

## "Making Democracy Work" Award Application Form

*Award winners in this category will be selected for successfully educating and/or engaging underrepresented communities with the skills and knowledge needed to meaningfully participate in public life.*

**Your League Name:** League of Women Voters Oakland

**What was the name of your project?**

Oakland Votes Collaborative

**What were the beginning and end dates of your project?**

July-November 2020

**What was the primary goal of your project?**

Primary goal of project: work to reverse the low level of voter participation in Oakland's East Oakland neighborhoods by starting a Collaborative of community and faith-based organizations to let residents of these neighborhoods know why their votes matter and to encourage them to register and vote.

Background:

In 2019, the League of Women Voters of Oakland (LWVO) commissioned a study of voter participation in Oakland (Towards Broader, Stronger Community Bonds, by Julie Lo). The study found that voter participation in Oakland City Council Districts (CDs) 5, 6, and 7, located in East Oakland, was 13% lower on average than that of the other four districts. The report also found that the population of these three council districts was more diverse and had lower levels of education and income compared to the other four districts. An article in the April 1, 2021 San Francisco Chronicle, East Oaklanders Helping Each Other reported that people of color make up 87% of East Oakland's population and the median annual income is between \$40,000 to \$45,000, compared to the area median income of \$78,000. In December 2019, LWVO began planning strategies to address the low level of voter participation in these council districts.

In May 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Gavin Newsom ordered counties to mail ballots to all registered voters before the November 2020 General Election and to provide for in-person voting. Alameda County decided to replace its approximately 900 polling places with 100 vote centers and 66 ballot drop-boxes distributed throughout the county. At that time, Oakland had only four ballot drop boxes, none of which were located in Council Districts 5, 6, or 7. Given the low level of voter participation in CDs 5, 6, and 7 and the voting inequities experienced by Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color (BIPOC) persons, and given that the percentage of voters voting by mail in CDs 5, 6, and 7 was lower than that of the other council districts, LWVO was concerned that the changes to election procedures could create additional barriers to voter participation in these districts. It was important to alert voters in these districts about the election procedure changes and the actions they could take to make sure they could vote and their votes would count.

For example, voters needed to know that they had to be registered at their current addresses in order to receive their ballots in the mail. It was also important for voters in Oakland to know that there would be no neighborhood polling places and that they would have to find a vote center if they had problems with their registration or wanted to vote in person on Election Day. In

addition, voters needed to know how to return their ballots and where they could find ballot drop boxes. Alameda County, where Oakland is located, was the only county in the area to use the vote center model. Surrounding counties all maintained their polling places, which complicated the messaging as the news media and many state and local organizations advised voters that there would still be "polling places where voters could vote in person."

The Oakland Votes Collaborative:

In June 2020, LWVO reached out to community organizations located in CDs 5, 6, and 7 to enlist their help as trusted messengers to inform voters of the election changes and the actions they needed to take in order to make sure their votes counted. Together we formed the Oakland Votes Collaborative, dedicated to increasing voter participation by letting voters know why their votes matter and alerting them to the changes in election procedures. Collaborating organizations agreed that voters should receive a uniform message about the election changes. With input from the organizations, LWVO developed multi-lingual fliers and voting tips and distributed them to the organizations. Some of the organizations tailored the information to their unique constituencies, such as seniors. Through leveraging the combined network of all participating organizations, it was possible to reach more of the population of Oakland and, in particular, voters living in CDs 5, 6 and 7. The Collaborative advocated with the Registrar of Voters for more ballot drop boxes and vote centers in these neighborhoods and some of the organizations offered space for them.

**Did you have collaborative partners in the project? Briefly name them and their role in the project.**

Alameda County Community Food Bank: placed voter information into the 8,000-10,000 food bags distributed weekly; made robocalls leading up to the election with the message, "make your vote count", and worked with Registrar of Voters to identify and advocate for locations for vote centers and ballot drop boxes in council districts 5, 6, and 7.

