

VOTER'S CHOICE ACT ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PLAN



AMADOR COUNTY ELECTIONS

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Amador.Vote



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 implemented the Voter's Choice Act (VCA) in 2019. Under this new act, voters have more choices on how, when, and where they vote. The 2020 and 2022 Primary and General Elections were conducted under this model. Every registered voter in Amador County received a vote by mail ballot regardless of having signed up for one. Voters are not limited to just voting by mail; they are able to drop off their ballots in one of our five secure drop-off locations throughout the county or vote in person at one of three accessible vote centers. If a voter chooses to vote in person, the voter is no longer limited to a single polling place on a single day. Voters are able to go to any vote center location throughout the county.

For the 2022 Primary Election, Evalynn Bishop Hall and County Administration Center vote centers were open 10 days before the election and Mace Meadows vote center was open three days before the election through Election Day, including weekends. In the General Election, all three vote centers were open the same as the Primary Election. The General Election we had some challenges with weather, during the 10 days prior to the election our vote center endured plenty of rain. On Election Day, Mace Meadows did get snow during voting hours. Although you could not change the weather, you can only prepare for it. Amador County voters had more ways and more days in casting their ballots and our elections were very successful.

Now that Amador has operated under this new model for five elections, this Election Administration Plan (EAP) is being updated to reflect processes put in place 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 continue to educate the public regarding the choices that come with the VCA model. It includes information about our vote centers, and ballot drop-off locations, and how they will operate. Hopefully, this EAP will provide an idea of how our office will administer future elections in Amador County.

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VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH – GENERAL

EC §4005(a)(10)(l)(i)(VI)

Kimberly L. Grady, Amador County Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters, continues to make significant efforts to educate the community at large in Amador County regarding the California Voter's Choice Act (VCA).

Media and Public Service Announcements

EC §4005(a)(10)(l)(i)(III), EC §4005(a)(10)(l)(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. Our office has collaborated with community leaders to have them share our information with their already established readers, listeners and followers. We 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 (weekly), Buy & Sell Press (free weekly)*
- Online News Sources: Amador County Website, Amador Community News (ACN) website
- Radio: *KVGC 1340AM and 96.5FM*
- Social Media: Motherlode Community Connection (Facebook group)

Significant efforts for educating potential voters through the abovementioned media will continue to be implemented in an ongoing manner. The Amador County Elections Office believes the best approach would be focused media campaigns before all major elections, and period campaigns in the election off-season to provide a steady stream of useful information.

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 are our primary sources due to their vast audiences. Secondary newspapers (newsletters) such as the Buy & Sell Press, 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 will 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 have collaborated with the abovementioned local entities and are sharing our education materials through their social media platforms.

Having a Community Presence

EC §4005(a)(10)(l)(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 have and will continue to reach out to consist of, but will not be limited to, assisted living facilities, cohousing, fraternal organizations, homeowner associations, local businesses, mobile home parks, nonprofit organizations, 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 has and will continue to put emphasis on the availability of an accessible vote by mail ballots 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 when confirmed.

Directly Contacting Voters

EC §4005(a)(10)(l)(i)(X)

Amador County Elections will make two direct contacts with voters for purposes of informing voters of upcoming elections. 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

EC §4005(a)(10)(l)(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.

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VOTER EDUCATION AND OUTREACH – VOTERS WITH ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS

The Amador County Elections Office formed a joint Voting 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 has had 15 meetings since. 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.

Educating the Disability Community – Voter Education Workshop

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(VI)(ib)

The Amador County Elections Office will hold annual voter education workshops to increase accessibility and participation of eligible voters with disabilities. The date, time, and location of each workshop will be publicly announced at least 10 days prior to its scheduled time.

During these workshops, the Amador County Elections Office will discuss any new voting processes, demonstrate the ExpressVote Ballot Marking Device, demonstrate our onsite video language translation stations, discuss Remote Accessible Vote by Mail, and any other topics the attendees wish to discuss regarding accessibility in voting.

