



Voter's Choice Act

Q: What is the California Voter's Choice Act?

A: SB 450, more commonly known as the California Voter's Choice Act, was passed by the State of California in 2016, which allows select counties to conduct all-mail ballot elections while also providing regional Vote Centers to be open 10 days prior to Election Day through close of voting on Election Day. On February 26, 2019, the Orange County Board of Supervisors approved conducting elections through this model. The Registrar of Voters will implement the California Voter's Choice Act starting with the March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election.

Q: Will this affect how I vote?

A: Yes!

- Every registered voter will receive a vote-by-mail ballot
- Orange County is transitioning from polling places to Vote Centers
- Ballot Drop Boxes are available for you to drop off your vote-by-mail ballot in a secure location in addition to returning it via regular mail, or turning it in yourself at a Vote Center

All registered voters in Orange County will have more time to vote, will receive a ballot in the mail, and have access to more secure voting options.

Q: What is a Vote Center?

A: A Vote Center is a full-service in-person voting experience; similar to voting at a traditional polling place; however, there are many more benefits. At Vote Centers, not only can you vote, but solve voter registration issues, register to vote, check in electronically, get a replacement ballot, and receive general assistance for an extended period. Additionally, you can vote at any Vote Center in the County.

Q: What are the benefits of moving from polling places to Vote Centers?

A: Vote Centers are designed to improve the voter experience. While polling places have been a mainstay of voting for many years, the use of them has dropped dramatically in the past 20 years. Voters have gravitated towards more convenience, choosing instead to receive a vote-by-mail ballot and in many instances drop it off at a polling place, rather than vote in-person. Vote Centers adapt to these changes and offer many more conveniences.

Vote Centers

Q: What services are offered at a Vote Center?

A: The following services are offered at Vote Centers: secure electronic check-in, electronic voting system, drop off ballot at any site, accessible voting options, ballot on-demand, trained employees, ability to vote at any location, and multi-day voting.

Q: If Vote Centers are not area specific, how will I get a ballot that is specific to me?

A: Voters still receive ballots that are based on their registered address and the assigned precincts regardless of which Vote Center they visit.

Q: What are the dates and hours for Vote Centers?

A: Select Vote Centers are open 10 days before Election Day during regular business hours from 8:00am-5:00pm. All Vote Centers will open 3 days before Election Day with extended hours from 8:00am-8:00pm. On Election Day, all Vote Centers will be open from 7:00am-8:00pm.

Q: How did you determine where Vote Centers will be located?

A: Site selection considerations required by law include proximity to: public transportation, communities with historically low vote-by-mail usage, population centers, language communities, voters with disabilities, communities with low rates of household vehicle ownership, low-income communities, and communities that may need access to same day voter registration. We also took into consideration: access to free parking at Vote Centers, the distance and time a voter must travel by public transit or car, the need for alternate methods for voter with disabilities, traffic patterns, and more.

The Orange County Registrar of Voters Office received feedback from our Roadshow to Vote Centers meetings, Community Workshops, surveys conducted during outreach and community engagement events, online surveys, and suggestions from the public as well. Additionally, the Registrar's office has had locations volunteer to host Vote Centers. The feedback we received from surveys, suggestions, Vote Center meetings, Community Workshops, and our staff allowed us to combine data to determine the best site selections.

Q: How do I find a list or map of available Vote Centers?

A: Please visit ocvote.com/votecenter for a map of Vote Centers. Registered voters will also receive a Voter Information Guide in the mail with list of Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Boxes.

Q: What do I need to bring with me to a Vote Center in order to vote?

A: Registered voters do not need to bring anything to the Vote Center to vote. However, if you are a first-time voter, you will need to bring in proof of residency per federal law.

Q: What type of voting system will be used at Vote Centers?

A: The voting system is a paper-based system that utilizes an electronic check-in to look up voters. An electronic check-in allows all voters the opportunity to vote at any Vote Center in the county regardless of which Vote Center is closest to their residential address. Once the voter is found within our system, we will print them their specific paper ballot with the measures and contests the voter is eligible to vote on.

Q: Are any other counties in California moving to a Vote Center model?

A: The following counties will be operating the Vote Center model: Amador, Calaveras, Butte, El Dorado, Fresno, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Napa, Nevada, Sacramento, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Tuolumne. In 2020, over half of the CA electorate will be voting under the Vote Center Model.

