

The seal of Amador County, California, is a circular emblem. It features a central figure of a man in a hat and boots, holding a rifle and a pack, standing on a rocky terrain. The background shows a mountain range and a river. The words "AMADOR COUNTY" are written in an arc at the top, and "CALIFORNIA" is written in an arc at the bottom. The seal is surrounded by a decorative border.

VOTER'S CHOICE ACT
ELECTION
ADMINISTRATION
PLAN

AMADOR COUNTY ELECTIONS

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Jackson, CA 95642

ROUGH DRAFT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Amador County Elections Office is dedicated to ensuring the democratic process for all voters through security, integrity, transparency, accountability, accessibility and education.

Our office is preparing to implement the Voter's Choice Act (VCA). Under this new act, voters will have more choices on how, when, and where they vote. For the fast approaching March 2020 Presidential Primary, every registered voter in Amador County will receive a vote-by- mail ballot regardless of having signed up for one. However, voters aren't limited to just voting by mail; they will be able to drop off their ballots in one of our many secure drop-off locations throughout the county or vote in person. If a voter chooses to vote in person, he/she will no longer be limited to a single polling place on a single day. A voter may go to any vote center location throughout the county; two vote centers will be open 10 days before the election and one, for now, for a total of three, vote centers will be open 3 days before the election through Election Day, including weekends. The voters of Amador County will have more choices.

In order for Amador County to transition to the VCA model, this Election Administration Plan (EAP) was put together by our office, in collaboration with our community, and using lessons learned and guidance from other VCA counties and the California Secretary of State's Office. Our EAP describes how we plan to educate the public regarding the choices that come with the VCA model. It includes information about our proposed vote centers and drop-off locations, and how they will operate. Hopefully, this EAP will provide an idea of how our office is planning to administer future elections in Amador County.

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VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH – GENERAL

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(VI)

Kimberly L. Grady, Amador County Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters, has made significant efforts to educate the community at large in Amador County regarding the California Voter's Choice Act (VCA). See Appendix A for publications and other materials regarding voter education and outreach.

Media and Public Service Announcements

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(II), §4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(VIII)

Due to the rural geography of Amador County, the Elections Office's use of television is not feasible. However, through strong relationships with community leaders such as the local newspaper and radio station, we will be able to reach the majority of Amador County voters. We will partner with community leaders to have them share our information with their already established readers, listeners and followers. We will also use available media and public service announcements in accessible formats to educate the voting-age population in Amador County, and to promote the availability of an accessible vote-by-mail ballot and how to request one. Media will include, but not be limited to, newspaper, radio, online news sources and social media including audio and video formats. The following Amador County media outlets have been chosen with consideration of their target audience, frequency of publication, reach, accessibility, and consultation with the public.

Newspapers: *The Ledger Dispatch*, *Buy & Sell Press* (free weekly), *Upcountry News* (monthly publication)

Online News Sources: Amador County Website, Amador Community News (ACN) website

Radio: *KVGC 1340AM* and *96.5FM*

Social Media: Motherlode Community Connection (Facebook group), A Better Amador (Facebook group)

Significant efforts for educating potential voters through the abovementioned media will be implemented in July and August 2019 and again in January 2020. The Amador County Elections Office believes the best approach would be to educate voters now during the transition to Vote Centers and then again nearer to the March 2020 Election.

Because of the limited local media resources in Amador County, we will utilize any and all available media for voter education and outreach. KVGC Radio and the Ledger Dispatch newspaper will be primary sources due to their vast audiences. Secondary newspapers (newsletters) such as the Buy & Sell Press and Upcountry News, and online sources such as Amador Community News will also be used to reach a wider audience. Amador Community News website and Facebook pages have a medium sized audience (over 7,000 followers) and can be used to reach additional voters.

Although Social Media is vastly used, the Amador County Elections Office does not currently have social media accounts. We anticipate partnering with local entities and sharing our education materials through them. If needed, the Elections Office will create Facebook and Twitter accounts, if only for the ease of sharing our materials with our partners. Also, the NextDoor app is used by a large portion of the community, and we expect to reach a majority of our more rural voters using the application.

