabilities, and one public hearing after the draft EAP is published.</p> <p>Counties must convene meetings of their Voting Accessibility Advisory Committees (VAACs) and Language Accessibility Advisory Committees (LAACs).</p>	<p>VCA counties are not required to conduct any in-person public meetings or workshops in connection with the preparation of an EAP.</p> <p>However, counties are still required to convene VAAC/LAAC meetings and community education workshops.</p> <p>Where possible, you should work with your county to ensure members of the public have the opportunity to provide meaningful feedback on the EAP.</p>
When will VCA counties publish and accept public comment on draft EAPs?	VCA counties are required to publish a draft EAP for public comment and hold a public hearing no less than 14 days after the draft plan is published.	VCA counties are expected to post a draft EAP on the county elections official’s website and accept public comment on the draft plan for at least 10 days .

Question	Pre-COVID-19	November 2020
<p>Who can use a Remote Accessible Vote By Mail (RAVBM) ballot?</p>	<p>Voters with disabilities and military and overseas voters can request and complete an RAVBM.</p>	<p>Any registered voter may request an RAVBM, regardless of whether the voter is a voter with disabilities or a military or overseas voter. An RAVBM may be used as a method to allow voters to register and vote on the same day from home - all the way through the end of Election Day.</p>
<p>What are VCA counties doing to ensure voting is safe?</p>		<p>Counties are encouraged to add a greeter at their in-person voting locations and develop guidelines for line management to ensure physical distancing. Poll workers should be trained on proper use of protective equipment, ensuring physical distancing, and proper cleaning of voting equipment.</p> <p>County elections officials must provide protective equipment to county elections employees, election workers, and observers. Face masks must also be offered to voters. Election workers must not turn a voter away for lack of face covering. In such circumstances, election workers should consider additional physical distancing.</p>

We encourage you and your League to work with your county to maximize voting opportunities and accessibility for communities who have less experience with voting by mail, have low voter turnout, and/or are most likely to need assistance voting. For more information about how voting is changing statewide in response to COVID-19, check out the [Secretary of State's November 2020 Election page](#).

Please note that not all of the resources and information in the toolkit below have been updated to reflect changes to VCA implementation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please refer to the table above for up-to-date 2020 General Election information. Your League is encouraged to use this toolkit for guidance on outreach and community collaborations.

Introduction

In 2018, Madera, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, and San Mateo counties became the first cohort to adopt the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) and provide voters with more days and more ways to vote. In 2020, they are joined by Amador, Butte, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Mariposa, Orange, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne counties.

The VCA is designed to boost the state's overall voter participation by making voting more convenient and accessible. It also provides an opportunity to reduce the participation gap for voters who are historically underrepresented in our electorate. However, old polling places will be closed and the changes have the potential to confuse voters. Furthermore, people won't learn about these changes overnight. It takes an army of volunteers, multiple community meetings, and strong relationships with your county Elections Office and other community based organizations to get the word out and ensure the success of the Voter's Choice Act.

If your League is just getting started, do not fear! In 2018, the state and local Leagues, counties, the [Secretary of State](#), and advocacy, good government, and community groups working with [Voter's Choice California](#), a project of the [Future of California Elections](#), generated a plethora of resources to promote understanding and help put the VCA into practice. This toolkit consolidates many of those resources, along with offering ideas as to how your League can have an impact as the county transitions to the VCA.¹

¹ To customize many of the Google Docs materials linked in this VCA Toolkit you'll have to make your own copy. This Google Docs [start up guide](#) provides details. Here's the nutshell version:

1. Go to the Google document, spreadsheet or slides
2. Click *File* in the top left and then select *Make a Copy*.
3. Don't choose the option to share with the same people
4. You'll now have a customizable copy on your personal Google Drive that you can share with others.

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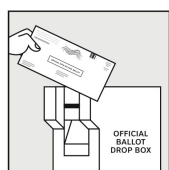
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What is the Voter's Choice Act?

Under the Voter's Choice Act (VCA), registered voters will receive their ballot in the mail weeks before Election Day. They then have **3 ways to return** their completed ballot:



Mail it in the postage paid envelope included with the ballot.



Use a county Dropbox starting 28 days before Election Day.



Visit a Vote Center, beginning 10 days before Election Day.
Some county Elections Offices will open as Vote Centers 29 days before E-Day.

Most old neighborhood polling places will no longer be open. Instead, voters can **vote in person** at any Vote Center in the county.

At any Vote Center, voters can vote in person, drop off a completed ballot, get a replacement ballot, vote using an accessible voting machine, and get help and materials in other languages.

Not registered to vote? No problem. Now voters can register and vote the same day at any Vote Center - all the way through Election Day.²

² This page reflects simple, plain-language messaging about the Voter's Choice Act that has been community reviewed with people who have low-literacy. The [Voter's Choice Act: Voter Ed & Outreach](#) PowerPoint offers an in-depth explanation of the Voter's Choice Act.

Is the VCA Right for your County?

The state League did not advocate for the adoption of the VCA, though we have worked to ensure its effective implementation. Your League may decide that it wants to advocate for the VCA. If so, we recommend that you consider certain key factors to determine whether or not the VCA is suitable for your county.

Vote by mail rate in your county

A high vote by mail (VBM) rate is a strong indicator that your county might be a good candidate for the VCA. Because the VCA requires that all registered voters receive their ballots in the mail, a high VBM rate means fewer voters will need to adjust to the new ways to vote. While there is no specific VBM rate a county should hit to adopt the VCA, almost every county that adopted the VCA in 2018 had at least a 65% VBM rate in the November 2016 General Election.³ You can find your county's VBM rates on the [Secretary of State's site](#).