Vote-By-Mail

Q: Will all voters in Orange County receive a vote-by-mail ballot?

A: Yes, all voters in Orange County will receive a vote-by-mail ballot. Voters may not opt out of receiving a vote-by-mail ballot.

Q: What do I do if my current address is different from the address listed on my voter registration?

A: To update to a current address, you will need to re-register to vote, either online or in person at our office or at a Vote Center.

Q: What are my options for turning in a vote-by-mail ballot?

A: You can turn in your vote-by-mail ballot via United State Postal Service, drop it off at a ballot drop box, at a Vote Center, or at the Registrar of Voters' office.

Q: Will I need to pay postage to mail my ballot through the United States Postal Service?

A: No postage is necessary for mailing in your ballot via United State Postal Service. Additionally, you can drop it off at any of our Ballot Drop Box locations, Vote Center locations, or in person at the Registrar of Voters' office.

Q: What do I do with my vote-by-mail ballot if I want to vote in person at a Vote Center?

A: You may surrender your vote-by-mail ballot at a Vote Center to a Vote Center Representative and proceed to vote in person. If you forget to bring your vote-by-mail ballot to surrender, you will spoil and dispose of it at home.

Q: What is done with vote-by-mail ballots that are surrendered at Vote Centers?

A: Vote-by-mail ballots that are surrendered at Vote Centers are spoiled and not counted.

Q: How can I track my vote-by-mail ballot?

A: To track your vote-by-mail ballot, you can our award-winning OC Ballot Express program online on ocvote.com/track.

Ballot Drop Boxes

Q: How do ballot drop boxes work?

A: Ballot drop boxes are a great way to deliver your ballot to the Registrar of Voters without having to stop into a Vote Center. These secure drop boxes serve as an excellent solution to return your ballot directly to the Registrar of Voters.

Q: Where will ballot drop boxes be located?

A: Like Vote Centers, ballot drop boxes will be located with the community in mind. Ballot Drop Boxes site considerations include proximity to public transit, communities with historically low vote by mail usage, voters with disabilities, low-income communities, and more. For a map of where the ballot drop boxes are located, visit ocvote.com/votecenter

Q: How often are ballots collected from ballot drop boxes?

A: For the first 26 days of voting, ballots will be collected from Ballot Drop Boxes every 48 hours. During the final days, ballots will be collected every 24 hours.

Q: How do you secure votes that have been placed in a ballot drop box?

A: The majority of ballot drop boxes are placed in high traffic locations. Every effort is being made to place them in locations with existing security camera coverage. Additionally, ballot drop boxes are made with military grade steel and have anti-graffiti coating on them.

Language Translation Information

Q: Can I get my ballot in my preferred language?

A: Orange County provides translated ballots in Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Korean. Translated reference ballots are available for select precincts in Tagalog and Farsi (Persian). If you've marked that you would like material sent to you in your preferred language when you registered to vote, then you will receive your ballot in your preferred language. If not, you can update your registration by re-registering to reflect that you would like your ballot in your preferred language.

If you prefer to vote in person and want a ballot in your preferred language, you can request a ballot in the language at the Vote Center.

Q: Will voting assistance at Vote Centers be offered in other languages?

A: Yes, there will be voting assistance in federally mandated languages at Vote Centers which includes Korean, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Spanish. Some Vote Centers may have assistance in Tagalog and Farsi (Persian). The level of assistance will vary based on each Vote Center's requirements.

Q: How do you determine which languages will be offered at Vote Centers?

A: Orange County must provide bilingual support in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese in compliance with federal law. The determination to provide ballot materials and support in these languages was issued in 2002 and were made using data from the 2000 U.S. Census under guidelines set forth in Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, we provide limited bilingual support in Farsi (Persian) and Tagalog, our state mandated languages that is determined by the Secretary of State every four years.

Q: What if my preferred language is not one of the five languages that are offered at Vote Centers?

A: If your preferred language is not one of the languages that are offered at Vote Centers, you are able to bring someone in with you to provide language assistance at the Vote Center.

Voter Registration

Q: What is the deadline to register to vote for the March 2020 primaries?

A: All voter registration forms must be completed and postmarked by February 18, 2020.

Q: Can I register to vote and cast my ballot at the same time?

