

Future of California Elections

How voters get information: Guidelines & recommendations

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Center for Civic Design

@civicdesign

Presentation: October 15, 2014

civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/



About the project

- 1 year
- 38+ partners
- 58 counties
- 100 research participants
 - Voters, non voters, infrequent voters
 - Young, new citizens, low literacy, people with disabilities, language minorities
- And many miles



It took many amazing people

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 advocacy groups: 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 (California Calls), Susan Stuart Clark (Common Knowledge), Ernie Ting (Smart Voter), Raquel Beltran (League of Women Voters of Los Angeles), Thea Brodtkin (League of Women Voters of Santa Monica), Kathy Souza & Mony Flores-Bauer (League of Women Voters of California, Voter Service Directors)

Research hosts and recruiting assistance: Berkeley Reads / Linda Sakamoto-Jahnke, Billy DeFrank Lesbian and Gay Community Center, California Community Foundation, CAUSE / Carrie Gan, Ed Roberts Campus/ Fred Nisen and Dmitri Belser, Los Angeles County Clerk's office / Dean Logan, Efrain Escobedo and Monica Flores, Modesto Parks & Recreation Staff, NALEO / Ofelia Media, Alberto Avalos, St. John the Baptist Church

Three big insights

- Plain language can't be overemphasized
- Civic literacy is a huge challenge
- Layout and visual presentation are important for comprehension

Two big sections of the guide

What's in this guide?	1
3 ways to vote	3
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
Accessibility and language voting assistance	7
What's on the ballot for this election?	8
Who are the candidates?	9
Paid candidate statements	10
Local ballot measures: E	12
Local ballot measures: F	18
Practice ballot	20

Large, clear groupings in the headings and table of contents helped voters understand what is in the voter guide.

Recommendations

- the right information
- organized in the right way
- presented so it is easy to read and understand
- and personalized for them
- helping address the civic literacy gap



Plain language

Let us tell you about Bill...

Voter Bill of Rights – recommended language

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
- have been living in the state for x days
- 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]

Voter Bill of Rights – current language

1. You have the right to cast a ballot if you are a valid registered voter. A valid registered voter means a United States citizen who is a resident in this state, who is at least 18 years of age and not in prison or on parole for conviction of a felony, and who is registered to vote at his or her current residence address.
2. You have the right to cast a provisional ballot if your name is not listed on the voting rolls.
3. You have the right to cast a ballot if you are present and in line at the polling place prior to the close of the polls.
4. You have the right to cast a secret ballot free from intimidation.
5. You have the right to receive a new ballot if, prior to casting your ballot, you believe you made a mistake. If at any time before you finally cast your ballot, you feel you have made a mistake, you have the right to exchange the spoiled ballot for a new ballot. Vote-by-mail voters may also request and receive a new ballot if they return their spoiled ballot to an elections official prior to the closing of the polls on Election Day.
6. You have the right to receive assistance in casting your ballot, if you are unable to vote without assistance.
7. You have the right to return a completed vote-by-mail ballot to any precinct in the county.
8. You have the right to election materials in another language, if there are sufficient residents in your precinct to warrant production.
9. You have the right to ask questions about election procedures and observe the election process. You have the right to ask questions of the precinct board and elections officials regarding election procedures and to receive an answer or be directed to the appropriate official for an answer. However, if persistent questioning disrupts the execution of their duties, the board or election officials may discontinue responding to questions.
10. You have the right to report any illegal or fraudulent activity to a local elections official or to the Secretary of State's office.

If you believe you have been denied any of these rights or you are aware of any election fraud or misconduct, please call the Secretary of State's confidential toll-free Voter Hotline at (800) 345-8683

Read it online: <http://civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/>



Center for Civic Design

Civic literacy

Elections are not intuitive

How many ways can you vote?

- vote by mail
- early voting
- vote at the polls

Identify options clearly

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.

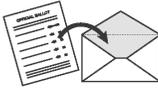
Decide how you want to vote before you go to the polls.

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 

3 ways to vote 3



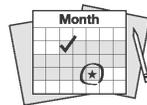
Vote by mail

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](#).



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](#).



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
- Using the automated phone service: 1-222-555-1216

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

Ballot Type 2 - CCD-20140711

General Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

Help people ask the right questions and find the answers

Question	# Asking	Variations of the question
What's on the ballot?	39	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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?

Help people answer their questions

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Anticipate and answer voters' questions, rather than just telling them what we think they need to know.