See Appendix C for more information regarding the choice of media sources.

Having a Community Presence

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(III)

The Amador County Elections Office will educate the voters in Amador County by having a community presence. The primary way Amador County Elections will achieve this is by partnering with established community based organizations to reach their target audiences via newsletters, emails, social media, websites, and/or events. Types of organizations the Amador County Elections Office will reach out to consist of, but will not be limited to, assisted living facilities, cohousing, fraternal organizations, homeowner associations, local businesses, mobile home parks, nonprofits, political organizations, retirement homes, and schools. These organizations will receive official media for purposes of education and outreach from the Amador County Elections Office.

The Amador County Elections Office will put emphasis on the availability of an accessible vote-by-mail ballot and how to request one with key organizations such as Amador Senior Center, Interfaith Food Bank, Community Compass, and the Arc of Amador.

The Amador County Elections Office has had meetings with the public and will continue to have meetings with community members. The department will also provide materials for or attend local events that are recommended by our staff and community members. Community event attendance will be published on the Elections website (<https://www.amadorgov.org/government/elections/voter-s-choice-act/public-events>) when confirmed.

See Appendix B for a list of events of the Amador County Elections Office plans to attend.

Directly Contacting Voters

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(X)

Amador County Elections will make two direct contacts with voters for purposes of informing voters of the upcoming election. These contacts will be in addition to other required contacts with voters including, but not limited to, sample ballots and the delivery of vote-by-mail ballots.

One direct contact will be a mailing to registered voters in Amador County informing them that a vote-by-mail ballot will be sent to all registered voters regardless of vote-by-mail preference. The other mailing will be sent after ballots have been mailed informing these voters of their voting options at vote centers, if they would prefer to vote in person, and options for returning their vote-by-mail ballots.

Using Resources to Ensure Voters are Informed

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(VII)

The Amador County Elections Office will spend the necessary resources on voter education and outreach to ensure that voters are fully informed about the election conducted in accordance with the Voter's Choice Act.

VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH – VOTERS WITH ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

The Amador County Elections Office formed a joint Voter and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (VLAAC) to establish how to best educate and reach the disability community in Amador County regarding the VCA. The committee was established on June 19, 2019, and had its second meeting on August 21, 2019. The committee members are well connected to the disability and language minority communities and will assist in developing plans to best serve these voters in Amador County. Please see Appendix D for materials regarding this committee.

Educating the Disability Community – Voter Education Workshop

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(VI)(ib)

The Amador County Elections Office will be holding one voter education workshop to increase accessibility and participation of eligible voters with disabilities. The date, time, and location of this workshop will be publicly announced at least 10 days prior to its scheduled time. This workshop is scheduled for:

Voting Accessibility Workshop
September 19, 2019
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
Amador County Administration Center
810 Court Street, Board Chambers
Jackson, CA 95642

Accessible Voting Materials and Ballots Accessible Website

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(IV)

The Amador County Elections website is an accessible website per standards recommended in §2053(b)(4). The Amador County Elections Office will work with the Amador County Information Services staff to ensure that all election information is available in text-based format on the accessible website.

(<https://www.amadorgov.org/government/elections>) Information includes, but will not be limited to, a list of the ballot drop-off locations and vote centers with dates and hours they are open, as well as the services available at vote centers. The Amador County Elections Office is also planning a webpage to educate everyone about the accessible voting tools available.

Accessible Services Available at Vote Centers and Ballot Drop-off Locations

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(X)

Each vote center will have accessible parking available and will be ADA compliant. Vote centers will be surveyed by staff to ensure that each vote center has the equipment and materials needed to be ADA compliant. All vote centers will be equipped with at least three accessible electronic voting machines and have paper ballots available if desired. These electronic voting machines will have the option of an audio ballot and a connection for sip-and-puff technology. Our staff will be trained to assist any voter in the best way possible and the Amador County Elections Office is experienced in using this equipment.