A ready and willing local government

Implementing the VCA is demanding and takes the whole community to do it right. Without an Elections Office that has sufficient resources and/or commitment, implementing the VCA will be an especially arduous process. If your Elections Office is able to take on the extra work, provide sufficient funding, expand their public outreach, and build strong relationships with community groups (especially those associated with people who are underrepresented in the electorate), then your county is in a good position to consider adopting the VCA.

³ Note that VBM rates fluctuate significantly depending on whether it is a primary or general election, or a presidential or non-presidential year.

To get an understanding of issues you might raise with the Elections Office or Board of Supervisors, check out [this letter](#) that was sent to help guide Santa Clara County's implementation of the VCA. This Voter's Choice California [publication](#) offers a sense as to what is involved to achieve good government outreach and a meaningful public participation process.



Santa Clara community leaders learn more about the VCA

As you're evaluating whether or not the VCA will work well in your county, it's important to be aware of the ways the new voting model will impact different communities. While the VCA was designed to boost participation among underrepresented groups, like people whose primary language is not English and those with disabilities, there are others - like people of color and youth, whose interests were less explicitly incorporated into the law. The interests of all of these communities should be considered in determining whether and how to implement the Voter's Choice Act.

Other factors to consider

Each county will have a unique set of advantages and disadvantages when considering whether or not to adopt the VCA. Some counties see it as a way to modernize elections, while others found the costs prohibitive or timeline too tight for 2020. Unusual circumstances may also impact the decision. For

example, Butte County adopted the VCA in order to help people who were displaced by the 2018 wildfires.

You know your community best, and are in an excellent position to consider all possible pros and cons. It's helpful to research election statistics for your county, caucus with a broad range of community groups and historically underrepresented residents to determine whether or not the new process is likely to help or hinder participation, and reach out to your Elections Office, Board of Supervisors, and other public officials to see where they stand. If your county has already adopted the VCA and is working on implementation, the next four sections will help guide your engagement in this process.

Incremental adoption of VCA elements

Several counties which chose not to adopt the VCA for 2020 are instead adopting some of its elements - either as stand-alone practices or in advance of a 2022 transition. For example, some counties have started using a combination of Vote Centers along with traditional polling places, established Language Accessibility Advisory Committees (LAACs) and Voting Accessibility Advisory Committees (VAACs), or placed Dropboxes in strategic locations.⁴

⁴ VCA-adopting counties are required to establish a LAAC to advise the county Elections Office on access to the electoral process for voters with limited English proficiency, and a VAAC to advise the county Elections Office on access to the electoral process for voters with disabilities.

TAKE ACTION

If your county recently adopted the VCA and you want to weigh in on the process, but aren't sure where to start, look no further. We have broken down the many ways your League can take action into four general steps. The first helps you look internally at your League to gauge your capacity to take action. The next step covers how to guide implementation by working with other community based organizations and your county Elections Office. The final two steps cover outreach strategies. Throughout, you will find linked resources to expand your knowledge, avoid reinventing the wheel, and boost your impact in each of these areas.

Step 1: Measuring Your League's Capacity

The work that goes into implementing and spreading the word about the VCA mirrors what the League has been doing for decades, but it takes resources and willpower to make an impact. That is why it is best to begin your effort by looking at your League and asking questions such as:

- Do you have an engaged membership that is ready to take an active role on VCA implementation?
 - Do they need more training or support to get them on board? If so, you could start by downloading and customizing this [Voter's Choice Act: Voter Ed & Outreach](#) PowerPoint⁵ to present at your next member meeting.
 - Can they be mobilized at events and meetings throughout your community to do outreach?
- Do you have members who can offer a unique or crucial perspective?
 - Do any of your members speak a language other than English? Depending on the language translation requirements in your county, they might be a good candidate for the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC).

⁵ This one, created for San Mateo County, would have to be modified with your county's specifics.

- Are any of your members advocates for or people with disabilities? They might be a good candidate for your county's Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC).
- Do any of your members have a background in a field like design? They could help modify and generate voter education materials.
- Do you have financial resources to
 - Print flyers and other promotional materials (\$).
 - Cover travel expenses for your members to go to events and meetings (\$).
 - Use social media ads to invite targeted community members to events (\$\$).
 - Create videos and other multimedia (\$\$\$).
 - Get professional-level, human translation of educational and outreach materials (\$\$\$).⁶

While financial resources can broaden your outreach impact and make it easier for more of your membership to get involved, it's in no way a necessity. Many VCA outreach materials such as multilingual flyers and videos were already created in 2018. Instead of reinventing the wheel, you can use materials like those included in this toolkit. And if there's anything that you're looking for, let us know and we'll work to help you find it.

Once your League answers these questions, you'll have a better sense as to your capacity. This will inform your next steps as you begin to mobilize your membership and network within your community.

⁶ It's important to have high quality translations. Machine translation (like Google Translate) has proven to be extremely inaccurate.

Step 2: Impacting Implementation

Before voter outreach and education begins, local Leagues can have a significant impact on the way that the VCA will be implemented. By collaborating with other community based organizations and your Elections Office, and possibly advocating with your Board of Supervisors, you can help ensure the success of the new process. This entails going to public meetings, networking with different groups in your area, and monitoring and providing input on the county's plan for putting the VCA into practice.

To start, make sure you have a good grounding in what is required by the VCA. There are a lot of details involved, but a number of resources distill and explain them.