Layout and design

Making information easy to recognize

Layouts help reinforce meaning

12 Local ballot measures: E

E Measure E Franklin Community College District

Summary

The college board will determine whether to issue bonds to pay for the college's debt service and the San Joaquin and Sacramento counties will pay for the college's debt service. The college board will also determine whether to issue bonds to pay for the college's debt service and the San Joaquin and Sacramento counties will pay for the college's debt service.

What your vote means

YES	NO
A "yes" vote on this measure authorizes the issuance of \$100 million of bonds and the use of bonds to pay for the college's debt service. If you vote "no" on this measure, the college board will determine whether to issue bonds to pay for the college's debt service and the San Joaquin and Sacramento counties will pay for the college's debt service.	A "no" vote on this measure authorizes the issuance of \$100 million of bonds and the use of bonds to pay for the college's debt service. If you vote "yes" on this measure, the college board will determine whether to issue bonds to pay for the college's debt service and the San Joaquin and Sacramento counties will pay for the college's debt service.

For and against Measure E

FOR

YES on E authorizes construction and debt to maintain high quality college learning programs in fields including health care, agriculture, technology, and public safety.

AGAINST

This bond is too large. We don't need it. We are expanding. We are expanding. We are expanding. We are expanding.

Supporters: Joe L. DeSoy, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors; Joe L. DeSoy, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors; Joe L. DeSoy, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors.

Opponents: Joe L. DeSoy, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors; Joe L. DeSoy, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors; Joe L. DeSoy, San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors.

Source: Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

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 in those areas and set the budget for the State of California.

CANDIDATE	Party	Website
John Mann Republican Telephone: 916-224-1100 Email: jmann@legis.ca.gov	Republican	www.johnmann.org
Marky Yamada Democratic California State Assemblyman Telephone: 916-224-1100 Email: yamada@legis.ca.gov	Democratic	www.markyamada.com

PERSONAL STATEMENT

As a business owner and a father, I understand the challenges of the economy and the need for a strong middle class. I am committed to creating jobs and supporting our local businesses.

TOP PRIORITIES

Support our economy and create jobs. Support our economy and create jobs. Support our economy and create jobs.

This candidate has a past conviction: [www.pcvr.com](#)

Source: Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

How to vote early in person

You can vote in person before Election Day, from October 7 through November 5

You may vote at any of the locations shown below from October 7 until November 5, Monday through Friday, 8am to 5pm. You may vote at any early voting location. You do not need to make an appointment.

Early voting locations:

- Franklin County Election Department
122 Main Street, Franklin, CA
522-555-3254
- State Center Town Clerk
122 South Street, Franklin, CA
522-555-3052
- Ashley Public Library
556 Hayes Street, Ashbury, CA
522-555-3420
- Hollis City Clerk
203 Clifton Avenue, Hollis, CA
522-555-0234
- Denton Town Administrator
131 Denton Street, Denton, CA
522-555-2389
- Union City Hall
795 Butler Circle, Union, CA
522-555-7174

Source: Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

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 early in person

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

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.

On the web: www.franklinvotes.org

Using the automated phone service: 1-222-555-1236

For more details, see Page 6.

Source: Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

How to vote in person at the polling place

Polling places are open from 7am to 8pm on Tuesday, November 6.

Find your polling place:

- On the front cover of this booklet.
- www.franklinvotes.org/myvote
- Automated service: 1-222-555-1236

At the polling place:

If you have questions, ask a poll worker.

Some poll workers at this polling place speak Spanish. They have special badges on.

Always use the alternate decorated voting system to mark these ballots. That system will read the ballot to you in English, Spanish, or Chinese.

- Sign in.
- Mark ballot.
- Place ballot in voting device.
- Take ballot to ballot box.

Check your ballot carefully

Make sure you have the correct ballot.

Make sure you have the correct ballot.

Make sure you have the correct ballot.

Source: Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

Design supports navigation

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Local ballot measures: E 12

Local ballot measures: F 18

Practice ballot 20

Ballot Type 1 CDD-20140711 General Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

8 What's on the ballot for this election?

You will receive two voter information guides for this election:

Franklin County Guide (this guide)

California State Guide

Local and county races and measures are in this guide.

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

Offices (see pages 12-15)

Member of the State Assembly

Member of the Board of Supervisors

United States Senator

Local Measures (see pages 16-22)

E. Community College District Bond

F. Renewal of the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement Program

Offices

President and Vice President

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

General Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

Ballot Type 1 CDD-20140711

12 Local ballot measures: E

E Measure E Franklin Community College District

Summary

To upgrade education center building facilities, accessibility, and other items of legal...