All exterior and interior ballot drop-off locations will be accessible and as near to public transportation routes as possible. The 24-hour ballot drop-off location at the Amador County Government Building (810 Court Street) is accessible and on a public transportation route.

Requesting an Accessible Vote by Mail Ballot

§4005(a)(8)(B)(iii)

All registered voters will receive a vote-by-mail ballot. A postage-paid postcard for the purpose of requesting an

accessible vote by mail ballot will be included in the vote-by mail-ballot materials sent to each voter. Voters needing an accessible vote-by-mail ballot will be able to request one by filling out the included postage-paid postcard and returning it to the Amador County Elections Office or by following instructions posted on the Amador County Elections website (<https://www.amadorgov.org/government/elections/accessible-voting>) The Amador County Elections Office will be using the Democracy Live platform to distribute accessible vote-by-mail ballots.

Requesting a Replacement Ballot

§4005(a)(10)(I)(ii)

Voters with disabilities can request a replacement ballot two ways: (1) by mail or (2) by visiting any vote center. Voters who would like to request a replacement ballot by mail may do so by following instructions on the Amador County Elections Office website. The last day replacement vote by mail ballots can be **mailed** is seven days before the election. Voters with disabilities can also visit any vote center to receive a replacement ballot or to vote on accessible voting equipment.

Toll-Free Hotline for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Voters

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vii)

The Amador County Elections Office has a toll-free number (1-XXX-XXX-XXXX) for deaf and hard of hearing voters available Monday – Friday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm and 7:00 am – 8:00 pm on Election Day. Amador County Elections staff and extra office help will be trained on procedures for accepting relay calls from California Relay Service 711 (Speech and Hearing Impaired). This information will be posted on the Amador County website and in voting materials sent to voters.

Addressing Disparities in Voter Accessibility and Participation

§4005(a)(10)(I)(iii)

After any election that is conducted in compliance with the Voter's Choice Act, the Amador County Elections Office will make a reasonable effort to address significant disparities in voter accessibility and participation. The Amador County Elections Office will meet with the Amador County VLAAC to address and discuss any issues that ensued during the election. Furthermore, the Amador County Elections Office will survey all vote center staff to evaluate and address any disparities regarding voter accessibility and participation.

VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH – LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The Amador County Elections Office formed a Voting and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (VLAAC) to establish how to best educate and reach the language minority communities in Amador County regarding the VCA. The committee was established on August 29, 2017, and had its second meeting on October 11, 2017. The LAAC will assist in how to best reach the Spanish speaking population in Amador County. See Appendix D for materials regarding this committee.

Educating the Language Minority Communities

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(VI)(ia)

Bilingual Voter Education Workshop

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(VI)(ia)

The Amador County Elections Office will be holding one bilingual voter education workshop to increase outreach and the participation of Amador County's Spanish speaking community. The date, time, and location of these workshops will be publicly announced, in English and Spanish, at least 10 days prior to their scheduled times. This workshop is scheduled for:

Language Accessibility Bilingual Workshop
September 19, 2019
2:30 pm – 3:30 pm
Amador County Administration Center
810 Court Street, Board Chambers
Jackson, CA 95642

Media and Public Service Announcements

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(I), §4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(IX)

Amador County does not have any media outlets that are specific to the Spanish speaking population. Therefore, the Amador County Elections Office has consulted with the public and the Amador County VLAAC to establish a list of community partners that can assist with educating the Spanish speaking communities in Amador County. This will primarily be done through the distribution of educational material in Spanish. How community partners will distribute Spanish educational material will be at their own discretion, but the Amador County Elections Office will recommend including material in emails, newsletters, and distributing flyers at public events they attend or through their daily operations. Public service announcements for purposes of informing voters and promoting the toll-free voter assistance hotline will be posted in Spanish in *The Ledger Dispatch* newspaper.