Accessible Voting Materials and Ballots Accessible Website

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(i)(IV)

The Amador County Elections website is an accessible website per standards recommended in [EC §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 has also implemented a webpage to educate everyone about the accessible voting tools available. (<https://www.amadorgov.org/government/elections/accessible-voting>)

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

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(X)

Each vote center will have accessible parking available and will be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant. Vote centers are surveyed by staff to ensure that they have 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 ballot on demand printers for providing paper ballots. These electronic voting machines will have the option of an audio ballot and a connection for sip-and-puff technology. Our staff is 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 Administration Center at 810 Court Street, Jackson, CA 95642 is accessible and on a public transportation route.

Requesting a Remote Accessible Vote by Mail Ballot

EC §4005(a)(8)(B)(iii)

Remote Accessible Vote by Mail (RAVBM) allows voters to vote on their own assistive devices. To use RAVBM, a voter must first make a request for an RAVBM ballot from the Amador County Elections Office either by returning the postage paid postcard they received in their vote by mail packet, phone, email, or online. Once the request is received, an email with a link to the RAVBM will be sent to the voter. The voter must click on the link and enter their voter information (i.e. name, birthdate and zip code) in a secured portal. After entering their information, the voter must affirm they are eligible to use the RAVBM process. The voter will then download their ballot and any additional information and instructions on how to mark and return the ballot. The voter marks their ballot using their own assistive technology (jelly switches, screen readers, mouse keys, sip and puff, etc.).

Once the ballot is complete, the voter must print out their ballot selections and place it in an envelope. RAVBM voters should use the envelope that is mailed with their vote by mail ballots. Using the vote by mail envelope is encouraged as it is easier to use, has holes along the signature line, and will be easier for election staff to identify. The voter must sign the envelope and then can return the ballot by mail (postmarked and received within 3 days after Election Day), drop-box, or vote center by 8:00 pm on Election Day.

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

ballot will be included in the vote by mail ballot materials sent to each voter. Voters needing a remote 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

EC §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

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(vii)

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

EC§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 June 19, 2019, and has had 15 meetings since. The committee members will assist in how to best reach the Spanish speaking population in Amador County.

Educating the Language Minority Communities

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(l\)\(i\)\(VI\)\(ia\)](#)

Bilingual Voter Education Workshop

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(l\)\(i\)\(VI\)\(ia\)](#)

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

At these workshop, the Amador County Elections staff will discuss any new voting processes, discuss facsimile ballots, introduce the toll free Spanish hotline, and demonstrate our onsite video language translation stations.

Media and Public Service Announcements

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(l\)\(i\)\(I\)](#), [§4005\(a\)\(10\)\(l\)\(i\)\(IX\)](#)

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

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(l\)\(vii\)](#)

The Amador County Elections Office has a toll-free voter assistance hotline (1-760-548-3367) for Spanish speakers in Amador County. This hotline goes to an interpreter relay service that will be operational at all times. 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

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(l\)\(i\)\(V\)](#)

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.

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. [EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(I\)](#), [EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(III\)](#), [EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(VI\)](#)

Vote Centers Open

29 days before the Election EC §4005(a)(4)(A)	10 days before the Election EC §4005(a)(4)(A)	3 days before the Election EC §4005(a)(3)(A)
Amador County Elections Office 810 Court Street Jackson, CA 95642 Regular Hours: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm Monday – Friday	County Administration Center 810 Court Street Jackson, CA 95642 Evalynn Bishop Hall 701 State Hwy 124 Lone, CA 95640 10:00 am to 6:00 pm - Everyday 7:00 am to 8:00 pm on Election Day	Mace Meadows Golf Course 26570 Fairway Drive Pioneer, CA 95666 10:00 am to 6:00 pm - Everyday 7:00 am to 8:00 pm on Election Day

Mobile Vote Centers

[EC §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

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(V\)](#)

See Appendix A for a map of all vote centers in Amador County.

Vote Center Details

Staffing Vote Centers

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(IX\)](#)

Each vote center will be staffed by Amador County Elections Extra Help employees. They are processed and hired as county employees, including fingerprint and background checks, orientation and required periodic training.

Design and Layout of Vote Centers

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(XI\)](#)

Vote centers are 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.

Security and Contingency Plans

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VIII)

Ensuring the Security of Voting

EC §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 (*California Code of 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

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VIII)(ia), EC §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.

