Voter Data: A Closer Look to Voter Demographics and Voting Patterns

Neal Kelley, Registrar of Voters, Orange County, CA
What types of voter data are available?

Voter Registration Database

Voter Turnout Data

Effective Maintenance of Voter Registration List:

- Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Changes
- National Change of Address (NCOA) Process
- Secretary of State – Statewide List of Registered Voters
- Undeliverable Mail and Cancellation Request
- Secure Third-Party Data
How do we analyze voter data?

- Undeliverable Mail Rates
- Language Requests
- Birth Year / Age Range
- Political Party Preference
- Voting Methodology
- Other Types of Voter Data

The generational makeup of the electorate is impacting the general consensus of what voters expect and demand in a positive voting experience.
Voter Trends reflect:

- Voter Demographics
- Voting Patterns/Behaviors
- Use of Available Services

Voter trends in Orange County have aligned with trends that are being observed across California and the United States.
Voter Trends in Orange County: Increased Voter Turnout

Higher turnout in presidential elections than non-presidential elections

Voter turnout has been much higher due to increased interest in candidates, ballot measures, and local issues.

In 2016, voter turnout was 80.7% - the highest it had been in 40 years.
Voter Trends in Orange County: No Party Preference

Steady growth of "No Party Preference" versus traditional political parties.

Graph showing the percentage of voters identifying as "Non-Party Preference" grow from 2004 to 2018.

- 2004: 27% Non-Party Preference
- 2018: 35% Non-Party Preference

Politically, No Party Preference voters have grown by 40% since 2004.
Voter Trends in Orange County: Vote-by-Mail Ballots

Voting by mail as a popular option compared to voting at polling places

Projected Vote-by-Mail Growth
Provisional ballots as an alternative voting method for voters who do not meet certain requirements on Election Day

**DID YOU KNOW?**
- A *fail-safe provisional ballot* is used when no record of a voter’s registration can be located by poll workers in the roster.
- A vote-by-mail (VBM) provisional ballot is used when a voter requested a vote-by-mail ballot and does not surrender their vote-by-mail ballot in order to vote at a polling place.
- The additional time and resources needed to process provisional ballots may delay the final vote tally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Provisional Votes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>11,895</td>
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<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>19,696</td>
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<td>2012</td>
<td>39,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>57,291</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Proportion of Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>1 in 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>1 in 10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Voter Trends in Orange County: Data-Informed Decisions

Based on observed voter trends, Orange County has decided to conduct elections under a new model of voting pursuant to SB 450 - Voter’s Choice Act (VCA).

- **Vote-by-mail**
- **In-person voting**
- **Open 11 days**

Every voter in Orange County would receive a vote-by-mail ballot and would have the opportunity to mail it, drop it off at permanent ballot drop-box, or vote in person at any one of 188 vote centers throughout Orange County.
Case Study: OCROV Voting Rights Act Report
Purpose of Report

First report in 2012 and developed in following major elections years

Track compliance with federal and state language assistance mandates

Analyze language communities and services offered by OCROV
Methods of Identifying Language Communities

Official Method
Language Requests

Unofficial Methods
Last Names
Places of Birth
U.S. Census
Demographic Data

Source: Orange County Registrar of Voters

Source: 2012/2016 American Community Survey – 5 Year Community Estimate
Profiles of Language Communities

Voter Experience

- Testimony provided by a voter with language needs on their voting experience

Demographic Data

- Countywide distribution
- Demographic trends
Profiles of Language Communities

Participation in Electoral Process
- Voting Method & Turnout
  - In-Person Voting
  - VBM Voting

Bilingual PW Recruitment
- Achievements & Challenges
- Strategies
21 countries where Spanish is the most commonly spoken language

Approx. 1,086,691 (34.3%) of OC residents identify as Hispanic or Latino

Approx. 33,000 registered voters request Spanish election materials
Spanish – Community Considerations

Participation in Electoral Process
  High in-person voting

Bilingual PW Recruitment
  Historically high cancellation rates
  Increase A-Team #s
  Strategize with high schools, County PW program, etc.
Vietnamese

Countries that speak Vietnamese:
- Vietnam

Approx. **216,835 (6.2%)** OC residents identify as Vietnamese.