- A good place to start is with this [Voter's Choice Act 101 & Public Participation Guide](#) PowerPoint. It repeats some of the basic information included in the [Voter's Choice Act: Voter Ed & Outreach](#) presentation, but focuses on opportunities for the community to weigh in with early-stage review of the county's VCA plans. The Voter's Choice Act 101 & Public Participation Guide refers to, and should be used in conjunction with, these two customizable documents:
 - [Community Review Guide](#) - A clear, plain language guide to reviewing the EAP. Created as a form for easy recording of feedback.
 - [Comprehensive EAP Checklist](#) - A deep dive into all the elements that should be covered in the EAP.
- The Voter's Choice California (VCC) coalition offers a [legal digest, along with compliance checklists](#), developed by the state League. They explain the different elements that go into VCA implementation.
- In 2018 we found that Elections Offices were unfamiliar with best practices related to engaging the public for comment. This [Public Participation: A Guide for Election Officials Implementing the California Voter's Choice Act](#) was produced to provide

recommendations. It is also useful for local Leagues, and other community based organizations, setting up meetings to generate feedback on the VCA.

- A Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID) [report on key considerations in implementing the VCA](#) for elections officials.
- The California Secretary of State's [VCA Quick Start Guide](#) and [VCA Starter Kit](#) for elections officials.

The role of community organizations and coalitions

Implementing the VCA is too big a task for your Elections Office or a single organization to take on alone; it takes the whole community to make it work. That is why a coalition composed of a diverse range of community organizations is one of the strongest tools to help implement the VCA.

Whether your League is building this coalition or participating as a member, you will find that it is an ideal forum to share different perspectives on how to best implement the VCA, develop outreach materials that can reach your county's many communities, spread the word with a high level of coordination, and develop a relationship with your county Elections Office to provide feedback on the EAP and other decisions. The Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID) released [a report on the benefits and challenges to community collaboration](#) that can guide your work with your Elections Office. To learn more about VCA coalitions, read [Voter's Choice California's guide to building a VCA coalition](#).

VCA advisory committees and meetings

Your Elections Office will hold several public meetings to inform county residents about the VCA, gather input on the Election Administration Plan (EAP), and to convene their legally required Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) and Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) meetings. The LAAC is a forum for members of the public to advise the county Elections Office on access to the electoral process for voters with

limited English proficiency, and the VAAC is a forum to advise on accessibility for voters with disabilities.

In San Mateo County, a working group of community organizations formed the [Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee \(VEOAC\)](#), which eventually achieved a formal status with the Elections Office similar to the LAAC and VAAC. With combined voices, the VEOAC was able to carry out a sophisticated outreach strategy across the county and build an enduring relationship with the Elections Office. As a result, the Elections Office frequently implemented the VEOAC's recommendations and kept the group abreast of ongoing outreach work. The VEOAC model is being replicated in other VCA counties for 2020. A VEOAC is not required by the Voter's Choice Act, but it is enormously useful to represent the concerns of community members on matters that go beyond the scope of the two VCA-required committees.

These meetings are the perfect place to build your network of leaders and community groups working on the VCA. Regular gatherings help build consensus, provide input on key decisions, avoid unnecessary duplication of effort, agree on consistent messaging, and maintain an ongoing conversation with the Elections Office. During meetings, it is important not only for your League to have a presence and to provide feedback, but to also empower impacted communities to take leadership roles, engage a diverse network of stakeholders, and make decisions with all of your neighborhoods and communities in mind.

Election Administration Plan

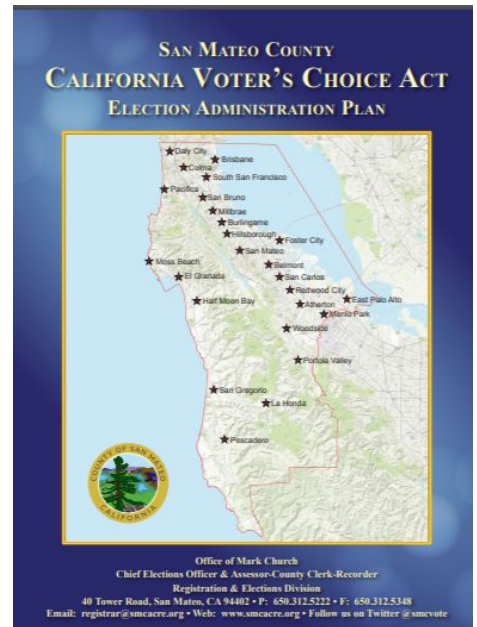
In order to transition to the VCA, your Elections Office is required to draft an Election Administration Plan (EAP). The EAP is comprehensive and will cover a plethora of detail, including:

- Vote Center and Ballot Dropbox locations
- Public education plans

- Media outreach ideas
- Available support and tools for voters with disabilities
- Types of assistance for voters who speak a language other than English

EAP procedure

1. Elections Offices are required to consult with the public *prior* to drafting the EAP. This includes at least one public meeting with representatives from language minority communities and another public meeting with advocates for, and people with disabilities in your county.
2. After getting input from language minority communities and people with disabilities, the county Elections Office will publish the draft plan and hold a public hearing no less than 14 days after the draft plan is published.
3. In addition to being able to attend the public hearing and make comments on the draft plan, the public will be able to submit written comments. It is recommended that community-based organizations hold meetings with other organizations to collaborate and think through the issues. Comments can be submitted individually, from an organization, or as a coalition.
4. If the county amends its plan after the public hearing, it will post a second draft and there will be another 14 days for public comment, but another public hearing is not required.
5. The Secretary of State must either approve the Voter Education & Outreach portion of the EAP or send it back for revision.⁷



⁷ The SoS's office has convened a task force, on which the state League sits, to help review the EAPs and make recommendations to the counties.

