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# HOW VOTERS GET INFORMATION

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★ Best Practices Manual for Official Voter  
Information Guides in California ★

2015

This project is supported by a grant from The James Irvine Foundation. Our project on how voters get information is in collaboration with the Center for Civic Design and the Future of California Elections.



LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF CALIFORNIA  
EDUCATION FUND

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As you review this guide, look out for these icons:



Important



Take a closer look



Quotes and information from research participants



May require changes to existing laws

## FOREWORD

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Only 31% of eligible Californians voted in the November 2014 election, and young people and people of color continue to be underrepresented. Although many factors contribute to low voter turnout, we believe that voter information is an important tool to engage and expand the electorate.

Since 1921, the League of Women Voters of California has been encouraging active and informed participation in government. This *Best Practices Manual for Official Voter Information Guides* continues this tradition and was specifically developed as an easy-to-use resource for election officials and community groups working to enfranchise and educate California voters.

Through this initiative, we aim to make voter information more effective, more inviting, and more useful by giving the right kind of information to voters at the right time, in the right way. Our research, led by the Center for Civic Design, was informed by diverse stakeholders including election officials, community organizations, good government groups, and frequent and infrequent voters from across California. The voices of these voters underpin all our conclusions and recommendations.

*“The whole time I’ve been ignoring this book, and it had all this information inside. Now that I’m reading it, it makes me feel more confident.”*

*– Bilingual, low-literacy research participant*

We hope that using our recommendations will lead to voter guides that raise voter confidence and increase participation. Fortunately, some of these ideas are already being implemented in one or more California counties. While we suggest several simple fixes, some ideas may face regulatory, legislative, and financial barriers—a challenge we welcome to better serve California voters.

We look forward to partnering with you to engage, educate, and serve California’s diverse electorate.



**Melissa M. Breach**

Executive Director

League of Women Voters of California Education Fund

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# RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

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This project included several phases of qualitative research. Our approach focused on observing voters to understand whether and why a design (such as a voter information pamphlet or a website) works, or in what ways it does not. Methods included information-gathering interviews, open-ended (ethnographic) interviews, and usability testing.

Qualitative research typically uses smaller numbers of participants than surveys or other quantitative research. However, two rounds of research sessions with voters and interviews with stakeholders across the state provided a strong research base for our recommendations.



## STAKEHOLDER INPUT

We worked with state and county election officials and community advocacy and good government groups through 25 interviews and several workshops.

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## LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

Center for Civic Design collected and analyzed current voter guides to get a sense of the range of information already available and how it is presented to voters in California.

- Early in the project, we looked for good examples we could use as a springboard for our work in a convenient sample of guides from 2010 to 2013.
  - We collected and analyzed guides from all 58 counties for the June 2014 Primary Election.
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## RESEARCH WITH VOTERS AND NON-VOTERS

We conducted two sets of research interviews with a wide range of voters, potential voters, and infrequent voters around the state with Center for Civic Design.

- Short research sessions were conducted with 53 people, collecting their preferences for what types of information they wanted and what channels and formats worked best for them. These interviews took place in Oakland, San Jose, Los Angeles, and Modesto.
- A prototype voter guide was designed and presented in 45 research sessions in which voters were asked to find answers to their questions about elections and talk about the experience of using the guide. These sessions took place in Los Angeles County, Modesto, and Berkeley. Participants included new citizens, people with low literacy, people with disabilities, and people who spoke Spanish and Chinese.

# RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

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## CURRENT VOTER GUIDES

Before diving into our recommendations, we must acknowledge how much current practice is meeting voter needs. Voters of all levels of participation in the study appreciated the substantial, useful information available in the current guides.

### Most counties provide basic information in their guides

Overall, the county guides are relatively consistent in providing basic information for an election. For example, almost all of them include “nuts and bolts” details like dates, hours, sample ballots, candidate statements, and other legally required information like party endorsements and information about top-two primaries.

### Nearly one-third of counties do not include key information

We know from interviews with election officials that the decision to include certain material is both practical and financial, based on filling pages in the booklet format. Even allowing for this practicality and differences in election administration, there are some surprising gaps, with some guides (up to a third of them) missing information like:

- Accessibility information for voters with disabilities
- The address of the polling place or an indication of where to find it (especially for online PDF files)
- Deadlines for voting by mail
- Information about language support at the polls

### The length of the guide varies by county

We are concerned with the length of the sample ballots, in light of the strong evidence from many sources that voters feel that preparing for an election can be an overwhelming task. The number of pages is one of the factors that figure into the “20-second test,” which is how long it will take before a guide may be thrown away. If recipients get a large document in the mail, they’re less likely to even flip through it, regardless of how compelling the cover might be.

The number of pages in the cataloged guides sometimes correlates to the size of the county population, with larger counties and areas with greater population density often having more pages. Does this suggest that voters in larger counties need more information, or that larger counties have larger budgets to add more information in their guides, or that larger counties have more election contests – or something else? That’s a question for another research study.

### Official Guides vs. Advocacy Groups’ Guides

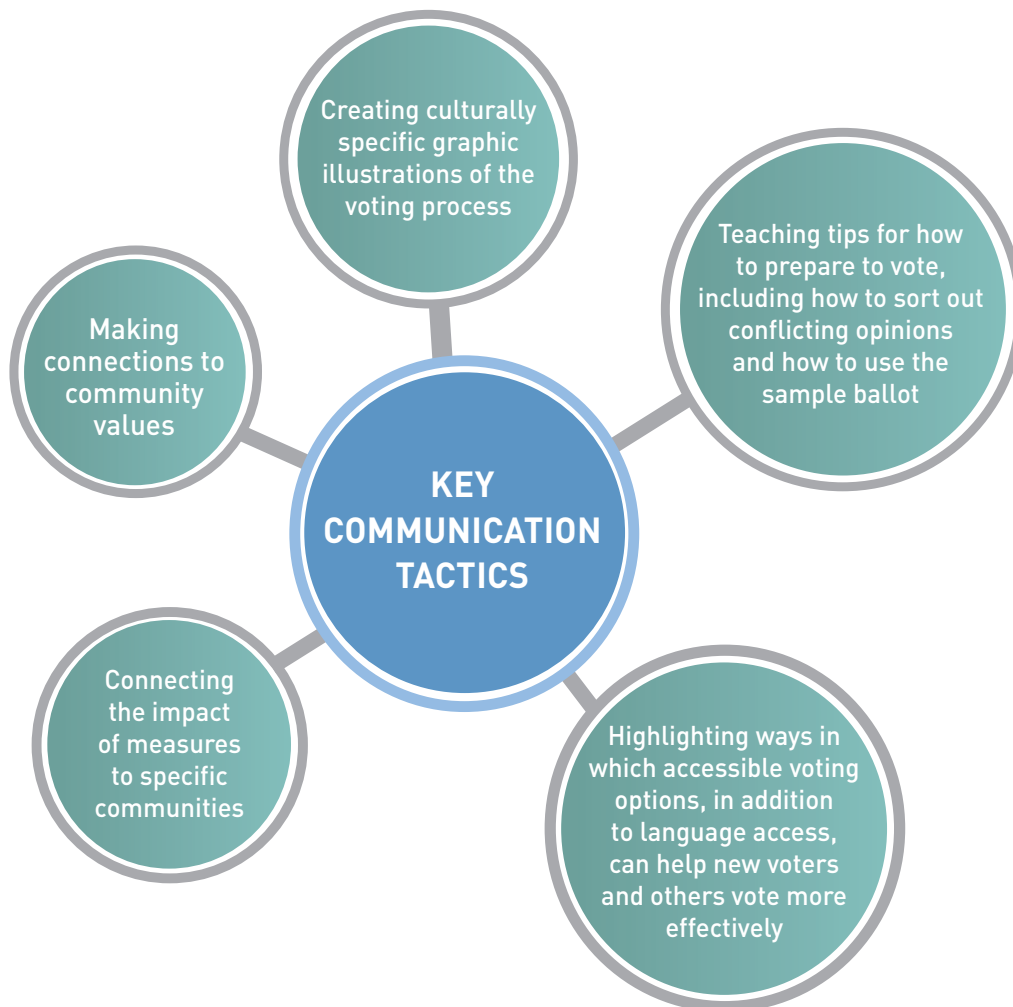
The stakeholders interviewed at the start of this project indicated that we might uncover information that would help advocacy and good-government groups write their own voter guides, whether or not they take positions on issues and candidates. Most of our guidelines and recommendations apply to any voter information, but advocacy groups have an opportunity to include information that might not be possible in an official voter guide.

# RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

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Our research participants were keenly aware of the literature from partisan campaigns. However, when a voter guide was from an advocacy group, the intent and message could be less clear. This was true even when voters valued the opinion of the group. Many said they didn't believe there was such a thing as neutral or unbiased nonpartisan information. They said they picked groups who had supplied them in the past with good information that matched their own beliefs.

We heard from advocacy groups that they often start developing their materials based on the information from various state offices, simplifying from there. This information might include county measures, how-to-vote information, and details such as candidate endorsements. Advocacy groups can help voters, especially new or less-frequent voters, better understand their participation by creating a bridge between those voters and the official information, teaching them how to read and use it, and filling in gaps in what an official guide can or will say.



# CORE FINDINGS

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## Voters need personalized information that is well organized and cleanly presented in an easy-to-read format.

We explored how voters (particularly new voters, registered non-voters, infrequent voters, and potential voters) find information about elections and what does or does not work about their current sources.



### VOTERS—ESPECIALLY NEW VOTERS—WANT INFORMATION THAT WILL HELP THEM:

- Understand their choices about how, when, and where to vote
- Learn about what is on the ballot for each election, so they can make decisions
- Identify nonpartisan, official information they can trust

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## One of the challenges of designing a voter guide is that it has to serve a wide audience with two broadly different goals:

- Experienced voters want quick access to confirm the when and where of voting and then to go directly to information about the current election, especially the ballot measures.
- New or infrequent voters have more needs for general education about how to participate in an election, in addition to needing details about what is on the ballot.

Both groups want to be able to get the information they need quickly and easily.

From the research we learned:



### PEOPLE WHO ARE **NOT VOTING** NEED TO CONNECT TO THE COMMUNITY THROUGH:

- Plain language
- Civic literacy
- Demystifying the act and logistics of voting
- Justifying the value of voting
- In-language materials

### PEOPLE WHO ARE **VOTING SOMETIMES** NEED TO CONNECT DAILY LIFE TO ISSUES AND CANDIDATES THROUGH:

- Simple and clear information about candidates and issues
- Options for voting

### **AVID VOTERS** NEED TO CONNECT TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WITH:

- Complete information
- Information about working the polls
- Encouragement to be role models

# CORE FINDINGS

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## OUR RESEARCH UNCOVERED THREE MAIN INSIGHTS INTO IMPROVING VOTER INFORMATION:

1. Use of plain language can't be overemphasized
2. Good layout and thoughtful visual presentation are important for comprehension
3. Voter guides are an important civic literacy tool

## 1. PLAIN LANGUAGE

The importance of using plain language to bridge the civic literacy gap cannot be overstated.

Research participants were unfamiliar with important terms that are key to understanding elections—sometimes not understanding how a term is applied in elections, but more often not knowing the word itself. As a result, some participants skipped or misunderstood sections of the guide.

### ELECTION TERMS THAT ARE DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND:

- |               |                   |                |
|---------------|-------------------|----------------|
| • Primary     | • Split your vote | • Rebuttal     |
| • Endorsement | • Redistricting   | • Early voting |
| • Polls       |                   |                |

They needed hints to help them interpret the information, such as descriptions of the offices: what do they do? Is it part of local, state, or national government? How will the winner of the contest impact my life?

And they struggled to understand where some of the information comes from. In particular, the ballot measure section has so many voices, from the summary, to advocates for and against, to the official analysis, to the text of the measures itself. For example, the San Francisco guide has a helpful glossary of terms used in ballot measures, but it would be better for the ballot measure material to be written in plain language or have definitions on the same page where the terms are used.

*\*For more plain language examples, see Appendix B.*

## 2. LAYOUT AND VISUAL PRESENTATION

In the first round of user research, we asked participants to select pages from a book of samples that they would want in their own voter guide.

The five pages participants chose most often all used visual layout effectively. The layouts of these pages made the content easy to skim and scan, and the reader knew immediately what information was being conveyed. (See the top five pages in Appendix C.)

We also found that many participants recognized the cover of the California Voter Guide from the Secretary of State's office because the design is consistent from election to election.