Approx. **35,000** of OC registered voters requested Vietnamese voting materials.
Vietnamese – Community Considerations

Participation in Electoral Process
High rates of VBM

Bilingual PW Recruitment
Concentrated in Little Saigon
Second highest need after Spanish
Strategize with high schools, County PW program, etc.
Countries that speak Korean:
- South Korea (Republic of Korea)
- North Korea (Democratic People's Republic of Korea)

Approx. **78,000 (3%)** of OC residents are of Korean descent

Approx. **12,000** OC registered voters request Korean election materials
Participation in Electoral Process

High VBM use

Bilingual PW Recruitment

Concentrated in Irvine, Garden Grove and Buena Park/Fullerton areas

Historically high cancellation rates

Increase A-Team #s
Countries that speak Chinese:
- People’s Republic of China (PRC/Mainland China)
- Republic of China (ROC/Taiwan)
- Hong Kong

Approx. **110,000 (3.5%)** of OC residents are of Chinese descent

Approx. **6,000** OC registered voters request Chinese election materials
Chinese – Community Considerations

Participation in Electoral Process
High VBM use

Bilingual PW Recruitment
Concentrated in Irvine and Fullerton areas
Different dialects
Partnership with youth groups, high schools, etc.
Outcomes

Verify language assistance compliance with data
Develop data-based goals

Customized data analysis tools

Promote language assistance services to increase usage

Continuous community outreach and engagement

Continued quality translation of election materials
Exercise: Voter Data Exercise
Overview of the Voter Data Exercise

2 Parts:
- Voter Data Assessment
- Group Exercise

Purpose:
- To share with your colleagues or elected officials
- Use for planning purposes
National & State-Level Trends on the Local Level
Responsibilities of Elections Officials

- Administer elections
- Manage local voter registration database
- Handle petitions
- Certify elections
Impact of National & State Trends
National Trends

- Distrust of Government
- Election Security
- Insufficient Funding
- National Politics
State Trends

- Modernizing Elections
- Expanding Access
- Streamlining and Centralizing
- State Politics
National Example

• Then-Speaker Paul Ryan’s comments in November 2018
  
  Paul Ryan: "California just defies logic to me... we were only down 26 seats the night of the election & 3 weeks later, we lost basically every contested CA race. This election system they have - I can’t begin to understand what ‘ballot harvesting’ is." [link]

• Press releases from candidates hinting at election fraud
State Example

- State legislation to move 2020 Presidential Primary from June to March
- Voter and candidate awareness
- Less time for planning and preparation
Monitoring

- Become familiar with what agencies can impact you from the federal and state levels
- When are their decisions made?
- When do those decisions go into effect?
Get Involved!

- National Associations
- State Associations
- Local Chapters
- Start Your Own!
Case Study: Voter’s Choice Act
History

Modeled after a similar program in Colorado

SB 450 passed in 2016

First implemented in CA in 2018 in 5 counties

15 counties will implement vote centers in 2020

PAST. PRESENT. FUTURE.

2018
- State of California is authorized to start the use of vote centers after SB450 passed in 2016.

2016
- State of Wyoming, Laramie and Teton Counties use vote centers for their Primary and General Elections.

2015
- Wyoming (SF52) authorizes the use of vote centers with use of a-poll books.

2013
- Arkansas (HB1875) passes legislation allowing their jurisdictions to use voter centers.

2012
- South Dakota (HB53) passes authorizing the use of vote centers; however a pilot in some jurisdictions was authorized previously.

2011
- Arizona (HB233), Indiana (SR32), New Mexico (SB337), Tennessee (SB1268), Texas (HB2394), and Utah (HB130) pass legislations allowing all jurisdictions to use vote centers if warranted.

2010
- North Dakota (HB1378), South Dakota (SB101), Tennessee (SB3687), and Texas (HB1769) — initiate pilot projects.

2008
- The State of Iowa passes legislation allowing jurisdictions to use vote centers for city, school and special elections.

2006
- The State of Indiana begins vote center pilot in five counties.

2004
- Larimer County, Colorado (SR153) passes authorizing legislation.