EAP feedback

One of the best ways to play a role with the VCA is for your League to monitor the progress of the EAP, collaborate with other groups to provide feedback, and work with your county Elections Office to create a robust plan. In San Mateo County, the local community coalition provided frequent feedback and critiques of the EAP. It was amended twice before being finalized. [You can view the final version along with the earlier drafts](#) in order to get a sense of how the conversations progressed and to see how an engaged coalition helped create a stronger final EAP.⁸ You can also check out [Voter's Choice California](#) to find your county's EAP by finding your county under the "VCA Counties" option.

Vote Center and Dropbox locations

The shift from polling places to Vote Centers and Dropboxes will be one of the biggest changes for voters. That's why it's important to gather as much feedback as possible about where to place each voting location. The law has fourteen criteria that must be considered when determining where Vote Centers should go, and you can use these guides for [Vote Center and Dropbox requirements](#) as well as [accessibility requirements](#) to ensure that your county meets those criteria.

You can also check out [the Voting Location Siting Tool designed by the California Civic Engagement Project](#) to help map out ideal Vote Center locations. This tool identifies areas where voting locations are likely to have the most success in serving voters.

Certain factors are not legally required, but may be extremely important to your community. Community members should think about weighing in on matters such as:

⁸ Use of this EAP is not meant to endorse its substance, but is offered as an example of the public participation process used in EAP development.

- Are Dropboxes located indoors? You may want to advocate for outside locations.
 - If they're indoors, are they accessible at consistent hours? [This article highlights](#) potential issues that can arise depending on the Dropbox location.
- Are any Dropboxes accessible 24/7?
- Are there an adequate number of Dropboxes in rural and other hard-to-reach areas?
- Is your county providing a roving/mobile Vote Center to give voters in rural or hard-to-reach areas, or communities of people with disabilities, a chance to vote in person?
- Are Vote Centers located at places familiar to people in your county's communities?
- Are Vote Centers located in places everyone in your community trusts and feels comfortable?
 - In 2018, eligible voters from families with some undocumented members provided feedback that they did not feel comfortable voting or dropping a ballot off at a city hall or next to a police department.⁹ Libraries were considered more friendly locations.
- Are there an adequate number of Vote Centers in neighborhoods with traditionally low vote by mail (VBM) rates?
 - The VCA may pose the greatest challenge for people who prefer to vote at the polling place rather than by mail. That's why it's important to encourage your county to get statistics on which neighborhoods have low VBM rates to inform Vote Center placement.
- Should some of the Vote Centers have additional bilingual assistance?

Outreach strategy and materials

Working with the county Elections Office and other community groups to spread the word will mirror the kind of outreach you are already doing within

⁹ Historically, [the presence of police officers near polling locations](#) has been experienced as intimidating.

your League, with one key difference; as a group, you will have more resources and perspectives. This is crucial because your county Elections Office should have a relatively large budget to use in outreach, including sending direct mailers to voters to explain the VCA, holding public meetings, and partnering with local media. With your input, they can put that budget to the best use. Your League can help by providing input on:

- How the county communicates the changes from polling places to Vote Centers by things such as:
 - Posting notices at new locations
 - Posting notices at old polling locations to advertise nearby Vote Centers and Dropboxes.
- Direct mailers and flyers that the county sends to voters
 - Give guidance to help generate plain-language, readable mailers. San Mateo County created [flyers](#) and [direct mailers](#) that serve as good models of how to use plain language effectively.
- The materials your county generates for social media, newspapers, radio stations, TV, and other outlets.
- Finding media outlets geared toward the full diversity of the county's communities and that broadcast in languages other than English.
- Creating accessible materials, especially when developing print and web-based media.
- Whether the materials being produced follow plain-language and readability best practices as outlined in the [Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides](#) and by the [Center for Civic Design](#).
- Offering additional ideas about community partners, media partners, and outreach events.

November 6, 2018 Statewide General Election



You will be mailed a ballot the week of October 8, 2018.



You can fill out and return your ballot in the postage-paid envelope provided. It must be postmarked by November 6.



Or, you can drop off your ballot at any county Vote Center or Ballot Dropbox.



You can vote in person by visiting **any** Vote Center. You can also:

- Drop off your ballot.
- Vote with an accessible voting machine.
- Get help and voting materials in multiple languages.
- Didn't register in time? At a Vote Center you can sign up and vote on the same day all the way through Election Day.

When Vote Centers are Open

Tuesday, October 9 – 3 Vote Centers are open on weekdays.

Saturday, October 27 – 8 Vote Centers open every day - including two weekends.

Saturday, November 3 – 39 Vote Centers open every day through Election Day, November 6.

Don't miss the weekend Vote Centers open Saturdays & Sundays! For Vote Center and Ballot Drop Box location & hours, and more information, visit [____.org](#), or call or text XXX.XXX.XXXX

A generic direct mailer written in plain language. Access the word version [here](#).

Step 3: Outreach - All Things League

The easiest way to begin your outreach efforts is to bring the VCA into all things League. This means educating your League’s membership about the VCA and incorporating new language into your voter service materials.

Publications

You can incorporate VCA messaging into any and all of your publications. Start with an email announcement to your membership sharing the new days and new ways to vote. This is a great chance to explain how the VCA works and to start building a list of people in your League who might be interested in doing outreach. A similar message is a good idea if you have a voter service listserv to reach non-League members in your community.