Spanish Toll-Free Voter Assistance Hotline

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vii)

The Amador County Elections Office has a toll-free voter assistance hotline (1-XXX-XXX-XXXX) for Spanish speakers in Amador County. This hotline goes to an interpreter relay service that will be operational 29 days before the election and up to 30 days after, Monday – Friday: 8:00 am – 5:00 pm and 7:00 am – 8:00 pm on Election Day. The number for this hotline will be posted on the Amador County Elections website and in voting materials sent to voters.

Spanish Educational Material

The Amador County Elections Office will distribute educational material in Spanish provided by California's

Secretary of State through any organizations that opt to use it in their outreach.

Identifying Language Minority Voters

§4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(V)

The Amador County Elections Office identifies language minority voters by their language preference indicated on voter registration forms. Minority language voters may also email or call the Amador County Elections Office to designate their language preference. We collect and store this data in our election management system. Furthermore, we receive information about the language minority communities from the United States Census Bureau.

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VOTE CENTERS

There will be a total of three vote centers available to all voters in Amador County. Below is a list of proposed vote centers. All vote centers will be open for at least 8 hours a day. On Election Day all vote centers will be open from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. Exact Hours of each vote center's operation will be posted on the Amador County Elections webpage (<https://www.amadorgov.org/government/elections/vote-center-and-ballot-drop-off-locations>) and included in the Amador County Voter Information Guide.

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(I), §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(III), §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VI)

Vote Centers Open

<i>29 Days Before the Election Through Election Day</i> §4005(a)(4)(A)	<i>10 Days Before the Election Through Election Day</i> §4005(a)(4)(A)	<i>3 Days Before the Election Through Election Day</i> §4005(a)(3)(A)
Amador County Elections Office 810 Court Street Jackson, CA 95642 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Mon – Fri 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sat – Sun 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election day	Mace Meadows Golf Course 26570 Fairway Drive Pioneer, CA 95666 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day	The Oaks 5607 Jackson Valley Road Ione, CA 95640 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Election Day

Mobile Vote Centers

§4005(a)(10)(B)(xiv)

The Amador County Elections Office is considering the implementation of a mobile vote center. Amador County will look to service geographically isolated populations and assisted living facilities. The locations and hours of operation for these mobile vote centers will be available to the public on the Amador County Elections website and in voting materials sent to voters. All mobile vote centers will have the same functionality as any established vote center.

Map of Vote Centers

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(V)

See Appendix E for a map of all vote centers in Amador County. See Appendix F for a description of vote center and ballot drop-off location placements and demographic maps of Amador County.

Vote Center Details

Staffing Vote Centers

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(IX)

Each vote center will tentatively have at least three paid staff members with a County Elections Office staff member serving as the vote center manager.

Design and Layout of Vote Centers

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(XI)

Vote centers will be designed in a way to ensure each voter has the right to cast a private and independent ballot. Voting equipment and ballot drop boxes will be placed strategically in the vote center so that they are easily identifiable by voters and can be monitored by vote center staff. See Appendix G for the design and layout of vote centers.

Security and Contingency Plans

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VIII)

Ensuring the Security of Voting

§4005(a)(10)(I)(iv)

The Amador County Elections Office will ensure the security of voting conducted at vote centers using the following methods and standards:

- Every vote center staff will be well trained and prepared to assist eligible voters in every way possible.
- Vote center staff will have access to the same election management system (EIMS) used in the past and will be able to determine if a voter is properly registered, whether the voter has received a ballot, whether the voter has returned a ballot, and what type of ballot to issue the voter to ensure every eligible voter casts the ballot he or she is eligible to vote in each election.
- Furthermore, all laptops connected to the election management system will also be connected to VoteCal, the official statewide voter registration database managed by California Secretary of State. VoteCal will track voters across the state and notify vote center staff if a voter is actively registered in another county and if the voter has received and/or returned a ballot in another county.
- Any and all equipment that will be connected to the election management system's server will be in full compliance with all security measures and regulations (§20158) with the assistance of Amador County Information Services staff.
- Each vote center will have equipment, resources, and signage placed strategically to ensure every voter has the opportunity to cast a private and independent vote.
- The ballot marking device and precinct tabulator will not be connected to any network. All equipment will be sealed with official election seals and will be shut down and locked when vote centers are not open.
- Any and all recorded votes, including paper ballots, ballots submitted on voting equipment, CVR ballots, provisional ballots, and vote by mail ballots, will be securely transported to the Amador County Elections Office daily after the vote center closes.