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 8:00 pm on Election Day. Exact times of each drop-off location's operation will be on the Amador County Elections webpage and included in the Amador County Voter Information Guide. (<https://www.amadorgov.org/government/elections/vote-center-and-ballot-drop-off-locations>)

EC §4005(a)(1)(A), §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(II)

24-Hour Ballot Drop-off Locations

EC §4005(a)(1)(B)

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

Daytime Ballot Drop-off Locations

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

Ione Plaza Market (Inside store)
313 Preston Ave.
Ione, CA 95640

7:00 am to 8:00 pm Daily
Closes at 8:00 pm on Election Day

Pokerville Market (Inside store)
18170 State Hwy 49
Plymouth, CA 95669

8:00 am to 8:00 pm Monday – Saturday
9:00 am to 7:00 pm Sunday
Closes at 7:00 pm on Election Day

Pine Grove Market (Inside store)
19394 State Hwy 88
Pine Grove, CA 95665

24 hours Daily
Closes at 8:00 pm on Election Day

Young's Payless Market IGA (Inside store)
26560 State Hwy 88
Pioneer, CA 95666

7:00 am to 9:00 pm Daily
Closes at 7:00 pm on Election Day

Map of Ballot Drop-off Locations

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(V)

See Appendix A for a map of ballot drop-off locations in Amador County.

ESTIMATED SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM COSTS AND SAVINGS

EC §4005(A)(10)(I)(v)

The Amador County Elections Office has determined that costs will exceed savings with the first few years after 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.

Additional money allocated for voter outreach and education will contribute to on-going costs, as Amador County Elections plans to continue educating voters on voting processes and services available for the disability and language minority communities. Costs included are outlined in the budget table below under budget lines OFFICE EXPENSES, PUBLICATIONS AND LEGAL NOTICES, and ELECTION-PRINTING.

Estimated Voter Education and Outreach costs for 2024 Primary and General Elections compared to 2022 General Election.

Outreach Expense	2022 General	2024 Primary	2024 General
Advertising/Notices	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00	\$3,000.00
In Office Materials	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00
Outreach Postcards	\$8,500.00	\$9,000.00	\$10,000.00
Social Media	No Allocation	No Allocation	No Allocation
Outreach Events	\$1,500.00	\$2,000.00	\$2,500.00
Translation Services	\$1,000.00	\$1,500.00	\$2,000.00

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

BUDGET AND EXPECTED COSTS

	ACTUAL 2021-2022	ADOPTED 2022-2023	Difference
TOTAL SALARIES/EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	259,930.54	259,424.00	(506.54)
SERVICES AND SUPPLIES			
COMMUNICATIONS	1,864.36	1699.00	(165.36)
MAINTENANCE - EQUIPMENT	12,465.28	12,370.00	(95.28)
MAINTENANCE - PROGRAMS	53,400.27	57,591.00	4,190.73
MEMBERSHIPS	318.00	318.00	0.00
OFFICE EXPENSES	15,224.05	19,615.00	4,390.95
G.S.A. DEPT. COST ALLOCATION	9,410.00	4,198.00	(5,212.00)
PROFESSIONAL & SPECIALIZED SERVICES	79.00	0.00	(79.00)
PUBLICATIONS AND LEGAL NOTICES	9,061.39	7,800.00	(1,261.39)
RENTS, LEASES- EQUIPMENT	527.59	500.00	(27.59)
MINOR EQUIPMENT	0.00	0.00	0.00
ELECTION-PRINTING /BALLOTS/ ENVELOPES	141,592.62	87,000.00	(54,592.62)
ELECTION-SERVICES/SUPPLIES	1,754.47	3,675.00	1,920.53
ELECTION-POLL WORKERS	(213.00)	0.00	(213.00)
ELECTION-POLLING PLACES	435.95	1,250.00	814.05
MEETINGS AND CONVENTIONS	668.88	2,500.00	1,831.12
HAVA GRANT	0.00	0.00	0.00
TOTAL SERVICES AND SUPPLIES	246,588.86	198,516.00	(48,072.86)
TOTAL - ELECTIONS	506,519.40	457,940.00	(48,579.40)

The adopted budget for the upcoming 2022-2023 fiscal year shows a decrease of \$48,579.40. It is anticipated that this decrease will continue as processes and staffing are fine-tuned in upcoming elections.

Amador County Vote Center and Ballot Drop-off Locations