You can then start generating flyers and other publications to get the word out. Voter’s Choice California created plain language VCA flyers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) that are appropriate for all counties. Community groups in Nevada County used [bookmarks and postcards](#) to provide voters with a concise explanation of the VCA and Vote Center and Dropboxes. This type of messaging can easily be incorporated into voter service materials that your League routinely hands out. The state League has also created a plain-language explanation of the VCA that is included in our [Easy Voter Guides \(EVGs\)](#). These come in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese, and are



You now have more days and more ways to vote in Nevada County.

If you are registered to vote, you will **get your ballot in the mail** weeks before the election.

You have **3 ways to return** your completed ballot:



Mail it in the included postage-paid envelope.



Use a county Dropbox starting October 9.



Visit a Vote Center starting October 27.

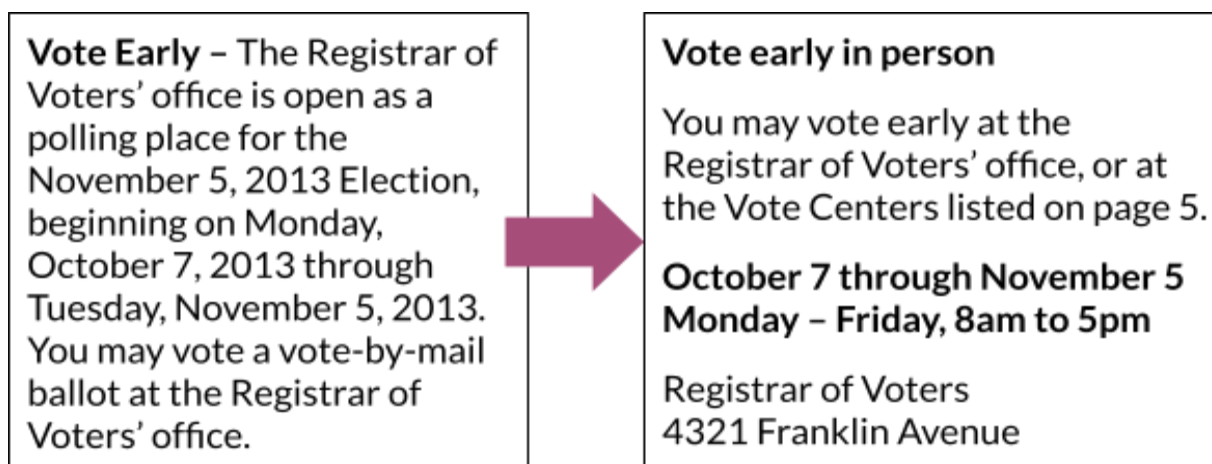
Most of your old neighborhood polling places will no longer be open. Instead, you can **vote in person** at any Vote Center in the county.

Get more information by visiting VotersChoice.sos.ca.gov or calling 1-888-395-1298

the perfect handout for people who need a primer on the VCA or voting in general.

A note on plain-language

If you can't find VCA messaging that works for your outreach and you decide to create your own, take care to craft a message that is in plain-language. This will help you reach the widest possible audience, including people with low-literacy, people with intellectual disabilities, and those not familiar with voting terminology. To learn some best practices and to get examples of effective plain-language communication, check out the [Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides](#) or the [Center for Civic Design](#).



A before and after of how plain language and formatting can help you convey information better

Events

League events are the best forums to share the VCA with an audience that is familiar with the League and already eager to learn about voting. In 2018, various groups (including Elections Offices) conducted VCA events where the only topic for discussion was the VCA. They were largely unsuccessful and failed to attract audiences larger than a handful of people. Instead, information about the VCA is best shared at other events with a captive

audience. As a League, you likely have an advantage due to the events your League holds for any election, like the ones listed below.

Pros & Cons presentations and candidate forums

Pros & Cons presentations and candidate forums are excellent opportunities to provide a quick overview of the new ways to vote. This is best done before getting into your main event. For example, before introducing the candidates at a forum, you can show a short video covering the VCA basics. Or you can start a Pros & Cons Presentation by showing a slideshow about the VCA. Here again, the previously noted [Voter's Choice Act: Voter Ed & Outreach](#) presentation from San Mateo County can be modified and used for your county. Community groups in Nevada County also produced [this video](#) explaining the changes in detail.

Mock elections and campus voter registration events

If your League has a high school or college voter registration program, or if you help out at mock elections, make sure you incorporate the VCA into your presentation. For most young voters, the VCA will be the first voting model they use, so it's important to make sure they start with the correct information.

Flyers are good takeaways - especially because they are taken home and will provide information to the whole family. Videos and hands on presentations will, however, be more engaging. If you're working with students whose parents' first language may not be English, try to send home in-language materials.

Step 4: Outreach - Collaborations

More events

Collaborating with community based organizations

Local Leagues can use VCA implementation as a way to build relationships with other community based organizations. Ideally, you'll create a coalition and work together to craft messaging for culturally-sensitive community outreach. Alternatively, you might be asked to do a [Voter's Choice Act: Voter Ed & Outreach](#) presentation for another organization - either as a "train the trainers" exercise or simply to help educate members of the organization. In 2018, Leagues attended meetings of organizations like the Sierra Club, Rotary Club, and the NAACP, and gave short presentations on the VCA and other election topics. Sometimes they teamed up with other community based organizations to do presentations collaboratively.