# CORE FINDINGS

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## Voters want a roadmap to the booklet and the elections process

In all of our research, participants wanted, liked, and used a table of contents when one was available. In the sample ballot prototype, the table of contents acted as a roadmap to help them understand the scope of the information in the booklet. Many used the table of contents to flip through the book and stay oriented, coming back to it for each new thing they wanted to find. Without it, they often got lost in the details.

*"Useful. Lets you know where to go, so no extra reading." – Regular voter*

*"Fast, simple, to the point" – Non-voter*

*\*For more layout and visual presentation examples, see Appendix B.*

## 3. CIVIC LITERACY

The evidence from our research suggests that an official voter guide is an information device, not an engagement device. Getting a voter guide in the mail is probably not going to change a non-voter's mind alone. However, it may be the one nonpartisan source of information that many people see and should be used as a tool for civic literacy. The pamphlets could even be a useful tool for non-voters, who mentioned seeing the ones sent to family members and friends.

The voter guide can be a tipping point, if people can be encouraged to take the first step and read it. Several participants ended usability test sessions by saying that they had learned a lot.



*"[This is] stuff I hadn't thought about or paid much attention to... voter rights, measures. I might try to do more research. More interested in voting now."*  
– Young Non-voter

## New and infrequent voters don't know where to start

County voter guides include a sample ballot, candidate information, and information about measures, but new, inexperienced, and infrequent voters have to make huge inferences to map that information to their very basic who, why, and what questions.

Until people start to make sense of why they want to participate, the details can be confusing. It takes a lot of energy and desire to take the information apart to form the kind of meaning our participants seemed to be looking for.

## The civic literacy gap: voters need more than even the best guide can deliver

Even with a simplified guide, successful voter participation still depends heavily on civic literacy and understanding the basic concepts in an election. Participant after participant in both rounds of research stumbled over aspects of elections from terminology to a basic understanding of the process.

*\*For more civic literacy examples, see Appendix B.*

# VOTER GUIDE RECOMMENDATION CHECKLIST

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Use this checklist of our recommendations when creating or reviewing a voter guide.

## **Include the right information at the appropriate level of detail**

- Is the information organized by activity or task?
  - Does the cover page include the following information?
    - County name and seal (or other official insignia)
    - Name or type of election
    - Date of election day and times the polls are open
    - Polling place information
    - How to contact the election office
    - Languages offered
  - Is it clear how the county and state guides are different and connected?
  - Are the headings written as questions or active instructions?
  - Are the plain language principles incorporated? This includes
    - Writing short sentences
    - Using short, simple, everyday words
    - Writing in active voice and writing in the positive
    - Keeping paragraphs short
    - Separating paragraphs by a space, so that each one stands out on the page
  - Are there definitions and descriptions for election terms and processes?
- 

## **Organize information in an easy-to-follow path**

- Is there a table of contents?
  - Are there questions, quasi-questions, or instructions as headings?
  - Does each page have a clear topic?
  - Are there visual elements to make each section easy to see?
  - Is the voter information organized to include both an overview and details?
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# VOTER GUIDE RECOMMENDATION CHECKLIST

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## Present information so it is easy to read and understand

- Is the text big enough (at least 12 points)?
  - Is the information visual?
  - Is there consistency in presentation and writing?
  - Is the sample ballot presented in a way that voters easily understand what it is and how to use it?
- 

## Personalize information for the voter

- Is the availability of languages visible in all versions of the guide?
  - Is the polling place clearly visible? Is it on the front cover?
  - Is it clear when the sample ballot is an exact sample and when it's just similar?
  - Do the update and registration forms look official?
- 

## Use structure and content to close civic literacy gaps

- Is there a signature so voters know the source of the guide?
- Are voters told their rights (i.e., voter bill of rights)?
- Is it easy to learn about and compare the candidates?
- Do voters know how the ballot measures will affect them?
- Is there an explanation of the type of election?
- Has the voter information been tested with low-literacy and low-English-proficiency voters?

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

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**If we were to give one guiding principle for improving voter guides, it would be to focus on answering voters' questions in language they can easily understand.**

We can't overemphasize that doing this well requires both a voter-centered perspective and plain language. Too much of the current voter information is written from the perspective of the elections office. That is, it explains the process of elections using the concepts and terminology of election insiders, rather than turning it around to explain how to participate in elections from the perspective of a voter.

We understand that many counties work with vendors to create and design voter guides. We recommend that vendors use this manual in collaboration with county election departments to implement changes.



**THE GUIDELINES FOR IMPROVING VOTER GUIDES ARE ORGANIZED IN 5 GROUPS, BASED ON THE NEEDS OF THE BROAD CALIFORNIA VOTER AUDIENCE**

- 1. Include the right information at the appropriate level of detail (page 10)**  
What information to include and how to break it into meaningful chunks (content strategy)
- 2. Organize information in an easy-to-follow path (page 14)**  
How to structure the voter guide to help readers find their way to the information they need (information architecture)
- 3. Present information so it is easy to read and understand (page 18)**  
How to use type, fonts, and images to help voters read accurately (information design).
- 4. Personalize information for the voter (page 23)**  
Clear identification of when the information is generic and when it provides the exact details for the voter (personalization)
- 5. Use structure and content to close civic literacy gaps (page 25)**  
What information helps voters learn and understand the process (domain literacy)




## **INCLUDE THE RIGHT INFORMATION AT THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF DETAIL**

The first step in designing a voter guide is determining what information it should include. Next, you must decide how to write that information so that voters can grab the details they need off the page easily and accurately. The information must answer voters' questions meaningfully, be identified correctly, and be easy to read.

### **Organize information by activity or task**

Voters need all of the information for each voting task grouped together. In our testing, it was much more effective to have all of the information about each way to vote in one place, instead of listing dates, locations, and instructions separately, which we saw in several guides for the June 2014 primary and in earlier guides in our collection.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE



## How to vote by mail


**You can vote by mail before Election Day**

To vote by mail, you have to request a ballot. Then you can mark the ballot and send it back or drop it off at any polling place.


**How to get your vote-by-mail ballot**

You can request a vote-by-mail ballot starting on **October 7**.  
You must request a vote-by-mail ballot by **October 29**.

You can:

-  Go to [www.franklinvotes.org](http://www.franklinvotes.org) and request a vote-by-mail ballot.

**-OR-**


-  Send a letter with your signature that includes your address and where to send the vote-by-mail ballot:  
**Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk**  
**4321 Franklin Avenue, Franklin, CA 99999**

After you apply to vote by mail, you will receive your ballot within ten business days.

**How to return your vote-by-mail ballot**

Place your ballot in the official envelope, following the instructions on the vote-by-mail packet. Your ballot must be at the Elections Office or a polling place by 8pm on Election Day, November 6, to be counted.

You can:

-  Send it by mail to:


< These instructions for how to vote by mail include how to get your ballot and how to return it, with both steps (unique to vote by mail) on one page.



## Maximize your front cover

The guide starts with the cover. For regular voters, it might be all they need along with the ballot contents; for others, it signals what's inside. The cover should include:

- The county name and seal (or other official insignia)
- The name or type of the election
- The date of election day and times the polls are open
- Polling place information
- How to contact the election office
- Languages offered






### Franklin County Voter Information Guide

## General Election

### Tuesday, November 6, 2012

### Polls open from 7am to 8pm

You are registered to vote in Franklin County, California.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Registered voter name:</b> Your Name	 <b>Is this polling place accessible:</b> Yes
 <b>Your polling place address:</b> 1234 Terrace Avenue Suite 201 Franklin, CA 99939	 <b>Languages available:</b> English, español, 中文

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

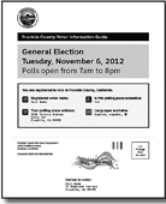
## Connect the county and state guides

Voters need clarity on the multiple sources of official election information. It is difficult to navigate between the county and state guides, and a connection needs to be made.

Each guide should reference the existence of the other. This helps voters learn the relationship between the two booklets—encouraging them to look for and use both guides. In the county guide, for example, we suggest an image of the state guide on the cover and in the section introducing ballot information.

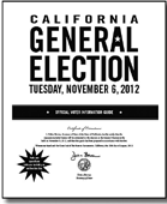
## What's on the ballot for this election?

**You will receive two voter information guides for this election:**



**Franklin County Guide (*this guide*)**

Local and county races and measures are in this guide.



**California State Guide**

U.S. national races, and state races and state propositions are in the guide from the state.

<

Putting the images of two voter guides side by side helps voters understand that there are two booklets and recognize them when they arrive.

## Write headings as questions or active instructions

QUESTIONS, QUASI-QUESTIONS, AND INSTRUCTIONS ALL MAKE IT EASIER FOR READERS TO CONNECT THE INFORMATION TO THE ACTIONS THEY WILL TAKE. PICK A STYLE OF HEADING AND USE IT CONSISTENTLY.

Heading Style	Example	Why it Works
Question	What is the last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot?	Suggests a question that voters ask
Quasi-Question	How to request a vote-by-mail ballot	Suggests the answer the section contains
Instruction	Request a vote-by-mail ballot by October 29	Provides the answer, making the question implicit

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

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Questions and instructions are better headings than noun phrases, like “vote-by-mail ballots,” that announce the topic but do not offer any hints about what information will be covered.

Good headings help voters understand what the page or section will tell them and let them recognize the question they need answered, rather than forcing them to recall the question and then match it to a topic.



## USE PLAIN LANGUAGE

All of these basic plain language guidelines help make information easier to read:

- Write short sentences.
- Use short, simple, everyday words.
- Write in the active voice, where the person doing the action comes before the verb.
- Write in the positive.
- Keep paragraphs short.
- Separate paragraphs by a space, so that each one stands out on the page.
- Start each instruction or topic on a new line.

It is especially important to use easy-to-understand terminology in headings (both the title of the page and any headings within the content). If a voter does not understand the meaning of a heading or cannot clearly differentiate between sections, they may miss important information by skipping sections.

## Write for people with low literacy and people reading English as a second language

Plain language is even more important for people who do not read English well. The National Assessment of Adult Literacy suggests that 44% of Americans read at basic or below-basic level. This means that they can read short texts with common words or follow simple written instructions. They may not understand dense text when they have to figure out the meaning of what they read, such as complex information about taxes and budgets in ballot measures.

In addition to general literacy, voters may read poorly because of cognitive disabilities, disabilities like dyslexia that affect reading, or because English is not their first language. Information written in plain language is also easier to translate.

## Define election terms

Sometimes election terminology is unavoidable, but it must be defined—in plain language—for voters.



Some terminology can be made easier by considering plain language in writing laws and regulations. If the language starts out voter-centric, it won't need as much explanation. It might also be helpful to develop a glossary of plain language election vocabulary with consistent definitions that could be used in all county voter guides. Such a glossary developed in plain English could provide the basis for similar, consistent translations of vocabulary and definitions.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE



## ORGANIZE INFORMATION IN AN EASY-TO-FOLLOW PATH

Navigating even a short voter guide can be difficult for voters who are not familiar with elections.

### Make it easy to find information about the ballot and about how, when, and where to vote

Voters have two different starting points as they read a voter guide: learning about the contests and measures on the ballot or learning about the process of voting. These concepts should be in different sections rather than intermixed. The opening page or table of contents should indicate these two sections clearly.



### Include a table of contents

The table of contents was one of the most heavily used pages in our prototypes, yet only two of the June 2014 primary guides included this resource. Participants used the table of contents to get a sense of what was in the guide, and they continued to refer to it as they looked for information.

A table of contents acts as a roadmap for a voter guide. It gives a quick indicator of the topics and scope of the guide. It helps readers determine whether their questions will be answered and at what level of detail.

- Experienced voters often want to skip directly to the ballot and are annoyed at flipping through general information.
- New voters need to see the different types of information available.

Here is a sample table of contents. Use questions, quasi-questions, or instructions for headings.



## What's in this guide?

### 3 ways to vote

Voter Bill of Rights

How to vote by mail

How to vote early in person

How to vote in person at the polls

Accessibility and language voting assistance

### What's on the ballot for this election?

Who are the candidates?

Local ballot measures: E

Local ballot measures: F

Paid candidate statements

Practice ballot



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

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## Start with the overview or key details, then link to more details or exceptions

It is easy to discourage new voters by overloading them with the complexity of elections. Focusing on exceptions and unusual circumstances confuses voters. People with unusual situations often are aware that they are an exception and will seek out the details they need when links to them are clearly visible.

Explain the most common informational needs first. Then, provide options for more information:

- Place information about exceptions or variations after the basic information in clearly identified sections.
- Reference a different page in the guide.
- Show how to find the information on the web or by phone.

