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A Project of Future of California Elections

## **Public Participation in the Voter's Choice Act:**

### **Identifying Public Participants**

In this excerpt of [Public Participation: A Guide for Election Officials Implementing the California Voter's Choice Act](#), Voter's Choice California (VCC) outlines ideas to help election administrators expand your lists of community leaders who engage with your office. Diverse outreach lists can help you refine your EAP, populate LAACs and VAACs, and educate the public about new voting processes.

#### **Create a diverse outreach list**

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

- Organizations serving people with disabilities
- Organizations serving African American communities
- Organizations serving Asian American communities
- Organizations serving Latino communities
- Organizations serving Native American communities
- Organizations that focus on voter engagement and participation
- School-based organizations, such as Parent Teacher Associations and school boards
- Municipal governments and services, such as libraries, city councils, utilities
- Local political party clubs and county central committees

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Future of California Elections 1000 North Alameda Street, Suite 240, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
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- Service organizations, such as Kiwanis, Lions, and Rotary
- College/student organizations
- Business associations, such as chambers of commerce and young professionals clubs
- Religious organizations, such as interfaith councils and PICO chapters
- Organizations with local relevance, such as a beach-related organization in a coastal community or a wine-growers association or 4H in a rural community
- Labor unions
- Social service agencies and nonprofits, such as food banks and 211 call centers

## Engage partners

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

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

Most counties regularly invite community leaders to forward outreach messages to their networks. You might consider expanding the set of leaders you enlist for this purpose. Consider soliciting the help of your LAAC and VAAC members and other community leaders such as members of county commissions, local elected officials, and nonprofit

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leaders. Besides being able to share and publicize information about meetings, community organizations can provide extra encouragement to community members to attend meetings.

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

### Personalize invitations

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

#### **SAMPLE MESSAGE**

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

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### VCC calendar of events

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

### Other methods

A number of additional methods for engaging voters and community leaders, including recommendations for using social media, are detailed in the full guide: [Public Participation: A Guide for Election Officials Implementing the California Voter's Choice Act](#).

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