Community events

Tabling or speaking at events such as farmers' markets, community fairs, and sports, can help you cast a wide net to reach voters from different demographics and those who don't normally seek out League information. Only low touch strategies (e.g. strategies that are short and that get the basic facts across in a concise manner) would work in this type of setting, but a handout with the VCA basics will help build awareness.

As you look for events to attend and at which to table, try to target all of the various demographics that make up your community. In 2018, Leagues attended events at concerts in the park, community fairs and markets, Cinco de Mayo celebrations, Lunar New Year festivals, Pride celebrations, and much more. The more events your League is able to attend, the more likely

you will be able to reach communities that are historically underrepresented in our elections.

Traditional media

Letters to the editor, radio PSAs, and other traditional mediums are useful in casting a broad net to reach your whole county. If your League has connections with local papers or radio stations, then get in touch with them to see if they will run strategically-timed [written](#) or [verbal](#) announcements about the VCA and how it affects voters in your area. [Articles like this one in Nevada County](#) can help your League get the word out about the VCA and the work you're doing during election season.

Costs to run ads in these mediums can be prohibitive, so consider working with your Elections Office to generate any such ads. Your League can help by making sure the county is targeting newspapers that reach diverse communities with accessible, in-language materials that are accurate, informative, and engaging.

Social media

Using social media not only allows you to quickly get the message out to your members, it enables you to reach their networks and other people in your community who may have never heard of the League. As we get closer to the election, you should consider posting frequently to share election information including, but not limited to, VCA messaging. If you have extra funds available, consider Facebook and Twitter ads to reach a broader network.

Note: in order to post certain elections-oriented ads on Twitter and Facebook, you will need to verify your account. This takes time so get started on this a few months before the election. Detailed instructions on how to do so can be found [here for Facebook](#) and [here for Twitter](#).

Facebook and Twitter

The most effective way to reach a wide audience on Facebook and Twitter is to give your audience materials that they can act on and that they are eager to share with their friends. Successful social media posts:

- Use the official hashtag [#MoreDaysMoreWays](#) - this will make your posts more visible to people looking for VCA updates on social media.
- Invite targeted groups to attend LAAC and VAAC meetings, especially if they are from a minority language community or if they are a person with a disability.¹⁰
- Ask users to give feedback about where Vote Centers and Dropboxes are being placed and provide mechanisms for them to relay that feedback to the Elections Office.
- Tag certain audience members who will continue to share the post and boost visibility. (This method is best employed in posts on your pages, not in ads).
- Use images! Photos of people, especially people voting, draw users to your post. You can use [this collection of VCA images](#) generated by the LWVC.
- You can view sample Twitter posts from November 2018 in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).



One of the stock photos you can customize to help in your VCA outreach

¹⁰ Prior to doing this, however, make sure that you know they county's rules related to LAAC and VAAC membership and that you're directing people to the correct Elections Office contacts.

Following these suggestions will help maximize the power of social media and get the most engagement for your dollar. You should also make sure you target particular audiences. You can build ads that go to:

- Young people
- People who speak languages other than English. Make sure these ads are in the appropriate language and placed in relevant publications.
- People in different geographic areas. For example, people in urban or rural areas, those in areas affected by a natural disaster, and people in areas with historically low voter turnout or low vote by mail usage.)
- People who follow certain Facebook or Twitter groups. For example, you can reach people with disabilities by sending ads that go to people who follow Disability Rights California or people who “like” an assisted living center, etc.



A VCA tweet highlighting the days voters have before Election Day

Nextdoor

Nextdoor is a private social network where you can communicate with people in your neighborhood. It is a great forum to share VCA and other election information. To have the broadest impact, have several members of your League from different neighborhoods sign up and start sharing

information. You can start by sharing a concise announcement about the changes to voting and how they impact your community. You can follow this up with routine posts about dates and deadlines, including:

- Registration deadlines (to avoid having to register at a Vote Center and to ensure receipt of state and county voter guides.)
- A notice to look out for their ballot once they are mailed
- A notice when Vote Centers open up along with a few nearby locations
- Information to help them understand the VCA and what's on their ballot, including flyers, [Voter's Edge](#), and the [Easy Voter Guide](#)
- Invitations to attend a public VCA meeting

Accessibility of outreach

As you develop your League's outreach strategy and help the county Elections Office create theirs, you'll want to find ways to reach out to underrepresented communities, including language minority groups and people with disabilities. This can be done in part by networking with leaders and organizations in these communities, tabling at relevant events, and by distributing outreach materials through appropriate channels. However, even if your League has identified ways to reach these communities, it's important to make sure that you're communicating appropriately with your target audience. Below are a few tips and resources to do so.



People from language minority communities

Translating voter education materials can be expensive, but luckily there are a few VCA and general voter resources that have been translated into different languages. The League's [Easy Voter Guide \(EVG\)](#) is in Spanish,

Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and English, and is the perfect primer for anyone who speaks one of these languages and is looking for a basic overview of voting and the VCA. Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAAJ) also translated a few materials in [multiple languages](#), including Punjabi, Hmong, and Khmer. These materials were last updated in 2018, but they still contain the most important details about the VCA if your League can't find or produce other resources for 2020. Keep checking back because the AAAJ is planning to update their in-language resources.