The technique of building from key facts to full information is called progressive disclosure. It lets voters decide whether they need or want the additional information. Progressive disclosure is sometimes called the “bite, snack, meal” approach.




The key is to present only the minimum information needed for the voter to take the next step, starting with quick overview information and leading to one or more levels of detail. This approach makes it easy for readers to skim and scan, with more detail available when they want it.

For example, information about voting in person might be displayed as a bite on the cover, as a snack on a summary page, and then as the full meal on a page of its own.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

The table below shows a bite-snack-meal approach to telling voters how to vote at the polls.

Level	Where in the Guide	Example
<b>BITE</b> 	Cover	General Election Tuesday, November 4, 2014 Polls are open from 7am to 8pm
<b>SNACK</b> 	Three Ways to Vote page	Vote in person at the polls Polls are open on Election Day, November 4, from 7am to 8pm The location of your polling place is printed on the front cover of this guide. Or, you can look up your polling place: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the web: <a href="http://www.franklinvotes.org">www.franklinvotes.org</a></li> <li>• Using the automated phone service: <b>1-222-555-1216</b></li> </ul> For more details, see page 6. For information about accessible voting, see page 8.
<b>MEAL</b> 	Detailed instruction on page 6	How to vote in person at the polls (Instructions on the voting process and how to mark the ballot.)

## Make each page a clear topic

When two different topics are combined on a single page, people often miss some of the information. This is particularly true for low-literacy or limited-English-proficiency readers, who tend to skip to the next page or section when they get confused.

Having only one topic per page makes it easier to scan through the booklet. For example, many participants in our research missed detailed contact information when it was below the table of contents.

## Use visual elements to make sections easy to see

When readers move through a document, whether page-by-page or flipping through, the design can signal where they are and how the information in one section differs from another. A clear visual hierarchy showing what is most important on each page is helpful to indicate new topics. Running headers also communicate a change from one section to the next, while at the same time tying sections together across pages.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

Using labeled or blank blocks on the outer page edges can also help readers find their way through a guide. These “thumb tabs” or “thumb indexes” are spaced evenly along the right-hand pages for each new section. [Note: If you’re printing on a regular, office, or desktop printer, the printer won’t be able to make the tab block go all the way to the edge of the paper. But if you’re using a commercial printer, they can print your document with this tabbed effect.]

## Organize the booklet to help voters see both overview and details

Don’t let voters get lost in the details when there are many candidates or measures. There are two ways you can arrange these pages, depending on how many pages you have of each kind of information.

### 1. Candidates, then measures

All candidate information, followed by all measure information, with overviews followed by detail pages in each section. This arrangement is useful when there are just a few candidates and measures on the ballot.

**Who is running for office?**

**Member of the Assembly, 4th District**  
The person elected Member of the Assembly will represent you in the state government to make laws and set the budget for the state of California.

**John Munn**  
Republican  
Taxpayer Association President  
JohnMunn@gmail.com

**Marikyo Yamada**  
Democratic  
California State Assemblyman  
www.yamadaforca.org

**Member of the Board of Supervisors**  
The person elected represents you in the County Board of Supervisors make local laws and set the county government budget.

**Karen Mitchoff**  
County Supervisor  
Karen.Mitchoff@gmail.com

**Paid candidate statements**

*Candidate statements are provided by the candidate and printed at their expense.*

**State Assembly, 4th District**

**Statement of John Munn**  
Preference: Republican  
Occupation: Taxpayer Association President  
For over twelve years, I have served the central coast, first as a school board member and now as a county supervisor and coastal commissioner.  
School Board Member: As an educator, I know that California's future depends on top quality education at all levels. I have worked with teachers, parents, students and administrators to achieve measurable improvement. That work has earned me support from dozens of local school board members, teachers and parents.

**Declaración de John Munn**  
Preferencia de Partido: Republicano  
Ocupación: Presidente de los Contribuyentes  
Durante más de doce años he servido a la costa central, primero como miembro del consejo escolar y ahora como supervisor costero.  
Miembro de la Junta Escolar: Como educador, sé que el futuro de California depende de una educación de calidad en todos los niveles. He trabajado con padres, estudiantes y administradores para lograr una mejora medible. Ese trabajo me ha ganado el apoyo de docenas de miembros de la junta escolar local, maestros y padres.

**Local ballot measures: E**

**E Measure E Franklin Community College**

**Summary**  
To upgrade educational facilities at Diablo Valley, Franklin, and Los Medanos College, and help prepare students for jobs and college training, building facilities for health, medical, science, and technology training, accessibility, and infrastructure improvements, shall the Franklin County Board of Supervisors issue bonds at legal interest rates with independent oversight, audits, and a sinking fund?

**What your vote means**

YES	NO
-----	----

**Local ballot measures: F**

**F Measure F Franklin County Vehicle Abatement**

**Summary**  
Should the Franklin County Vehicle Abatement Program and vehicle registration fee be increased by an additional two dollars for certain commercial vehicles payable upon registration a ten-year term beginning July 1, 2013, for the abatement and removal of abandoned and inoperative vehicles?

**What your vote means**

<b>YES</b> A "yes" vote on this measure continues the current program for 10 years and the county will continue to pay the cost of the program.	<b>NO</b> A "no" vote means the program will end on June 30, 2013.
--	---

**Local ballot measures: E**

Argument in favor of Measure E	Argument against Measure E
<p>Diablo Valley College, Franklin College, Los Medanos College, and the San Ramon and Brentwood education centers are essential safety nets providing affordable education and job training to over 55,000 students locally – many of whom cannot afford four year colleges and universities. YES on E ensures OUR local students have the opportunity to continue their education and be ready to compete in today's competitive job market!</p> <p>Local community college students are the backbone of our Franklin County workforce. YES on E updates classrooms and labs to maintain high quality career training programs in fields including healthcare, sciences, technology, and public safety.</p> <p>YES on E improves our colleges, helping students prepare for 21st century jobs and careers or transfer to 4-year universities.</p>	<p>Bonds are an expensive form of borrowing. Since 2002, District voters have repaid over \$408.5 million that will cost the DISTRICT BILLION DOLLARS.</p> <p>Now the District is asking for \$1.5 billion in NEW DEBT that will cost taxpayers over \$1.5 BILLION DOLLARS.</p> <p>Residents OPPOSE this bond issue because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people are unemployed or financially stretched and cannot afford to pay MORE.</li> <li>• As compensation for District voters, resources for care</li> </ul>

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

## 2. Overview, then details

All of the overview pages first, followed by all the detail pages. This arrangement is useful when there is a long ballot with many candidates and measures.

The image shows three sample ballot pages. The first page, titled 'Who is running for office?', lists candidates for the State Assembly, 4th District (John Munn, Marikyo Yamada, Karen Mitchoff) and the Board of Supervisors (Karen Mitchoff). The second page, titled 'Local ballot measures: E', details Measure E for Franklin Community College, including a summary and a 'What your vote means' section with YES and NO options. The third page, titled 'Local ballot measures: F', details Measure F for Franklin County Vehicle Abatement, including a summary and a 'What your vote means' section with YES and NO options.

The image shows two sample ballot pages. The first page, titled 'Paid candidate statements', displays the 'Statement of John Munn' and a 'Declaración de John Munn' in Spanish, detailing his background as a school board member and county supervisor. The second page, titled 'Local ballot measures: E', presents arguments for and against Measure E, discussing the benefits of education and the costs of the measure.



## PRESENT INFORMATION SO IT IS EASY TO READ AND UNDERSTAND

The presentation of information is as important as how clearly it is written. Good presentation signals the content type and makes it more inviting and easier to read.



### Make the text big enough

There's a reason we don't like fine print. Pages with small, tightly packed text are difficult to read. Our research participants were more likely to read sections in larger type and their reading was more accurate. They noticed when text was larger and complained when some pages had smaller text.

**Make the text size at least 12 points. If a topic won't fit on one page, you can:**

- Rewrite to cut the number of words
- Split the topic into two pages

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

## Design the pages for visual orientation and differentiation

Make sure each page has a clear identity to help readers know where they are in the content.

- Have a clear, easy-to-read heading for each page.
- Use running headings to connect parts of a section or a topic that covers multiple pages.
- Create a design for the opening page of a section that looks different, like a chapter heading in a book.

The running head on these pages helps voters see that both pages have information about Measure E.

12 **Local ballot measures: E**

**E** Measure E Franklin Community College District


**Summary**

To upgrade educational facilities at Diablo Valley, Franklin, and Los Medanos Colleges, and the San Ramon and Brentwood centers, and help prepare students for jobs and college transfer by modernizing classrooms and labs, building facilities for health, medical, science, and technology training, and implementing earthquake safety, accessibility, and infrastructure improvements, shall the Franklin Community College District issue \$450 million of bonds at legal interest rates with independent oversight, audits, and all funds spent on local sites?

13 **Local ballot measures: E**

Argument in favor of Measure E	Argument against Measure E
Diablo Valley College, Franklin College, Los Medanos College, and the San Ramon and Brentwood education centers are essential safety nets providing affordable education and job training to over 35,000 students locally – many of whom cannot afford four year colleges and universities. YES on E ensures OUR local students have the opportunity to continue their education and be ready to compete in today's competitive job market!	Bonds are an expensive form of debt. As with a home mortgage, bonds are repaid with interest, over time. Since 2002, District voters have approved bonds totaling \$406.5 million that will cost taxpayers OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS. Now the District is asking for \$450 million in NEW DEBT that will cost taxpayers ANOTHER BILLION DOLLARS. This bond is TOO BIG and TOO EXPENSIVE, especially given today's taxpayor hardship.

### 3 ways to vote



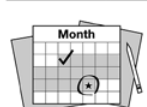
**Vote by mail**

Request a vote-by-mail ballot by **October 29**. Return it by mail, drop it off at one of the secure ballot drop-off locations, or deliver it on **November 6** to any polling place.

Vote-by-mail ballots must be received at the elections office or a polling place by 8pm on **November 6**.

For more details, [see Page 4](#).

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**Vote early in person**


You may vote early at the elections office, or at the voting centers listed on page 5.

**October 7 until November 5**  
**Monday – Friday, 8am to 5pm**

Franklin County Elections Department  
4321 Franklin Avenue  
Franklin, CA

For more details, [see Page 5](#).

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**Vote at the polls in person**

Polls are open on Election Day:  
**November 6, from 7am to 8pm**

The location of your polling place is printed on the back cover of this guide.


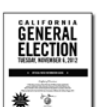
Or, you can look up your polling place:

- On the web: [www.franklinvotes.org](http://www.franklinvotes.org)
- Using the automated phone service: 1-222-555-1216

For more details, [see Page 6](#).

### What's on the ballot for this election?

You will receive two voter information guides for this election:

**Franklin County Guide (this guide)**

Local and county races and measures are in this guide.

**Offices (see pages 12–15)**

Member of the State Assembly  
Member of the Board of Supervisors

**Local Measures (see pages 16–22)**

E. Community College District Bond  
F. Renewal of the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program

**California State Guide**

U.S. national races, and state races and state propositions are in the guide from the state.

**Offices**

President and Vice President  
United States Senator

**State Propositions**

**30** Temporary Taxes to Fund Education, Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding, Initiative Constitutional Amendment.

**31** State Budget, State and Local Government, Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.

**32** Political Contributions by Payroll Deduction, Contributions to Candidates, Initiative Statute.

**33** Auto Insurance Companies, Prices Based on Driver's History of Insurance Coverage, Initiative Statute.

**34** Death Penalty, Initiative Statute.

**35** Human Trafficking, Penalties, Initiative Statute.

**36** Three Strikes Law, Repeat Felony Offenders, Penalties, Initiative Statute.

**37** Genetically Engineered Foods, Labeling, Initiative Statute.

**38** Tax to Fund Education and Early Childhood Programs, Initiative Statute.

**39** Tax Treatment for Multistate Businesses, Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Funding, Initiative Statute.