What your v

YES

A "yes" vote on this of the bonds and the Tax Rate Statement percent (55%) of must approve the

FOR

YES on E updates quality career train healthcare, science

FOR and agai

FOR

YES on E updates classrooms and labs to maintain high-quality career training programs in fields including healthcare, sciences, technology, and public safety.

YES on E improves our college, helping students prepare for 21st century jobs and careers or transfer to a year university.

YES on E updates facilities and classrooms for science, technology, and training programs in nursing, dental hygiene, and health administration.

YES on E makes college buildings, classrooms, and facilities accessible to people with disabilities.

YES on E updates and maintains technology for modern, hands-on career training. Too many core academic classes are currently conducted in overcrowded, deteriorating facilities.

YES on E monies will be managed with the highest levels of accountability, consistent with practices that have saved local taxpayers \$14.5 million recently.

YES on E funds are legally required to be spent in Franklin County to improve our local community colleges. An Independent Oversight Committee and regular audits will ensure the monies are spent as promised, consistent with our College's prudent, fiscally responsible practices.

YES on E is supported by a broad coalition of local employers, educators, students and community leaders.

Please join us. For questions or to volunteer, please visit www.FCCColleges2014.com.

Linda Best, Fr. CEO, East Bay Leadership Council (Retired)

J. Dale Hudson, Former Chair, Community College District Independent Citizens' Oversight Committee

Cynthia Egan, 2013 Franklin County Teacher of the Year (San Ramon Valley USD)

Jim Rusey, Fr. Local Fire Captain (Retired)

Argument in favor of Measure E

Dublin 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!

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.

YES on E improves our college, helping students prepare for 21st century jobs and careers or transfer to a year university.

YES on E updates facilities and classrooms for science, technology, and training programs in nursing, dental hygiene, and health administration.

YES on E makes college buildings, classrooms, and facilities accessible to people with disabilities.

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Argument against Measure E

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 \$465.5 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 taxpayer burdens.

Residents oppose this bond because:

- Many people are unemployed, underemployed, or financially stretched and CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY MORE.
- As compensation for District employees has grown, resources for care of buildings and grounds have become scarce. BORROWING MONEY to repair neglected buildings is FINANCIALLY UNRESPONSIBLE.
- Numerous government agencies are asking for new taxes and bond debt because BRISQ, RENOVATION COSTS GROWING OUT OTHER SPENDING, Residents are being richer and -dimeed to death.
- District construction projects include competition WITHOUT WIDE COMPETITION, work is done by the "FAMILIAR FEW" at HIGHER COST.

The District SAYS it wants a community partnership, but REFUSES to make changes or RESPOND to public concerns. We believe that actions come when we work together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Residents expect and deserve to get the best value for every tax dollar.

Vote NO on Measure E!

Franklin Taxpayers Association
Alan Adkins, Executive Director

General Election - Franklin County - Tuesday, November 6, 2012

Recommendations

Recommendations

- Include the right information at the appropriate level of detail
- Organize information for progressive disclosure
- Present information so it is easy to read and understand
- Personalize information for the voter
- Close civic literacy gaps through structure and content



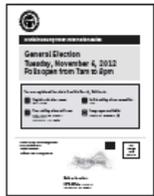
Write headings as questions or active instructions

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

Use visuals to reinforce information about elections

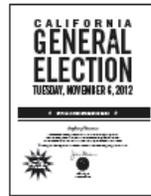
What's on the ballot for this election?

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.

Showing both voter guide covers helps voters understand that there are two booklets, and recognize them when they arrive.

Bite-snack-meal

Franklin County Voter Information Guide

General Election
Tuesday, November 6, 2012
Polls open from 7am to 8pm

Go to the polls! Your polling place location is on the back cover.



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.



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**.

Apply by doing one of the following:

- Tear off and mail back the application on the back cover page of this booklet.
- Visit www.franklinvotes.org and submit a request.
- Send a letter signed by the voter 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.

Then, you can:

- Send it by mail to:

The official term is "progressive disclosure"



Center for Civic Design

Making it happen

Next steps

Change happens step by step

- The ideas come from the current voter guides... and voters
- A deepening of the Field Guides
- Don't be afraid to rethink
- Work the 'adjacent possible'
- But, some recommendations require legislation



Report, prototype, and other materials

civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/

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Whitney Quesenbery

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@civicdesign

Thank you.