Prevention Measures and Potential Disruptions

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VIII)(ia), §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VIII)(ib)

All elections and vote center staff will be well trained and prepared for potential disruptions at vote centers. The Amador County Elections Office will have an experienced staff on duty to be able to distribute needed replacement materials and equipment. Furthermore, the staff will be equipped to troubleshoot equipment. All vote centers will have cell phones in order to connect quickly with the County Elections Office when necessary.

See Appendix H for a list of potential disruptions and responses that will be implemented by elections and vote center staff should a disruption occur.

BALLOT DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

There will be at least six ballot drop-off locations in Amador County. All ballot drop-off locations will be open 28 days before the election through Election Day. All ballot drop-off locations will be open normal business hours at the least. The 24-hour ballot drop-off location will close at 8 pm on Election Day. Exact times of each drop-off location's operation will be posted on the Amador County Elections webpage (<https://www.amadorgov.org/government/elections/vote-center-and-ballot-drop-off-locations>) and included in the Amador County Voter Information Guide.
§4005(a)(1)(A), §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(II)

24-Hour Ballot Drop-off Locations

§4005(a)(1)(B)

Amador County Administrative Center
810 Court Street
Jackson, CA 95642
In rear parking lot
Outside and Accessible 24 hours daily

Daytime Ballot Drop-off Locations

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(IV), §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VII)

Ione Plaza Market (Inside store)
313 Preston Ave.
Ione, CA 95640
Accessible 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily

Pokerville Market (Inside store)
18170 State Hwy 49
Plymouth, CA 95669
Accessible 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday – Saturday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday

Pine Grove Market (Inside store)
19394 State Hwy 88
Pine Grove, CA 95665
Accessible 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Buena Vista Store (Inside store)
5864 Buena Vista Rd.
Ione, CA 95640
Accessible 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday & Sunday

Volcano Country Store (Inside store)
16146 Main St.
Volcano, CA 95689
Accessible 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday – Saturday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday

Young's Payless Market IGA (Inside store)
26560 State Hwy 88
Pioneer, CA 95666
Accessible 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily

Map of Ballot Drop-off Locations

§4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(V)

See Appendix E for a map of ballot drop-off locations in Amador County. See Appendix F for a description of vote center and ballot drop-off location placements and demographic maps of Amador County.

ESTIMATED SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM COSTS AND SAVINGS

§4005(A)(10)(I)(v)

The Amador County Elections Office has determined that costs will exceed savings with the first implementation of the VCA. However, the Amador County Elections Office predicts that over time conducting elections in accordance with the VCA will encourage savings based on evidence from Colorado who implemented a similar elections model. According to a report published by *The PEW Charitable Trusts*, election costs declined 40% on average after the implementation of Colorado's Voter Access and Modernized Elections Act of 2013.

Estimated short-term costs include purchasing ballot on demand printers for all vote centers that will enable staff to print all ballot types within the county for that election. Included in short-term costs are the purchasing of laptop computers and monitors for vote center staff to have the ability to process voters directly in the election management system. Additional short-term costs include, but are not limited to, secure internet connections at all vote centers, extensive training for staff, purchasing of ballot drop boxes, and facility rentals.

Anticipated long-term savings include decreased costs for equipment, including the purchasing of new equipment and equipment maintenance, ballot printing, and labor.

See Appendix I for an example of the budget and expected costs and savings for the March 2020 Primary Election as compared to the June 2016 Primary Election.