**40** Redistricting, State Senate Districts, Referendum.

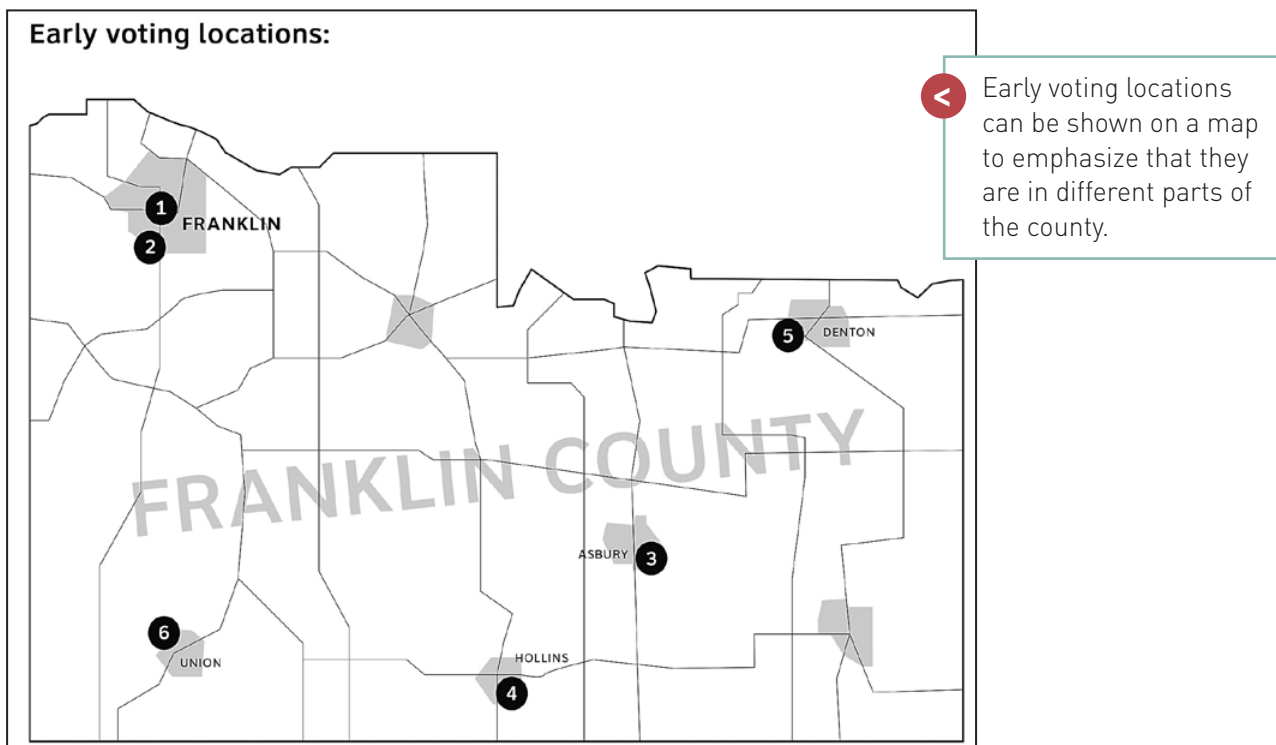
These two pages have distinct heading styles to indicate different sections of the voter guide.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

## Make the information visual

Visual elements help guide readers through the content. Useful images and icons are precise and relevant to the content, not decorative. Low-literacy readers interpret them literally, not as a general sign or metaphor.

- Use the layout to communicate the meaning. Candidates, measures, and dates are different, and they should all look different.
- Icons or other images signal the type of content next to them.
- Show events over time with visual storytelling, using cartoons or simple illustrations.



Icons for ways to communicate with the elections office help make it clear that these are choices a voter can select from.

You can:



Go to [www.franklinvotes.org](http://www.franklinvotes.org) and request a v

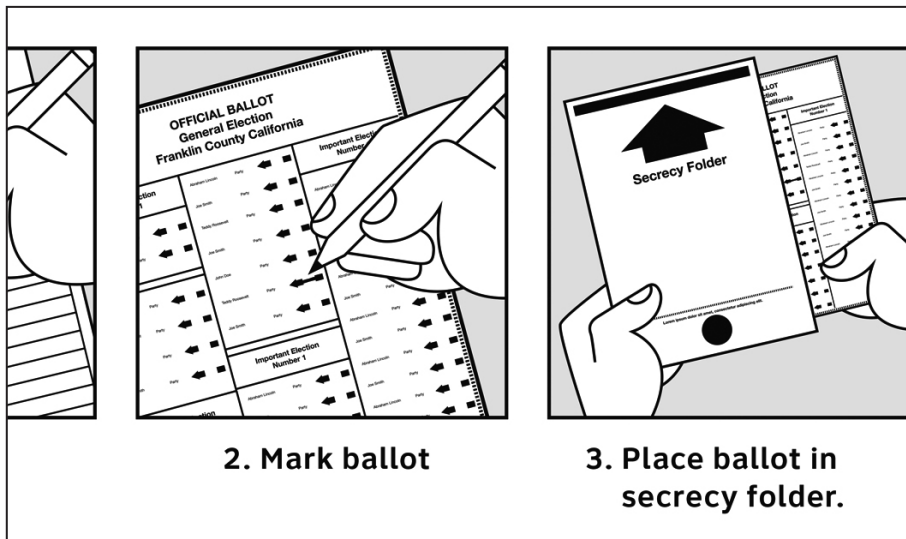
**-OR-**



Send a letter with your signature that includes  
and where to send the vote-by-mail ballot:

**Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk  
4321 Franklin Avenue, Franklin, CA 9999**

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE



< A sequence of actions is shown with numbered steps in separate images.

## Be consistent

All of the presentation elements should be consistent. Some examples of presentation elements are:

- Headings
- References to more information on another page or in another format.
- Contact methods (phone, web, mail)
- Web addresses

## Present sample ballots so voters understand the purpose

Showing a ballot in the guide is important to help answer voters' questions. Even if voters look at nothing else in the guide, by flipping to the sample ballot they can immediately see who the candidates are for which offices, see whether there are ballot measures and propositions and what they say, and get basic instructions about how to mark the ballot.

Some suggestions for your sample ballot include:

- Use an image of the ballot specifically for the registered voter, if possible.
- If the ballot is not personalized, say so on the page with the ballot image.
- Shrink the image a bit and add a heading that identifies it as a sample ballot.
- Call the sample ballot a "practice ballot." Encourage voters to use it for practice and take it with them to the polls.
- If the instructions on the sample ballot are clear and easy to follow, rely on them as a way to include "how to vote" information.
- If the legislated ballot instructions could be better, include instructions for voting elsewhere in the guide.
- Put the sample ballot toward the end of the booklet.


# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE



## Practice Ballot

Review this ballot to get ready to vote at the polling place. Mark it as practice and take it with you. (This is not a real ballot, but it has all of the items you can vote on.)

(Front)



### Official Ballot

Consolidated Statewide General Election  
Franklin County, California  
Tuesday, November 06, 2012

### Boleta Oficial

Consolidado Estatal Elección General  
Condado de Franklin, California  
Martes, 06 de noviembre 2012

#### Instructions to voters

- Use only the marking pen provided or a ball point pen with black ink.
- To vote for a candidate**, completely connect the arrow to the right of the name, as shown in the illustration. Where two or more candidates for the same office are to be elected, completely connect the arrow to the right of each of your choices.
- To vote on a measure**, completely connect the arrow next to YES or NO.
- To vote for a candidate whose name is not on the ballot**, print the name on the blank line for that office labeled "write in," and connect the arrow for that candidate.
- If you make a mistake**, damage your ballot, or you want to change a vote, take your ballot to an election worker and get another. All distinguishing marks are forbidden and void the ballot.

#### Instrucciones a los votantes

- Utilice sólo el lápiz de marcar provisto o un bolígrafo con tinta negro.
- Para votar por un candidato**, conectar completamente la flecha a la derecha del nombre, como se muestra en la ilustración. Cuando dos o más candidatos para el mismo cargo se elegirán, conecte completamente la flecha a la derecha de cada una de sus opciones.
- Para votar por una medida**, conectar completamente la flecha junto a SI o NO.
- Para votar por un candidato cuyo nombre no aparece en la boleta electoral**, imprimir el nombre en la línea en blanco para que la oficina de la etiqueta "escribir", y conecte la flecha por ese candidato.
- Si usted comete un error**, dañar su boleta, o si desea cambiar un voto, tome su papeleta a un trabajador electoral y conseguir otro. Todos los signos distintivos están prohibidos y anular la boleta.

<p><b>President and Vice-President of the United States</b> <b>Presidente y vicepresidente de los Estados Unidos</b></p> <p><b>Vote for 1 pair</b> <b>Voto por 1 par</b></p> <p>Republican / Republicano <b>Mitt Romney</b> President / Presidente <b>Paul Ryan</b> Vice-President / Vicepresidente</p> <p>Libertarian / Libertario <b>Gary Johnson</b> President / Presidente <b>James P. Gray</b> Vice-President / Vicepresidente</p> <p>Peace and Freedom / Paz y Libertad <b>Roseanne Barr</b> President / Presidente <b>Cindy Sheehan</b> Vice-President / Vicepresidente</p> <p>Democratic / Democrático <b>Barack Obama</b> President / Presidente <b>Joseph Biden</b> Vice-President / Vicepresidente</p>	<p><b>U.S. Senator</b> <b>Senador de EEUU</b></p> <p><b>Vote for 1</b> <b>Voto por 1</b></p> <p>Republican / Republicano <b>Elizabeth Emken</b> Businesswoman / Mujer de negocios</p> <p>Democratic / Democrático <b>Dianne Feinstein</b> U.S. Senator / Senador de EEUU</p> <p>or write-in</p> <p><b>U.S. Representative</b> <b>Representante de EEUU</b></p> <p><b>Vote for 1</b> <b>Voto por 1</b></p> <p>Republican / Republicano <b>Randy Loftin</b> Financial Planning Advisor</p>	<p><b>Member of the Assembly, 4th District</b> <b>Miembro de la Asamblea, Distrito 4</b></p> <p><b>Vote for 1</b> <b>Voto por 1</b></p> <p>Republican / Republicano <b>John Munn</b> Taxpayer Association President / Presidente de la Asociación de Contribuyentes</p> <p>Democratic / Democrático <b>Marikyo Yamada</b> California State Assemblyman / Asambleista Estatal de California</p> <p>or write-in</p> <p><b>Member of the Board of Supervisors</b> <b>Miembro de la Junta de Supervisores</b></p>
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Here is an example of a practice ballot page.

**Note:** we did not address how to provide a sample ballot for an electronic voting system or ballot making device.



# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE



## PERSONALIZE INFORMATION FOR THE VOTER

New voters, infrequent voters, and people with limited English proficiency cannot always distinguish between general information and information that is specific to them. This is most important for polling place information and sample ballots. Many participants in our study did not realize that a sample ballot could be personalized to their address.

Be clear when information is for the entire county and when it is for the specific individual voter. Many participants could not tell if the entire guide was personalized, or only part of it. In some cases, they drew incorrect conclusions about how to vote because they mistakenly assumed that the information was personalized. For example, they assumed that a map showing a location marked with a star was their polling place.

### Make the availability of languages visible in all versions

People who read another language recognize it easily. Links to election information in other languages should be easy to find on the cover and on any appropriate pages, *in those languages*.

#### At the polling place



To check polling place accessibility, look for the wheelchair symbol on the back cover of this pamphlet. If your polling place does not meet the guidelines, call 1-222-555-1212 for alternative methods of voting.

Ballots are available in Spanish and Chinese.

Las boletas están disponibles en chino e Inglés.

选票是西班牙语和英语。

Repeating information in additional languages helps ensure that voters are aware of their options.



### Put the polling place on the front cover

The cover of a voter guide does not have to be treated like the cover of a book. Rather, for a voter guide, the front cover should hold key information: date and type of election, who published the guide, languages that materials are available in, and the address of the polling place.

Though polling place addresses typically are printed on the back covers of guides, findings from usability testing suggest that the polling place information belongs on the front with the other crucial information about elections.

Center for Civic Design developed this cover with the personalized address information on the front. This puts it where voters can see it, while working with mail addressing technology.

The image shows a sample cover for the Franklin County Voter Information Guide. At the top left is the Franklin County logo. Below it, the title "Franklin County Voter Information Guide" is in a blue bar. The main heading is "General Election Tuesday, November 6, 2012" with "Polls open from 7am to 8pm" below it. A central box contains registration information: "You are registered to vote in Franklin County, California." It lists "Registered voter name: Your Name" and "Is this polling place accessible: Yes". It also lists "Your polling place address: 1234 Terrace Avenue, Suite 201, Franklin, CA 99939" and "Languages available: English, español, 中文". At the bottom, it says "Franklin County Elections Department, 4321 Franklin Avenue, Franklin, CA 99999" and "CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED". There is a "U.S. Postage PAID No. 4293" stamp and a "Deliver to voter: Your Name, 17 Highland Terrace, Franklin, CA 99999" label.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

## Be clear about the sample ballots. Let voters know if the sample ballot is exactly what the official ballot will look like or just similar.