ਇਹ ਤੱਥ ਪੱਤਰ ਸਿਰਫ ਮਾਡੇਰਾ, ਨਾਪਾ, ਨੇਵਾਡਾ, ਸੈਨ ਮੇਟਿਓ ਅਤੇ ਸੈਕਰਾਮੈਂਟੋ ਕਾਊਂਟੀਆਂ ਲਈ ਹੈ।

ਜਾਣੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਵੋਟਿੰਗ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ

ਕੀ ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਚੋਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੋਟ ਪਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹਾਂ? ਮੈਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਕਿੱਥੋਂ ਕਰਾਂ? ਕਿਸੇ ਚੋਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ, ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ "ਰਜਿਸਟਰ" ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਤੁਸੀਂ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ:

- ਇੱਕ ਅਮਰੀਕੀ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ ਹੋ;
- ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ ਦੇ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਹੋ;

ਕੈਲੀਫੋਰਨੀਆ 2018

ਆਮ ਚੋਣਾਂ
ਮੰਗਲਵਾਰ, 6 ਨਵੰਬਰ, 2018
ਵੋਟਰ ਰਜਿਸਟਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਆਖਿਰੀ ਤਾਰੀਖ
ਸੋਮਵਾਰ, 22 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ, 2018

ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਰਜਿਸਟਰਡ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਨਹੀਂ? ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਵੇਖਣ ਲਈ ਕਿ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਨਹੀਂ ਐਨਲਾਈਨ <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov> 'ਤੇ ਚੈੱਕ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਯਕੀਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ। ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਨਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਬਦਲ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਦੁਬਾਰਾ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕਰਾਉਣਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ।

A know your voting rights guide published in Punjabi

If you, your Elections Office, or another organization in your community decides to create translations of new VCA materials, it's crucial that your translators refer to the [official VCA glossary](#) in the appropriate language. They are listed on the left-hand side of the Secretary of State's VCA resource page. Using the official glossary ensures consistency and culturally competent messaging.

People with disabilities

When designing flyers and other outreach materials, keep in mind that they need to be accessible to audience members with disabilities. Plain language helps people with low-literacy. For readability in general, and audiences with low vision, you can use a few tools to make your materials more accessible:

- Use 14 point font
- Avoid serif fonts. Sans serif is recommended
- Use high contrast colors, e.g. if your background is white, use black or navy blue text
- When providing input on your Elections Office's **online** materials, encourage them to use HTML instead of PDFs. Using HTML instead of PDF documents makes the documents accessible to people with certain disabilities or that use assistive technologies such as screen readers.



All Vote Centers will have several accessible voting machines available

When creating materials for people with disabilities, there are a few key pieces of the VCA you can highlight:

- Voters with disabilities can request a remote accessible vote by mail (RAVBM) ballot to allow them to vote privately and independently. They will be able to fill this ballot out at home using their assistive technologies, print it, and mail it to the Elections Office.
- Vote Centers are required to be accessible, to be near public transportation routes, and to have voting machines accessible to people with disabilities.

- Membership on the county's Voter Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) offers an opportunity to provide input as to how VCA implementation can best accommodate the needs of all voters.

Conclusion

If you've read up to this point, then it is probably clear that the VCA is anything but straightforward. Regardless of whether you're working on implementation and/or outreach, it will take you, your League, your elections office, and your community to make it work. It requires going to public meetings, tabling at community events, and leaving no stone unturned.

It will be a challenge, but it will be worth it. If all goes smoothly, the VCA will be an opportunity to make our democracy more representative and inclusive. With a more accessible and convenient elections system, we can close the participation gap for young voters, voters with disabilities and from language minority communities, and others who have been underrepresented in our electorate. Hopefully the many resources in this guide will help you in this endeavor.

If you have questions about the VCA or are looking for resources that you can't find, we are here to help. Just give us a call at (916) 442-7215 or email Andrew Muse-Fisher at amusefisher@lwvc.org. We may not have all the answers, but we are more than happy to speak with you and see how we can assist.

Appendix A: Links

The following links are the same as those listed in the toolkit, but in a more truncated format. Each has a brief description and is organized by subject area.

Introduction

Link	Description
Voter’s Choice Act: Voter Education & Outreach Powerpoint	You can make a copy of this San Mateo County presentation and edit it to use at League events, coalition meetings, and to give an overview of the VCA to a broad range of audiences.
Voter’s Choice California (VCC)	A project of the Future of California Elections , VCC is a coalition of civil rights groups, advocates for effective government, and community based organizations committed to advancing effective implementation of the California Voter's Choice Act and broad, diverse voter participation.

Is the VCA right for your county

Link	Description
Secretary of State’s site: Vote by Mail Rates	Find Vote by Mail rates for your county organized by election.
VCA Implementation Letter to Santa Clara Board of Supervisors	A letter to the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors that highlights important considerations when debating approval of the VCA. It was written in 2019 by a coalition of nonprofits including the state League.

Impacting implementation

Link	Description
Voter’s Choice Act 101 & Public Participation Guide	<p>This PowerPoint had some overlap with the Voter Ed & Outreach one, but it focuses on opportunities for the community to weigh in with early-stage review of the county’s VCA plans.</p>
Community Review Guide	<p>A clear, plain language guide to reviewing the EAP. Created as a form for easy recording of feedback.</p>
Comprehensive EAP Checklist	<p>A deep dive into all the elements that should be covered in the EAP, including the 14 criteria for Vote Center siting.</p>
Legal Digest and Compliance Checklists	<p>These documents detail all statutory requirements of the VCA and can help you understand the different elements that go into implementing the new law.</p>
Public Participation: A Guide for Election Officials Implementing the California Voter’s Choice Act	<p>A guide produced by Voter’s Choice California. Elections Offices are the target audience, but it can also come in handy for community organizations trying to hold meetings and generate feedback on the VCA.</p>
Center for Inclusive Democracy (CID) Report on Key Considerations in Implementing the VCA	<p>This guide covers some of the factors that county elections officials should consider when deciding to adopt the VCA. Community organizations may find it useful when advocating for the adoption or effective implementation of the VCA.</p>
Secretary of State’s VCA Quick Start Guide	<p>This quick start kit is intended to be used as a starting point for county elections administrators who are considering adopting the Voter’s Choice Act model for election administration in their</p>