2003
- Larimer County, Colorado introduces the first vote center.
Orange County Voter Trends

Increasing vote-by-mail voters

Decreasing in-person voters

Increasing vote-by-mail voters dropping off ballots in-person
Vote-By-Mail Growth

+6,507% increase - 1,109,000
Vote-By-Mail Growth

Year over year growth since 1996

- 2016: 61%
- 2018: 72%
- 2020: 83%
- 2022: 91%
In-Person Ballot Drop Off

Voters’ changing habits mirror benefits of Vote Centers

Polling Place Model Challenges

- Volunteer recruitment
- Facility recruitment
- Physical security
- Voting equipment
- Election certification

Ballots Counted and Left to Count

- Vote-by-Mail: 184,608 ballots counted, 7,500 ballots uncounted
- Provisional: 45,499 ballots counted, 0 ballots uncounted
Why Vote Centers?
Voter’s Choice Act

Every voter would receive a vote-by-mail ballot and would have the opportunity to mail it, drop it off at permanent ballot drop-box, or vote in person at any vote center.
Enhanced Training

Fewer election workers and are employees instead of volunteers

Allows for longer, enhanced training
Vote Center Security

- Electronic check-in with real-time updates
- Controlled chain of custody
- Enhanced security measures
Electronic Pollbooks

More information available to locate correct voters

Real-time information of who has voted shared Statewide

Stringent security requirements for electronic pollbooks
Chain of Custody

Fewer sites combined with better trained poll workers allow a more controlled chain of custody.

Improved ballot tracking

Better physical controls due to better facilities
Looking Ahead

Other counties are considering transitioning in 2022 or 2024.

Legislation moving non-Vote Center counties to operate similarly.

More data will be available to analyze the effect of conducting elections with Vote Centers.
Community Engagement & Election Officials
Responsibilities of election officials in community engagement:

- Trusted, non-partisan messenger
- Clearinghouse for all election and voting information
- Allocate taxpayer funds and public resources appropriately
Examples of data OCROV collects:

- Location of attended events
- Targeted group(s) of attended events
- Size of attended events
- Types of events
- Event turnout reports
- Vote Center surveys
- Site suggestions
Implement Data-Driven Community Engagement

Example 1
Population map helps us:

- Ensure enough outreach to high density areas
- Identify regional demographics and strategize outreach efforts
Case Study: Community Program Specialists

OCROV has full-time permanent employees dedicated to serve the general public and DOJ-required language communities, which include: Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean.

History
General CPS
Outreach CPS
Case Study: Community Program Specialists

Impact on Community:
• Comfortability
  • Increased trust
• Information
  • In-person language assistance
  • Identifiable needs and necessities
• Representation
  • Consistent engagement
Case Study: Community Program Specialists

Example 1: Partnership with a community organization
Case Study: Community Program Specialists

Example 2: Partnership with a business
Case Study: Community Program Specialists

Example 3: Partnership with a government
Community Engagement Plan Development Exercise
Steps to Develop a CE Plan

- Situation Analysis
- Develop Objectives
- Track and Evaluate Progress
Situation Analysis

What is your agency’s mission?

How can your constituency support your agency?

What methods are your agency using to achieve its mission?
Develop Objectives

What goals does your agency want to achieve?

Are they realistic in the given time frame?

How can you measure whether your goal has been achieved?
Tracking and Evaluation

What are you using to measure success?

What would you do differently if you were to do it again?

When do you evaluate your goals?
Orange County Case Study

Developed for election years to track goals and progress

Establish major objectives

Crew resource management
Situation Analysis – Orange County

What is your agency’s mission?
Run elections, maintain voter registration database

What methods are your agency using to achieve its mission?
• CE Team
• Pop-Up Mobile Voting Unit
• Social Media
• Community Partners

How can your constituency support your agency?
• Sign up for or share vote center employment opportunities
• Share event suggestions
• Repost social media posts
Develop Objectives – Orange County

Goals

Register voters
Provide election and voting information
Recruit vote center workers

Are they realistic in the given time frame?
Yes, and some are legally mandated

How can you measure whether your goal has been achieved?

- Review voter registration data and trends
- Track contacts, impressions, participation in events, etc.
- Track number of vote center employment sign-ups
What are you using to measure success?
- Weekly reports and meetings
- Track through Trello, checklists, etc.

When do you evaluate your goals?
- Post-election

What would you do differently if you were to do it again?
- Examples from past elections
Group Exercise

Work in teams

Take turns asking questions to complete the handout to develop an outline for a community engagement plan
THANK YOU!