This confusion affects voters' view of the sample ballot and information about candidates and measures. It doesn't occur to most voters that their actual ballot could be different from their neighbor's.

For example, many participants told us they used the sample ballot as practice for voting. Also, some vote-by-mail voters may be confused when they receive a sample ballot in the mail. Include information about when real ballots will arrive and that the ballot they will receive will be a translated version if they requested one.

This is especially important for new voters, low-literacy voters, and voters speaking English as a second language. Ballots are not a comfortable or familiar format for them to read. They told us that they hoped the sample ballot would be the same as in the polling place, so they wouldn't get lost or miss anything as they transcribed their votes onto the official ballot.

## Make any update or registration form look official

In the interviews, people complained that the poll worker form we used did not look "official" and said that they looked for something like a county seal or the election mail insignia to tell them that the form was "real."

The usability testing prototype included an update form (based on Santa Clara County's) that was designed to be a tear-off postcard. Its appearance worked better because it included the county seal and election mail insignia, but exposed another problem: having personal information like date of birth visible on a postcard.

**Mary Cuevo**  
Registrar of Voters



**Registrar of Voters**  
Franklin County



**OFFICIAL ELECTION MAIL**  
Authorized by the U.S. Postal Service

Voters looked for county seals and postal insignias as indications that this is official information.

Participants also wanted the form to show them what their current voting options are, so they would know whether they needed to make any changes. For example, "You have signed up to vote by mail in every election."

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE



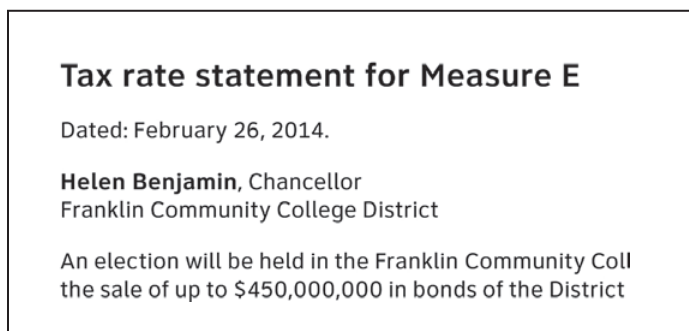
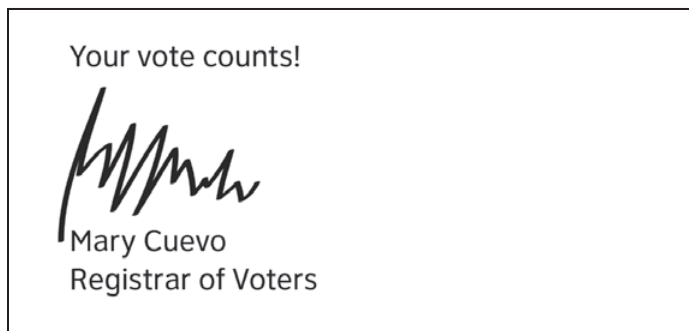
## USE STRUCTURE AND CONTENT TO CLOSE CIVIC LITERACY GAPS

Voters recognize county guides as the authoritative source of objective information. You can use this position to close the gaps between what voters already know and what they need to know to take part in elections.

### Add a signature so voters know the source

From the opening letter from the clerk or election director, to statements from candidates, to arguments for and against, voters notice and appreciate seeing the source of information. Identifying individuals and committees who provide information for the guide helps voters know what comes from the official source—the election department—and what doesn't.

- Include names and titles
- Show the organization or affiliation of the person



Information can be signed in various ways.

### Tell voters their rights

New voters, non-voters, and infrequent voters carefully read and asked questions about the Voter Bill of Rights we included in our prototype. This section educated voters about the election process as well as their rights. Though it is not required, participants in our study got so much value out of this information that we urge counties to include it. We also recommend including website links to more detailed information about how to use these rights.

\* See Appendix E for a sample Voter Bill of Rights in plain language.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

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## Make it easy to learn about and compare candidates

When voters ask, “Who is running?” they need information beyond name and party affiliation. They compare and contrast candidates, using information that the candidates provide as well as statements and endorsements from other sources. Voters in our study appreciated having a way to quickly see and compare candidates with the option of getting more information about them.



- Include a structured summary of all of the candidates, with links to their campaign websites or social media pages.
- Urge candidates to provide paid statements in English and additional languages.
- Show that the candidates, not the election department, provided this information and paid to have it included in the guide.
- Add party endorsements (when relevant) to the structured summary listing rather than showing endorsements on a separate page.

While we are not recommending that photos of candidates be on ballots, it may be time to test including them in county voter guides. We suggest this with some hesitation, recognizing that adding candidate photos introduces additional steps and costs to the production of guides. However, non-voters and infrequent voters responded very positively to pages that had candidate photos.

We think this positive reaction came from the clear signal the photos gave that the section was about people (rather than measures). The photos also seemed to help participants relate to candidates and associate candidate priorities with individuals.

## Help voters know how ballot measures will affect them

Summaries and statements for and against were helpful to voters in our study. While the original text of measures ideally would be in plain language, summaries should be short (between 50 and 300 words) and must be in plain language. There is little point in having the summaries if voters don't understand them. A helpful structure explains the current situation and what would change if the measure passed.



- Describe in a useful way what it means to vote Yes or vote No (or For or Against). This helps voters see how the measure affects them.
- Show who provided pro/con statements in a list at the end of the summary of the measure.
- Create a simplified table format for tax rate implications and include that on the summary page.
- Introduce pro/con statements with a one-page summary for each measure. (You can ask providers of statements to give you a one-sentence summary to include here.)
- Write counsel and financial analyses in plain language (perhaps using the state office's plain language guidelines).
- Place all of the summary pages first, with page references to the arguments, analyses, and full text following the summaries.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUR VOTER GUIDE

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If the guide includes the full text of ballot measures, include a key to help voters understand what they are looking at. For example, if text is struck through or underlined, include an explanation at the top of each measure.

## **Explain the type of election**

Even educated, avid voters in our study weren't always clear about what happens in which kinds of elections. Describing the California top-two primary was especially problematic.

Explain the type of election and where it fits into the larger election cycle. For example, describe the purpose of a primary election (to narrow the number of candidates) and what will happen next (the two candidates who get the most votes will move on to a general election).

All types of elections need some explanation. We strongly recommend that you test the explanation with voters to ensure that the published version works well for voters with low literacy and low English proficiency, as well as low civic literacy.



# UNTESTED FINDINGS

We have a number of ideas that we did not test but that the research suggests could be valuable:

- Include a short description of local offices to help voters put candidate information in context.
- Add a short summary of the pro/con to the measure summary page, to make this page stand alone. This would put the ballot language, yes/no explanations, and a signed pro/con summary on a single page.

<b>What your vote means</b>	
<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
A "yes" vote on this measure authorizes the issuance of the bonds and the levy of taxes as estimated in the Tax Rate Statement to repay the bonds. Fifty-five percent (55%) of those voting on the ballot measure must approve the measure for it to pass.	A "no" vote on this measure disapproves the issuance of the bonds and the levy of taxes.
<b>For and against Measure E</b>	
<b>FOR</b>	<b>AGAINST</b>
<p>YES on E updates classrooms and labs to maintain high quality career training programs in fields including healthcare, sciences, technology, and public safety.</p> <p><b>Linda Best,</b> Fmr. CEO, East Bay Leadership Council (Retired)</p> <p><b>J. Dale Hudson,</b> Former Chair, Franklin Community College District Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee</p> <p><b>Cynthia Egan,</b> 2013 Franklin County Teacher of the Year (San Ramon Valley USD)</p>	<p>This bond is too large, this debt is too expensive, especially given today's taxpayer burdens. We cannot afford to pay more.</p> <p><b>Alex Aliferis,</b> Executive Director, Franklin Taxpayers Association</p>

← This is a sample summary of the arguments for and against a ballot measure.





- Make some wording changes to simplify the language:
  - Label the sample ballot as a "Practice Ballot."
  - Label the different ways to vote clearly, especially differentiating "Voting Early in Person" and "Voting in Person on Election Day."
  - Change "Voter Bill of Rights" to "Your Rights as a Voter."
  - Be clear about "What You are Voting On."
- Require laws that change voting procedures to include testing whether voters understand the new procedure and its name.

# UNTESTED FINDINGS

- Break the guide into two books: a main book with the sample ballot and information about candidates and measures, and a smaller booklet with all of the “how to vote” information. The smaller booklet is bound into the main book inside the front cover, so both types of information are visible when the book is opened.

What's in this guide?	
<b>3 ways to vote</b>	<b>3</b>
Voter Bill of Rights	2
How to vote by mail	4
How to vote early in person	5
How to vote in person at the polls	6
	7
	8
	9
	10
	11
	12
	20

3 ways to vote	
 How to vote by mail	1
 How to vote early in person	3
 How to vote in person on Election Day	4
 Accessible voting	6
Language assistance	7

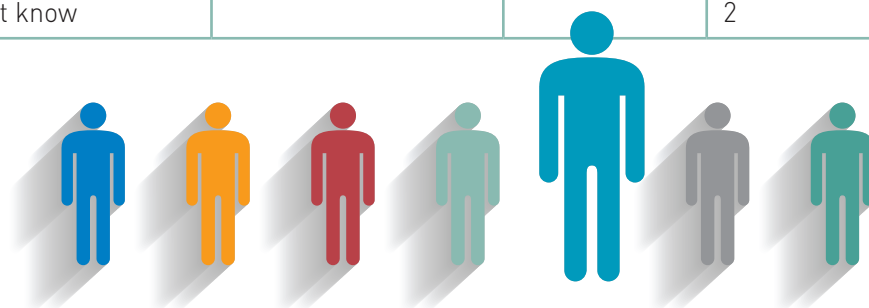
< The smaller booklet on how to vote would be standard information, updated with correct dates and locations for each election.

- Explore and test voter information published on websites and smartphone apps.
- Combine multiple languages into one voter guide, testing presentation and layout for optimal ease of finding, reading, and comprehending information by voters with a range of reading skills.
- Investigate the number and combination of languages that can effectively be included on the same paper ballot or voter guide.

# APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DATA

## Demographic data on the 98 research participants

Pew Age Cohort	Birth Years	Age in 2014	Number in Study	Percentage
Silent	1928 to 1945	69+	5	5%
Boomers	1946 to 1964	50 to 68	12	12%
Gen X	1965 to 1980	34 to 49	28	29%
Millennial	1981 to 1990	24 to 33	28	29%
Student	1991+	18 to 23	25	26%
Voting Cohort	Last voted in		Number in Study	Percentage
Regular voters	2013		23	23%
Presidential voters	2012		21	21%
Infrequent voters	2011 or before		24	24%
Non-voters	Don't know or never voted		29	30%
Gender	California total %		Number in Study	Percentage
Male	49.8%		48	49%
Female	50.2%		50	51%
Race/Ethnicity	California Total %		Number in Study	Percentage
Hispanic (all)	38%		38	39%
Asian (all)	13%		18	18%
Black (all)	6%		12	12%
White	40%		17	17%
Mixed/Other			13	13%
Registration	California Total %		Number in Study	
Yes	72.69%		71	72%
No	27.31%		25	26%
Don't know			2	2%





## APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DATA

### Locations where interviews and usability test sessions were conducted

Oakland	Berkeley	San Jose	Modesto	Los Angeles
Laney College, Fruitvale, Temescal neighborhood	Ed Roberts Campus, West Branch - Berkeley Public Library	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library, Billy DeFrank Lesbian and Gay Community Center	Stainislaus County Public Library, Maddux Youth Center	85C Bakery Café - Cerritos, St John the Baptist Church - Baldwin Park, Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment (CAUSE) - Pasadena, Focus Plaza - San Gabriel Square, Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk - Norwalk



# APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DATA

## Portraits of voters

To help visualize the people in the study, we created composites of eight voters. Their experiences should influence the development and distribution of your voter guides.



### Alejandra

<i>"No one in my family votes"</i>	
Age	18 (Student)
Voting Status	Non-voter
Attitudes	Not yet a voter
Language	Bilingual
Civics Literacy	Low

Alejandra lives with her big extended family in the Central Valley. She just graduated from high school and works more than full time at her family's restaurant. She's still thinking about what she wants to do next. No one in her family is interested in politics, but she thinks that some of her cousins might vote.

### Kim

<i>"The right to vote should be honored"</i>	
Age	33 (Millennial)
Voting Status	Regular voter
Attitudes	Dutiful voter
Language	Bilingual
Civics Literacy	Good

Kim's parents moved to California when she was a baby. They are proud that she has now graduated as a registered nurse. She started voting because her parents and friends pushed her into it, but now she feels it's her duty to vote. She also helps her parents with things like voting. Last election, she had a problem trying to help her mother vote. Her county didn't have ballots in their language, and her mother was confused about how to mark the ballot.

# APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DATA

## Justin

<i>"I guess I'll vote...if I get to it"</i>	
Age	22 (Student)
Voting Status	Presidential voter
Attitudes	Forming habits
Language	English
Civics Literacy	Ambient

Justin is a student at UC Berkeley. Although he started out well, he's finding college study hard, especially with his ADHD and the distractions from all his friends. He's registered to vote (his mom made sure of that), but he's a bit hesitant. When he thinks about voting, he wants to have his say, but when he looks at the voter guide, it looks a lot like studying for a class.

## Rakheem

<i>"I vote when I have an opinion"</i>	
Age	18 (Student)
Voting Status	Infrequent voter
Attitudes	Issues voter
Language	English
Civics Literacy	Ambient

Rakheem runs a successful printing business. Two issues have motivated him to vote: supporting the first black president and gay rights. His grandmother's stories about the first time she was allowed to vote made a big impression on him as a teenager. Though he was all fired up about the Presidential election and knows the propositions are important, he rarely takes the time to read them before an election. He skims them as he marks his ballot. Sometimes he just doesn't return his vote-by-mail ballot in time.

## Steve

<i>"I'm part of the process!"</i>	
Age	45 (Gen X)
Voting Status	Regular voter
Attitudes	Political voter
Language	English + some Spanish
Civics Literacy	High

Steve first got involved with a campaign when a neighbor ran for the local school board. It was a lot of fun, but even more it made him feel more like part of the whole city. He'd been a (mostly) regular voter, but now he's really focused on local government. For his current candidate, he's used his IT skills to create an app so they can see what neighborhoods they have covered.

## Rosa

<i>"Voting is the right thing to do"</i>	
Age	72 (Silent)
Voting Status	Presidential voter
Attitudes	Dutiful voter
Language	English
Civics Literacy	Good

Rosa is a retired teacher. Her husband died last year. She has always been an avid voter, not missing even local elections. Now she has cancer and the treatment leaves her fatigued. She has good and bad days. She'd like to go to the polls, but worries about how she will feel on Election Day.

# APPENDIX A: RESEARCH DATA

## Ari

<i>"Of course I vote...everyone should"</i>	
Age	52 (Boomer)
Voting Status	Regular
Attitudes	Avid voter
Language	English
Civics Literacy	High

Ari never thought much about voting. It was just something you did. Her parents voted, and she assumed that everyone in her family would vote. Her parents always talked about their work in the civil rights movement, and she marched against the Vietnam War. Although she's not really active now, she still thinks of herself as involved in the local and national politics she follows carefully. Even with all her attention, she can feel unprepared for voting.

## Mr. & Mrs. Li

<i>"It's hard to know what to do"</i>	
Age	57 & 59 (Boomer)
Voting Status	Infrequent
Attitudes	Tentative voter
Language	Chinese, LEP
Civics Literacy	Low

Mr. and Mrs. Li moved to California in the 1980s with their young children, and the family became citizens a few years ago. They registered to vote, but their lives are so busy that actually getting to the polls can take a back seat to other things. The measures often confuse them. Mrs. Li doesn't like to vote if she doesn't have an opinion. And Mr. Li doesn't understand why he has to vote if that "electoral committee" really elects the president.






# APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS

## 1. PLAIN LANGUAGE EXAMPLES

### Voters interpret election-specific terms literally

New voters do not have any historical context to help them interpret election jargon, so they interpret it literally. Terms like “top-two primary” and “early voting” are especially confusing.

Early voting, for example, is confusing when someone has a mental model of an election as a single day. More confusingly, it overlaps with both vote-by-mail (also done before Election Day) and voting at the polls (going to a specific place to vote). When you add the idea that you can drop off your vote-by-mail ballot at the polls on Election Day, the whole mental construct collapses.


OVERLAP AMONG OPTIONS FOR VOTING		
Voting option	Before Election Day	On Election Day
 <b>Vote by mail</b>	<b>Yes</b> – from home	<b>Yes</b> – drop off your ballot
 <b>Early voting</b>	<b>Yes</b> – in person	<b>No</b>
 <b>Vote at the polls</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Yes</b> – in person

Understanding the options for voting outside the polls on Election Day requires a level of civic literacy that most of the voters in our study lacked. Thus, the advantages of offering additional convenient voting options are lost.

### Voters have a strong desire for information in plain language

As part of the usability testing, we asked participants to compare two versions of some common pages: information about candidates, rules, and measures. They overwhelmingly preferred the simpler, plainer version, no matter how little or how much text was available.

Based on earlier research, we expected that participants in the usability testing would suggest removing some of the wordier information in the sections on ballot measures, such as the long candidate statements or the full text of the measures. In support of this view, participants said that they wanted shorter booklets that were easier to read.

 *“It looks like a novel. It should be three pages.”*  
– Spanish-speaking non-voter


# APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS

To explore this more deeply, we asked research participants to choose between shorter, structured candidate presentations and longer, paragraph-based, candidate statements.

## Choosing between short overview and deeper information



Candidates overview with very short summary text in structured sections.

 <b>Who is running for office?</b>		9
<p><b>Member of the Assembly, 4th District</b></p> <p>The person elected Member of the Assembly will represent you in the state government to make laws and set the budget for the state of California.</p>		<p><b>Member of the Board of Supervisors</b></p> <p>The person elected to the Board of Supervisors represents you in city / county government. The Supervisors make laws and set policy for the city/ county government, and set and oversee the city/ county budget.</p>
<b>CANDIDATE</b>	<p><b>John Munn</b> Republican Taxpayer Association President <a href="mailto:JohnMunn@gmail.com">JohnMunn@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Marikyo Yamada</b> Democratic California State Assemblyman <a href="http://www.yamadaforca.org">www.yamadaforca.org</a></p>
<b>PERSONAL STATEMENT</b>	<p>As a business owner, public official, and a single father who raised two sons in Franklin County, I understand the issues that matter most to Franklin County families. I treasure our democracy and pledge to put our common good above partisanship and special interests.</p>	<p>I have served our community as a public school teacher and Franklin County Supervisor, and California State Assemblymember. I am running for re-election to build on my record of legislative results, and to continue working as a strong advocate for our residents, families, and small business owners.</p>
<b>TOP PRIORITIES</b>	<p>Improve our economy and restore fiscal discipline. Secure our borders and forge a humane immigration policy. Improve healthcare and protect Social Security.</p>	<p>Give school districts more control of their budget. Make college more affordable for middle class families and provide funding for training technology. Create jobs in high unemployment areas hurt by the economic downturn.</p>
	<p><i>This candidate has a paid statement, <a href="#">see page 13</a></i></p>	<p><i>This candidate has a paid statement, <a href="#">see page 14</a></i></p>
	<p><b>Karen Mitchoff</b> County Supervisor <a href="mailto:Karen.Mitchoff@gmail.com">Karen.Mitchoff@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Robert Jones</b> Business executive <a href="http://www.RobertJones-for-Franklin.com">www.RobertJones-for-Franklin.com</a></p>
	<p>My focus during my first term has been to maintain and then improve our county financial structure in order to provide vital, quality public and safety net programs for our vulnerable citizens (pre-school; after school tutoring; computer literacy classes; funding a Veterans Services Representative).</p>	<p>Customer service to citizens is my top priority. I possess the qualifications, leadership, and high ethical standards required to serve the citizens of Franklin County, continuing my work to manage and protect taxpayers' dollars. I would be honored to earn your continued trust and support.</p>
	<p>Provide fire protection and emergency medical response with reduced fiscal resources. Provide protection from elder and child abuse; containment of communicable disease; protection to ensure water and food safety.</p>	<p>Ensure property tax refunds are promptly issued when assessed values are reduced. Establish sound fiscal policies for the county.</p>
	<p><i>This candidate has a paid statement, <a href="#">see page 14</a></i></p>	<p><i>This candidate has a paid statement, <a href="#">see page 14</a></i></p>

# APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS



Candidates' statements in long form, each filling one column.

## 12 Paid candidate statements

*Candidate statements are provided by the candidate and printed at their expense.*

### State Assembly, 4th District

#### Statement of John Munn

**Preference:** Republican

**Occupation:** Taxpayer Association President

For over twelve years, I have served the central coast, first as a school board member and now as a county supervisor and coastal commissioner.

**School Board Member:** As an educator, I know that California's future depends on top quality education at all levels. I have worked with teachers, parents, students and administrators to achieve measurable improvement. That work has earned me support from dozens of local school board members, teachers and parents.

**County Supervisor:** For the last eight years, I have worked every day to ensure that social services, healthcare and public works are provided effectively and within our budget constraints. That is why I have such broad support from community leaders and local elected officials.

**Coastal Commissioner:** The coast is the natural resource that ties us together. My work to protect our watersheds, coast and ocean, and ensure appropriate development, has earned me support throughout California.

I know small businesses are the heartbeat of our central coast economy. As a former professional in the high tech industry, I personally understand the challenges facing employers and employees.

It is an honor to have the support of the California Democratic Party, Congressmembers Sam Farr and Anna Eshoo, Senator Joe Simitian, Assemblymembers Bill Monning and Luis Alejo, Sheriffs Phil Wowak and Scott Miller, respected business leaders, health care professionals and scores of dedicated environmentalists.

I hope that I have earned your personal support and look forward to representing you in the State Assembly.

#### Declaración de John Munn

**Preferencia de Partido:** Republicano

**Ocupación:** Presidente de la Asociación de los Contribuyentes

Durante más de doce años, he servido a la costa central, primero como miembro

del consejo escolar y ahora como supervisor del condado y comisionado costero.

**Miembro de la Junta Escolar:** Como educador, sé que el futuro de California depende de la educación de alta calidad en todos los niveles. He trabajado con maestros, padres, estudiantes y administradores para lograr una mejor mensurable. Ese trabajo me ha dado el apoyo de decenas de miembros de juntas escolares locales, maestros y padres.

**Supervisor del Condado:** Durante los últimos ocho años, he trabajado todos los días para garantizar que se brinden los servicios sociales, de salud y obras públicas de manera efectiva y dentro de nuestras limitaciones presupuestarias. Es por eso que tengo un apoyo tan amplio de los líderes comunitarios y funcionarios electos locales.

**Comisionado Costero:** La costa es el recurso natural que nos une. Mi trabajo para proteger nuestras cuencas hidrográficas, la costa y el mar, y garantizar un desarrollo adecuado, me ha ganado el apoyo de toda California.

Sé que los negocios en pequeña escala son el corazón de nuestra economía central costera. Como ex profesional en la industria de alta tecnología, personalmente comprendo los desafíos que enfrentan los empleadores y empleados.

Es un honor contar con el apoyo del Partido Demócrata de California, los Congresistas Sam Farr y Anna Eshoo, el Senador Joe Simitian, los Asambleístas Bill Monning y Luis Alejo, los Alguaciles Phil Wowak y Scott Miller, líderes respetados de negocios, profesionales de la salud y decenas de ecologistas dedicados.

Espero haberme ganado su apoyo personal y espero representarlo en la Asamblea Estatal.

## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS

Contrary to what we had expected, between these two choices, participants said they wanted more information, not less, even if they might not read it. Their rationale was that if they were particularly interested in a candidate or measure, they would want as much information as possible.



### Information about candidates to include in the voter guide

Candidate information	# Choosing (n=44)	Reasons: comments from participants
Short, structured table	28 (64%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simpler. Takes time to read.</li> <li>• Clear headings. More space. Less of a pitch and more facts.</li> <li>• Definitely! Just want to focus on the priorities, not so much about who they are.</li> <li>• Less words, more info per page. Good layout vs. blocks of text.</li> <li>• Easy to read. Names and information are separated so you can read each one.</li> </ul>
Paragraph statements	12 (27%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has all the information, [together, continuous]. It's people-oriented.</li> <li>• It's more like a newspaper review, not just an outline.</li> </ul>
Want both	4 (9%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I want both...the more I know the better.</li> </ul>

### Information about ballot measures to include in the voter guide

Measure information	# Choosing (n=40)	Reasons: comments from participants
All the sections	29 (73%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gave you two sides. What they want to do and why.</li> <li>• Not many people will look at it, but if it's in the book more might.</li> <li>• Put the extra info in the back, so you have a way to answer your questions.</li> <li>• It's good to have choices about what to read. Full text is important so you can compare it to the arguments.</li> <li>• But no names and no rebuttals. It's longer, but I would want the background information. Keep the analysis and the full text, but I wouldn't read it.</li> </ul>
Summary only	10 (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple. People who are reviewing the long form probably already have made their decision.</li> <li>• [Summary] is good because if I don't want to read, I can just ignore all that, but other people can go to the detail. Should add photos to make it more appealing—related to the measure. Not only words on the paper. Graphs and charts “for the elderlies.” [All the text] makes you dizzy.</li> <li>• I can look up the rest of this stuff online.</li> </ul>



## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS

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### The Voter Bill of Rights can provide useful information, but it must be accessible to voters

The Voter Bill of Rights was surprisingly popular in both the interviews and the usability testing, especially among non-voters, infrequent voters, and new voters. Many of these participants stopped to read it completely and carefully. They often suggested that it be moved to the front of the book—inside the front cover or right after the table of contents.