	county.
<u>Secretary of State’s VCA Starter Kit</u>	This Starter Kit to the VCA is designed as a collection of resources and in-depth references. These materials and documents were developed by many of the stakeholders who participated in the implementation for the first Voter’s Choice elections in 2018.
<u>CID Report on the Benefits and Challenges to Community Collaboration</u>	This brief presents findings regarding the benefits and challenges of collaboration in 2018, and recommended areas for improvement in 2020.
<u>Guide to Building a VCA Coalition</u>	This guide created by Voter’s Choice California goes through the steps and the strategies to building an impactful VCA coalition.
<u>San Mateo County Voter Education and Outreach Advisory Committee (VEOAC)</u>	The homepage for the San Mateo County VEOAC, a group of community organizations that advises the Elections Office on VCA outreach efforts.
<u>San Mateo County Election Administration Plans</u>	The San Mateo EAP drafts and final versions, along with the EAP in different languages.
<u>Voter’s Choice California EAPs</u>	Voter’s Choice California keeps records of each county’s EAP as it becomes available. You can find yours under the “VCA Counties” option.
<u>Vote Center and Dropbox Requirements</u>	An easy to follow checklist of the legal requirements for Vote Centers and Dropboxes.
<u>Vote Center Disability and Language</u>	An easy to follow checklist of the legal requirements to make voting under the VCA more accessible for people with disabilities and

Accessibility Requirements	people from language minority communities
CID Voting Location Siting Tool	This mapping tool is designed to assist elections offices and community organizations seeking to place voting locations in the most appropriate locations.
The library was closed, so they left ballots on the lobby floor. Will their votes count?	A <i>Sacramento Bee</i> article about how Dropbox placement caused some confusion on Election Day.
VCA Outreach Flyer from San Mateo County	This is a palm card developed by the San Mateo County elections office that explains the VCA. The card follows best practices for plain language to communicate the most important details about the VCA.
Direct Mailer Example from San Mateo County	This is an example of a direct mailer sent to voters to let them know about the VCA. The mailer was reviewed by community organizations to be in plain language and to communicate the most important details about the VCA.
Direct Mailer Template	A generic direct mailer written in plain language. This template uses best practices to explain the VCA, and is a good resource for elections officials as they draft their outreach materials.

Outreach - All Things League

Link	Description
League of Women Voters of California Education Fund	The home page of the state League’s Education Fund. Here you can find more information about the numerous voter resources we provide.

Voter's Choice Act: Voter Education & Outreach Powerpoint	You can make a copy of this San Mateo County VCA presentation and edit it to use at League events, coalition meetings, and to give an overview of the VCA to a broad range of audiences.
VCA Flyer in English and Spanish	These plain-language flyers were created by Voter's Choice California. They are appropriate for all VCA counties and were updated in September, 2019.
VCA Bookmark and Postcard Examples	Examples of plain language VCA outreach materials your League can produce to spread the word about the new ways to vote and where to vote.
The Easy Voter Guide	The League's nonpartisan info guide about why vote, how to vote, and what's on the ballot. It features a VCA info page and is updated for each primary and general election with propositions on the ballot.
Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides	Developed by the League, this is an easy to-use resource for election officials and community groups working to enfranchise and educate California voters.
Center for Civic Design Field Guides	Design guidelines, based on research and best practices, that election officials can use to improve their voting materials,
Nevada County VCA PSA	Created by Nevada County community groups, this video offers an in depth explanation of the VCA.

Outreach - Collaborations

Link	Description
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Print News Ad Examples	Ads placed in newspapers throughout the state that highlight the essential facts about the VCA.
Nevada County News Article	An informational news article written by the League to explain how the VCA will impact voters in Nevada County.
Spanish Radio PSA Example	Listen to a spanish language PSA explaining the VCA. Originally aired in Napa County.
VCA Photo Gallery	A collection of photos of people voting, using Dropboxes, mailing their ballots, and using Voter's Edge. Feel free to use these photos in your League's VCA outreach.
Sample Twitter Posts - English	Sample VCA Twitter messaging to explain different aspects and timing of the VCA. These messages were generated by Voter's Choice CA.
Sample Twitter Posts - Spanish	Sample VCA Twitter messaging in Spanish to explain different aspects and timing of the VCA.
#MoreDaysMoreWays	This is the official hashtag for VCA outreach on social media. This link will show you all of the most recent and top performing Twitter posts talking about the VCA.
How to Get Authorization to Run Political Ads on Facebook	This guide will walk you through the many steps required to gain authorization to run political or get out the vote ads on Facebook.
How to Get Authorization to Run Political Ads on Twitter	This guide will walk you through the many steps required to gain authorization to run political or get out the vote ads on Twitter.
Voter's Edge California	The League's premier ballot look up site created in partnership with Maplight. It has VCA information and general voting information that

	will make voting easier for CA voters.
<u>Asian Americans Advancing Justice’s Know Your Rights in Several Languages</u>	VCA and non-VCA flyers that cover the basics of voting in several different languages.