A: Yes. Through Conditional Voter Registration, it extends existing 15-day registration deadline in California to eligible voters, allowing them to register and vote conditionally 14 days prior to an election and on Election Day. For this election, a voter can register and vote a provisional ballot as a conditional voter at Vote Centers and the Registrar of Voters' office.

Q: What are the requirements to be a registered voter in Orange County?

A: To be a registered voter in Orange County, you must be:

- 18 years of age or older
- Citizen of the United States
- Resident of Orange County
- Not currently in state or federal prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony
- Not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court

Q: What do I need in order to register to vote?

A: To register to vote, you will need your current address, Social Security Number or Driver's License number. You can register at our office, at any Vote Center, online, or fill out a registration form and send via United State Postal Service.

March 2020 Presidential Election Primary

Q: What's on the March 2020 Presidential Primary Election ballot?

A: The March 2020 Presidential Primary Election ballot will have candidates for Representatives in Congress, State Senate, State Assembly, Orange County Board of Supervisors, Orange County Board of Education, Democratic County Central Committee, Republican County Central Committee, Peace & Freedom County Central Committee, Green Party County Council, & Judge of the Superior Court. Additionally, any ballot measures, countywide measures, and state props will be on the ballot as well. For a full list, please visit ocvote.com

Q: Can I change my party on my registration before the March 2020 Presidential Primary Election?

A: Yes! To update your registration, you can re-register to vote and change your party preference then in advance of the voting period.

Q: What are the dates and hours for Vote Centers during the March 2020 Presidential Primary?

A: The first Vote Centers will open starting February 22, 2020 thru March 3, 2020. From February 22 thru February 28, Vote Centers will be open 8:00am-5:00pm. Vote Centers will be open with extended hours from February 29 thru March 3 from 8:00am-7:00pm. On Election Day, all Vote Centers will be open from 7:00am-8:00pm.

Q: Can I vote in the March 2020 Presidential Primary Election if I did not choose a party when I registered to vote?

A: For presidential primary elections: No Party Preference voters will receive a “non-partisan” ballot that does not include presidential candidates. A nonpartisan ballot contains only the names of candidates for voter-nominated offices and local nonpartisan offices and measures.

However, No Party Preference voters may vote in a political party’s partisan election if the political party, by party rule duly noticed to the Secretary of State, authorizes No Party Preference voters to vote in the next presidential primary election. For the March 2020 primaries, the Democratic, American Independent, and Libertarian parties have notified the Secretary that they will allow No Party Preference voters to vote in their primaries.

For more information, please visit ocvote.com/npp

Security Measures

Q: What security measures does the Orange County Registrar of Voters office have in place for elections?

A: Security measures can be found on our Elections Security Playbook which serves as a guide to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to physical and cybersecurity threats. To read the Election Security Playbook, please visit ocvote.com/election-library

Q: What is electronic check-in and how does that affect voter security?

A: Electronic check in is our secure way of looking up voters at any Vote Center in the County. This not only grants voters the convenience of being able to vote at any Vote Center in the County, but also provides a form of real-time communication between all Vote Centers, effectively tracking any voter to tries vote multiple times at different Vote Centers, and significantly decreasing the number of provisional ballots cast in the election.

Q: What security will be present at Vote Centers?

A: Vote Centers will incorporate both physical security and cybersecurity measures to ensure the security of voting and elections. Chain of custodies for voting equipment, encrypted data, and cybersecurity training are among several of the strategies that will be utilized.

Q: Could someone potentially cast a ballot at multiple Vote Centers?

A: No. As soon as a ballot is cast, it is electronically recorded so if a voter attempts to cast a second ballot, the database will maintain a record and the Registrar of Voters will be notified. If a voter insists that they didn't cast a previous ballot when they did, they can cast a provisional ballot and further research will be conducted at the Registrar of Voters' office.

Q: What happens if someone turns in their vote-by-mail ballot at a ballot box or via the United States Postal Service and also goes to vote at a Vote Center?

A: When a voter turns in their vote-by-mail ballot via the United States Postal Service or drops it off at a ballot drop box, their ballot will be electronically recorded when it is received at our office. However, if a voter attempts to cast a vote in person at a Vote Center, our Vote Center staff will inform them that they have already cast a vote. Whichever ballot is recorded first by our office will be counted first.