*“Yes. Let us know our rights. People are ashamed to ask.”  
– Regular voter who teaches others*

They also found it hard to read and asked questions about what it said.



*“These are things I need to know...but some of them are confusing.”  
– Bilingual and low-literacy participant*

More regular (and educated) voters tended to skip it, saying that they knew the information or that people should know it.

*\*For a sample Voter Bill of Rights in plain language, see Appendix C.*

## 2. LAYOUT AND VISUAL PRESENTATION EXAMPLES

### Inexperienced voters look for the polling place on the front cover

One of the more discouraging problems was watching participants fail to find the address of their polling place because it was on the back cover.

Participants simply did not understand why it is not on the front cover and inside the book. When they got to the back cover, there were several addresses, making the polling place less obvious on some designs.

While we understand the limitations of printing technology, this problem was severe enough that it should be addressed:

- Experienced voters learn to look on the back cover, but new and infrequent voters do not.
- If the polling place information is on the back cover, use the front cover and the page about voting at the polls to tell voters where to find it. This can help, but does not completely solve the problem.
- A more attention-getting presentation on the back cover helps, but only if voters look at that page. The back cover is the equivalent of the mailing envelope and is quickly dismissed.



### Information about party endorsements was confusing

The legally required information about party endorsements and campaign finance was either ignored or puzzled over. The prototype used a table to present party endorsements. Participants were attracted to the simple visual display and minimal words.



*“So this is who is SPONSORING the candidates. This could make it faster to make a decision [match who you like]. Charts are good.” – Student non-voter*

## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS

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They also had a lot of questions:

- What does “endorsement” mean?
- Who are all the other names besides Republican and Democrat?
- Which candidates will be on the ballot?
- How much money do the candidates get from the parties?
- How can one candidate be for two parties?
- Why are you telling me this?

*“They are agreeing to put their statements in the ballot. Sort of like advertising these candidates.”*  
– Non-voter

*“Spending limits are a good topic, but how does this work? What limits? How much? How does it affect them?”* – Student non-voter

*“Seems like because these candidates had a party endorsement, it seems like it’s biased. Unfairly advantaged. Take it out.”* – Infrequent voter

*“Not necessary. Letting you know what party they are affiliated with. It’s covered elsewhere. You get this in the mail from the parties.”*  
– Young, regular voter

They had an equally large number of questions about the spending limits statement and what it means. They wanted this information more closely connected to the candidate statements.

### **New voters were confused by the sample ballot in the voter guides**

We were surprised by the number of people who did not recognize the sample ballot easily. They thought:

- It was just a duplicate set of instructions for how to vote (because the top of the ballot was instructions)
- It was a list of the candidates (for informational purposes)
- The timing marks were just decoration
- If Spanish translations in the ballot were included, it was not necessary (because the rest of the book was not bilingual)

The way the sample ballot—which we suggest calling a “practice ballot”—is displayed can make a difference in how useful it is.

## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS

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### 3. CIVIC LITERACY EXAMPLES

#### Voters want to know what is on the ballot

Almost all voters' questions start with what they will vote for—the candidates and measures or propositions on the ballot. Then they turn to the questions about how to vote, starting with basic “when and where” questions.

#### Voters need help understanding elections and how they work

Information about primaries was by far the most confusing content in the guide. We tested two versions of the explanation of the top-two primary: the long version from the state guide and a short version based on the newly redesigned Los Angeles guide. Neither worked.

There were many reasons:

- Many voters do not understand what a “primary” is.
- Because they don't understand primaries, they don't see what is different about a top-two primary.
- They don't want the history; they just want to know how things work now.
- They don't have a strong party affiliation (or don't understand what this means).
- They don't think the top-two primary makes sense, so they struggle to understand why it might work the way it does.

*“I need help with different kinds of elections. What's the difference?”  
– Infrequent young Asian voter*

*“Why would two people from the same party run against each other?”  
– Young non-voter*

*“I'm not familiar [with top-two primary]. Is there another election between the primary and the general election?” – Regular voter*

*“Very confusing — what's new about it? What's the old way, what's the new way?”  
– Registered new citizen non-voter*

Participants asked many questions that revealed gaps in their knowledge about the mechanics of how to vote. Each of these questions suggests information that could go in the voter guide, but could also go in a “welcome packet” for new voters or in voter engagement flyers.

## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF CORE FINDINGS

### Some of the details of elections they didn't know:

- You don't need an ID to vote in CA
- You do need to register to vote
- You must register in advance to be allowed to vote
- Your employer is required to give you time off to vote
- You don't have to vote on everything on the ballot
- You can get help from a poll worker
- You can't vote after Election Day
- You don't have to have an appointment to vote.
- Registering to vote doesn't sign you up for jury duty
- Election materials are available in some languages in some places



### Voters need tips on how to use the guide

They also need the guide to be self-teaching, suggesting ways to prepare to vote and use the guide more effectively. For example:

- Experienced voters knew that the ballot in the guide is a sample and that they could mark it in advance and take it to the polls as a guide for marking the real ballot.
- Newer voters did not expect to see the pro-and-con statements about measures and would use them more now that they know they are there.



# APPENDIX C: TOP 5 USER-RATED PAGES

Pages	Description
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### QUICK-REFERENCE GUIDE

**PROP 30** TEMPORARY TAXES TO FUND EDUCATION. GUARANTEE LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

**SUMMARY** Put on the Ballot by Petition Signatures

Increases taxes on earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and sales taxes by ¼ cent for four years, to fund schools. Guarantees public safety readjustment funding. Fiscal Impact: Increased state tax revenues through 2018-19, averaging about \$6 billion annually over the next five years. Revenues available for funding state budget. In 2012-13, planned spending reductions, primarily to education programs, would not occur.

**WHAT YOUR VOTE MEANS**

**YES** A YES vote on this measure means: The state would increase personal income taxes on high-income taxpayers for seven years and sales taxes for four years. The new tax revenues would be available to fund programs in the state budget.

**NO** A NO vote on this measure means: The state would not increase personal income taxes or sales taxes. State spending reductions, primarily to education programs, would take effect in 2012-13.

**ARGUMENTS**

**PRO** After years of cuts to schools and public safety, it's time to take a stand. Prop. 30 asks the wealthiest to temporarily pay more to prevent deep school cuts, provide billions in new education funding, guarantee local public safety and help balance the state budget. Learn more at [YesOnProp30.com](http://YesOnProp30.com).

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**FOR** Ace Smith  
Yes on Proposition 30  
2633 Telegraph Avenue #317  
Oakland, CA 94612  
(510) 628-0202  
[YesOnProp30@EduStandCA.com](mailto:YesOnProp30@EduStandCA.com)  
[YesOnProp30.com](http://YesOnProp30.com)

**AGAINST** No on 30—Californians for Reforms and Jobs, Not Taxes  
925 University Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95825  
(866) 955-5508  
[info@StopProp30.com](mailto:info@StopProp30.com)  
[www.StopProp30.com](http://www.StopProp30.com)

**PROP 31** STATE BUDGET, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT AND STATUTE.

**SUMMARY** Put on the Ballot by Petition Signatures

Establishes two-year state budget. Sets rules for offsetting new expenditures, and Governor budget cuts in fiscal emergencies. Local governments can alter application of laws governing state-funded programs. Fiscal Impact: Decreased state sales tax revenues of \$200 million annually, with corresponding increases of funding to local governments. Other, potentially more significant changes in state and local budgets, depending on future decisions by state and local officials.

**WHAT YOUR VOTE MEANS**

**YES** A YES vote on this measure means: Certain fiscal responsibilities of the Legislature and Governor, including state and local budgeting and oversight procedures, would change. Local governments that create plans to coordinate services would receive funding from the state and could develop their own procedures for administering state programs.

**NO** A NO vote on this measure means: The fiscal responsibilities of the Legislature and Governor, including state and local budgeting and oversight procedures, would not change. Local governments would not be given (1) funding to implement new plans that coordinate services or (2) authority to develop their own procedures for administering state programs.

**ARGUMENTS**

**PRO** YES on 31 will stop politicians from keeping Californians in the dark about how their government is functioning. It will prevent the state from passing budgets behind closed doors, stop politicians from creating programs with money the state doesn't have, and require governments to report results before spending more money.

**CON** Proposition 31 is a badly flawed initiative that locks expensive and conflicting provisions into the Constitution, causing lawsuits, confusion, and cost. Prop. 31 threatens public health, the environment, prevents future increases in funding for schools, and blocks tax cuts. Join teachers, police, conservationists, tax reformers: vote no on Prop. 31.







**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**FOR** Taxpayers for Government Accountability  
(916) 572-7111  
[info@accountabla.org](mailto:info@accountabla.org)  
[www.accountabla.org](http://www.accountabla.org)

**AGAINST** Californians for Transparent and Accountable Government

Quick-Reference Guide | 5

The Quick Reference Guide to measures in the California State Voter Guide has clear formatting and short chunks of text that make it easy to identify the type of information available for each measure. All infrequent voters liked this page. (36 of 53 chose this page)

©2012 Easy Voter Guide		November 6, 2012 Election						
		SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT 3		SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT 5		SCHOOL BOARD DISTRICT 7		
CANDIDATE								
	Occupation: School Board Director Age: 48 Website: <a href="http://hintonhodgeforokland.com">hintonhodgeforokland.com</a>	Occupation: Public School Educator Age: 58 Website: <a href="http://benlang.com">benlang.com</a>	Occupation: Entrepreneur; Children's Advocate Age: 43 Website: <a href="http://rosteforoklandschools.com">rosteforoklandschools.com</a>	Occupation: Educator Age: 39 Website: <a href="http://mikewithintonforokland.com">mikewithintonforokland.com</a>	Occupation: Creative Director; Entrepreneur Age: 36 Website: <a href="http://harrisforokland.com">harrisforokland.com</a>	Occupation: Family and Child Advocate Age: 61 E-mail: <a href="mailto:spearman@yaho.com">spearman@yaho.com</a>		
	I have 25 years of experience as an advocate working with parents, leaders, and organizations to improve education in Oakland. I have served on the School Board since 2008, and working to solve problems facing our schools. I have professionally worked as a youth and family advocate and organizer.	BA, MA, MS; Teaching Credential; Administrative Credential. I've been an Oakland District 3 resident for 38 years. I've spent over twenty years as a classroom teacher and administrator. I am the candidate that understands curriculum and school finance.	I am motivated by the need for new leadership to transform Oakland's public school system. I'm a mother of a child thriving in OUSD. I'm a business owner, attorney, a community activist, and a volunteer. I believe education transforms lives.	I was born and raised in Oakland. I have worked in Oakland's schools and with Oakland's youth and been an active participant at school board meetings for 20 years. I am endorsed by Oakland's teachers.	I'm a former teacher and East Oakland native. I believe that building strong public schools is the key to breaking the cycle of unemployment and violence that plagues our community. I will bring new, fresh leadership to the School Board.	I have served as a member on the Board of Education for nearly 8 years. Vice President 3 years, President 1 year, Chairperson of the Safety Committee 3 years, Chair of the Audit Committee 4 years. I have also been the California School Board Association Delegate for OUSD 6 years.		
Provide high quality, effective instruction for all students closing the achievement and opportunity gap and strengthening our college and career readiness program, LinkEd Learning. Creating safe, healthy, and technologically ready schools. Providing teachers and staff with the necessary support and resources.	I will focus on bringing 21st Century curriculum and learning skills to Oakland classrooms. I will focus on bringing sound fiscal practices to OUSD administration. I will bring reason and educational experience to a school board that has been sadly lacking in both.	Provide every child with a safe, supportive learning environment. Protect classroom families: focus on quality teachers and small class sizes. Foster an OUSD culture that is transparent and accountable.	Increase enrollment, stop school closures, and end the expansion of charter schools. Negotiate a fair contract with Oakland's teachers. Facilitate community engagement and guarantee that everyone has access to quality public neighborhood schools.	Preparing our students for college and career through contemporary and engaging curriculum. Dedicating more resources to underperforming African American and Latino students. Supporting our educators through smaller class sizes, professional development opportunities, and increased salary.	Recruit and Retain Qualified Teachers. Expand intervention services in Secondary Schools. Provide Compensation to all employees.			

[hvoakland.com](http://hvoakland.com) Page 7

The Candidates Overview in an Oakland Easy Voter Guide also made it easy to see what type of information was available and to quickly scan the page. In this page of candidates for a local school board election, participants valued the photographs, saying they gave a sense of the people behind the words. (35 of 53 chose this page)

# APPENDIX C: TOP 5 USER-RATED PAGES

Pages	Description
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**Mark your calendar  
Don't forget to vote on  
November 6, 2012**

**October 2012**


Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
21	22 Last day to register to vote for this election	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Curbside Drop-off for Vote-by-Mail ballots begins	30 Last day to request a Vote-by-Mail ballot by mail	31 * Last day to mail your voted Vote-by-Mail ballot locally			

\* Vote-by-Mail ballots must be received at the Solano County Registrar of Voters Office or any polling place in Solano County by 8:00 p.m. on November 6, 2012. Postmarks do not count.

**November 2012**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Registrar of Voters Office will be open 8:00 A.M. - 5:00 P.M.
4	5	6 	7	8	9	10

**WARNING !!!** Your **POLLING PLACE** for this election may be different from the polling place you went to for the last election. Please check the front or back page of this pamphlet for the correct location or visit our website at: [www.solanocounty.com/elections](http://www.solanocounty.com/elections).

48 / CAL 

A page showing the election dates in a **calendar format** was very attractive. People's faces often lit up when they saw it.


Participants said it would serve as a reminder and valued the dramatic identification of Election Day with a star. (34 of 53 chose this page)

## 4 WAYS TO vote

**VOTE IN PERSON**

29 days before the election, the Butte County Elections Office opens as a polling place. This provides voters the opportunity to cast their ballot or pick up a ballot to take home.


Monday through Friday  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



**VOTE BY MAIL**

Voters may request a ballot be mailed to them. See back cover for application.

Vote by mail ballots must be received no later than 8 p.m. Election Day (postmarks are not acceptable).




**SATURDAY VOTING**

Vote in person, pick up a ballot, or drop your voted ballot at the Butte County Elections Office.

Last minute voters should consider using this opportunity on:

Saturday, November 3, 2012  
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.



**VOTE AT THE POLLS**


Where is Your Polling Place???

The location of your polling place is shown on the back cover of this booklet to the left of your address.

Decide how you want to vote before you go to the polls.

Mark your choices in this booklet, bring it to the polls with you and refer to it when voting your official ballot. This will save you time in the booth, and will also shorten the time for the next voter.

On Election Day the polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.

04-G12-FP1 

All of the pages showing **different ways to vote** on a single page were popular. One with four options in a tidy layout was particularly well liked. Participants pointed to the clear options and illustrations.

Almost all the students chose this page. (32 of 53 chose this page)

# APPENDIX C: TOP 5 USER-RATED PAGES

Pages	Description
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**MARIN COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS**  
INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTING AT THE POLLS

- 1. Sign Roster**
- 2. Mark Ballot**
- 3. Place Ballot in Secrecy Folder**
- 4. Take Ballot to Ballot Box**

**MARK YOUR BALLOT CORRECTLY**  
*Only use the marking pen provided*

<p><b>TO VOTE ON A MEASURE</b> Completely blacken the oval next to the word YES or NO.</p> <p><b>MEASURE X</b> Shall baseball games be played on Tuesdays? <input checked="" type="radio"/> YES <input type="radio"/> NO</p>	<p><b>TO VOTE FOR A CANDIDATE</b> Completely blacken the oval next to the candidate of your choice.</p> <p><b>CITY COUNCILMEMBER</b> Vote for ONE (1)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> JACKIE ROBINSON Baseball Player</p> <p><input type="radio"/> PEGGY FLEMING Figure Skater</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> LANCE ARMSTRONG Cyclist</p> <p><i>Do not vote for more candidates than allowed. Otherwise, none of your votes for that office will be counted.</i></p>	<p><b>TO VOTE FOR A WRITE-IN CANDIDATE</b> Completely blacken the oval next to the blank line. Clearly print the name of the write-in candidate on the line.</p> <p><b>GOVERNOR</b> Vote for ONE (1)</p> <p><input type="radio"/> GEORGE WASHINGTON</p> <p><input type="radio"/> ABRAHAM LINCOLN</p> <p><input type="radio"/> JOHN F. KENNEDY</p> <p><input checked="" type="radio"/> THOMAS JEFFERSON</p> <p><i>Only votes for pre-qualified write-in candidates will be counted</i></p>
--	--	---

**IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE ON YOUR BALLOT**  
*If you make a mistake on your ballot, return it to the poll worker who will invalidate the ballot and issue you another one.*


**PLEASE LIMIT YOUR TIME IN VOTING BOOTH**  
*Please don't spend more time in the voting booth than necessary. Ask a poll worker if you need assistance.*

Participants wanted visual **instructions for how to vote**. There were some differences in how much information they wanted, but the page most often selected was the one that looked the most complete, even though they also said the page was dense and even crowded.

Newer voters pointed to the step-by-step top line of instructions. (30 of 53 chose this page)

## APPENDIX D: QUESTIONS RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS ASKED

During the usability testing phase of the research, voters and potential voters asked the following questions. For some users who started with no questions, questions emerged as they paged through the prototype guide.

 Question	# Asking	Variations of the question
What's on the ballot?	39	What's on the ballot? Who do I support or vote for? Who is running? Who will I be voting for? Who are the candidates? Who supports the candidates? What are the candidates' positions on [specific issue]? What are the ballot measures? What are the pros and cons for the measures? Does this measure mean a tax increase? How does the official guide compare to the TV ads? Who is in office right now?
Where do I go vote?	23	What are the voting hours and locations? Is it near my house? Do I have to vote in my ZIP code? When is the next election?
How do I vote (mark a ballot)?	17	Have I voted correctly? What happens if I make a mistake? How long does it take?
What happens at the polling place?	13	What are your rights when you vote? Do I need to show ID to vote?
What are my options for voting?	12	How do I vote if not on Election Day? What is early voting?
How do I vote by mail?	11	Deadline for vote-by-mail? When is my vote-by-mail ballot due? What happens if I don't get my vote-by-mail ballot in the mail?
Registration questions	5	Am I registered to vote right now? How do I register to vote?
Why vote?	2	How important is it? Does it make a difference? How does your vote help?
No interest	2	I'm not very interested in politics



## APPENDIX E: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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All of the following research materials for this project are online:

<http://centerforcivicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/>

### Report and recommendations

- Sample voter guide pages illustrating the recommendations
- Icons and illustrations from the prototype voter guide

### Preliminary reports and presentations

- Reports on the stakeholder interviews: views from experts in voter education and outreach on barriers and challenges
- A preliminary report on the first interviews with voters and non-voters
- Workshop reports and presentation materials
- Voter guides and sample ballots from 2010-2013
- Landscape analysis from the 2014 primary election

### Research protocol materials

- Demographic questionnaire
- Session scripts
- Sample pages and prototypes tested



# APPENDIX E: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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## SAMPLE ICONS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

### ICONS



Voter guide



Polling place



Calendar



Accessibility



TTY



Voter



Telephone



Form



Language



Mail



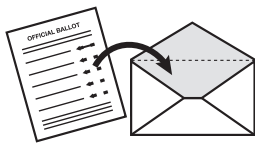
Web/Online



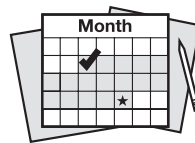
Attention!

---

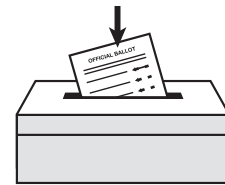
### ILLUSTRATIONS



Vote by mail



Vote early in person



Vote at the polls in person



Who's running for office?



Ballot measure



Practice ballot

# APPENDIX E: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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## SAMPLE VOTER BILL OF RIGHTS IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

### Voter Bill of Rights

#### You have a right to...

cast a ballot if you are a registered voter. You can register to vote if you are

- a U.S. citizen
- at least 18 years old
- a resident of California
- not in prison or on parole
- registered to vote where you currently live.

vote on a provisional ballot if your name is not on the list of registered voters.

vote if you are in line when the polls close.

cast a secret ballot without anyone bothering you or telling you how to vote.

get a new ballot if you have made a mistake as long as you still have your old ballot. If you are at a polling place, ask an election official for a new ballot. If you vote by mail, you must give your original ballot to an election official before the polls close on Election Day before you can ask for a new ballot.

get help voting and casting your ballot.

turn in your completed vote-by-mail ballot at any polling place in the county where you are registered to vote.

get election materials in a language other than English if enough people in your voting precinct need a ballot in that language.

ask questions about election procedures and watch the election process. You can ask questions of election officials about procedures. The person you ask must answer your questions or send you to the right person for an answer. Please don't ask questions while election officers are busy working.

report anything happening in the polling place that is a crime or if you believe someone is not who they say they are.

If you believe you have been denied any of these rights, or see something that might be a crime, call the Secretary of State's confidential toll-free Voter Hotline at **(800) 345-8683**.

# PROJECT CREDITS

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Many people contributed to this work, most importantly, the 100 Californians who participated in our research sessions around the state. They are anonymous, and we strive to represent their voices clearly in this manual.

We are grateful for the support and help of Catherine Hazelton of The James Irvine Foundation; Astrid Garcia, Stefani Jimenez, and Doug Chapin from the Future of California Elections (FOCE); and Whitney Quesenbery and Dana Chisnell from Center for Civic Design.

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## **Election officials**

Cathy Darling Allen / Shasta County; Jill Fox & Barbara Carr / San Francisco; Neal Kelley / Orange County; Dean Logan / Los Angeles County; Gail Pellerin / Santa Cruz County; Kari Verjil, Rebecca Spencer & Art Tinoco / Riverside County; Michael Vu / San Diego County; Debbie O'Donoghue & Nicole Winger / California Secretary of State's office; Mac Taylor, Brian Brown & Jason Sisney / California Legislative Affairs Office

## **FOCE members and other community organizations**

Tanzila Ahmed, Deanna Kitamura, Eugene Lee, and Nathanel Lowe / Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles; Kim Alexander / California Voter Foundation; Caroline Bruister / California Forward; Kathay Feng / California Common Cause; Almas Haider / South Asian Network; Rosalind Gold and Ofelia Medina / National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund; Eileen Ma / API Equality – LA; Fred Nisen and Bill Hershon / Disability Rights California; Michelle Romero / The Greenlining Institute; Bo Sivanunsakul / Thai Community Development Center; Sabrina Smith and the field team / California Calls; Susan Stuart Clark / Common Knowledge; Ernie Ting / Smart Voter; Raquel Beltran / The League of Women Voters of Los Angeles; Thea Brodtkin / The League of Women Voters of Santa Monica; Kathy Souza and Mony Flores-Bauer / The League of Women Voters of California

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The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund  
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Center for Civic Design  
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Future of California Elections  
[futureofcaelections.org](http://futureofcaelections.org)



The James Irvine Foundation  
[irvine.org](http://irvine.org)

# ABOUT US

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## About the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund

The League of Women Voters of California Education Fund conducts voter service and civic education activities. It is a 501(c)(3) corporation, a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational organization, which:

- Builds participation in the democratic process.
- Studies key community issues at all government levels in an unbiased manner.
- Enables people to seek positive solutions to public policy issues through education and conflict management.

## Our History

The League of Women Voters was formed in 1920 as an outgrowth of the movement to give women the right to vote following the passage of the 19th amendment to the U.S. Constitution. That amendment was ratified in 1920, after a 72-year struggle. The League was characterized as a “mighty political experiment” designed to help 20 million women carry out their new responsibilities as voters. It encouraged them to use their new power to participate in shaping public policy.

Carrie Chapman Catt is generally credited as being the founder of the League. She wrote of how she first envisioned the League in April 1919: “The politicians used to ask why we wanted to vote. They seemed to think we want to do something particular with it, something we were not telling about. They did not understand that women wanted to help improve the general welfare of the people.”

## Contact Us

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## Join the Conversation

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<https://www.facebook.com/cavotes>

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