Allen Temple Public Ministry: provided space for a vote center and distributed election information to its congregation, at its senior housing complexes, and food distribution sites

Faith in Action East Bay: approximately 45 participating churches distributed LWVO election information to their congregations.

Oakland Housing Authority: Distributed 1500 LWVO Your Vote Matters door hangers to its public housing units at Lockwood Gardens and Peralta Village and to its senior housing apartments. OHA also held several ZOOM meetings for resident managers and invited LWVO to present its voter registration training PowerPoint and to discuss the ballot measures. OHA enclosed LWVO's Plan to Vote by Mail flier in the October rent statements to the 2000 residents of all of its public housing properties.

East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO): distributed LWVO fliers and election information to its network of over 300 affordable housing advocacy advocates.

Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center: organized between 10-30 staff and students each Saturday in September and October 2020 to help LWVO members distribute over 10,000 Your Vote Matters door hangers in East Oakland precincts with the lowest voter participation. The Oakland Gay Men's Chorus also joined in this effort.

Meals on Wheels and Center for Elders Independence with the Oakland Commission on Aging: Used information from LWVO to create fliers showing how to mark a ballot and distributed them to 4200 seniors and voters with disabilities along with their meals.

Roots Community Health Center, Clinica de la Raza, Hacienda Historical Park: volunteered space for ballot drop boxes and distributed LWVO election information.

The Alameda County Registrar of Voters attended a meeting with the Collaborative to explain the new election procedures and answer questions from the organizations.

**Briefly describe the results of your work, including whether it was effective in strengthening a democratic process in your community.**

We believe that our work with the Oakland Votes Collaborative was effective in strengthening the democratic process in our community. One indication of this is that voter participation in Oakland, and particularly in CDs 5, 6, and 7, increased between the November 2016 and the 2020 presidential elections. Our analysis of registration and turnout in Oakland in the November 3, 2020 election, found that from the Presidential General Election in November 2016 to November 2020, voter registration increased by 9% in CD 5; 12% in CD 6; and 8% in CD 7. In comparison, voter registration in the city as a whole increased by 6%. Voter Turnout increased by 4% in the City of Oakland compared with 5% in CD 5; 4% in CD 6 and 5% in CD7 in spite of the changes to election procedures in the November 2020 election. (See analysis attached).

Although there is no one reason for the increase in voter participation in CDs 5, 6 and 7, we believe that the work of the Oakland Votes Collaborative was one of the factors that boosted voter engagement in these districts. Our work with the community organizations further established LWVO as a resource for accurate election information. The Collaborative's advocacy with the Registrar for more ballot drop boxes and vote centers in East Oakland Council Districts 5, 6, and 7 paid off.

Of the 18 ballot drop boxes in Oakland, five were located in the flatlands of East Oakland, of these five locations, three were at organizations in the Collaborative that volunteered the space. Of the 26 vote centers, 10 were located in the East Oakland flatlands, including one volunteered by an organization in the Collaborative.

After the election, we surveyed the organizations in the Collaborative. Survey participants responded that they found the Collaborative to be helpful in disseminating accurate election information. All of the respondents want to continue their relationship with LWVO on issues that relate to voting and elections and suggested that the Collaborative be expanded citywide.

**Do you believe that this project has potential to be a model for use by other Leagues? If yes, tell us the critical elements for success.**

Yes. We believe that this project has the potential to be a model for use by other Leagues. Three critical elements for success were: 1) Our collaboration with other community organizations; 2) The teamwork of League members; and 3) LWVO's production of election information in English, Spanish and Chinese.

Collaboration: LWVO's collaboration with community organizations enabled broader outreach to voters in communities where LWVO is not normally active. The organizations acted as trusted messengers to deliver election information to their constituencies who may not have found out

about the election procedure changes in time for them to adapt to voting by mail and the absence of neighborhood polling places. One of the benefits of our collaboration with community organizations was that we gained deeper insight into the barriers that disadvantaged communities face in obtaining information. For example, a major concern of the organizations was the lack of internet access in the area and the ability of some of their constituencies to navigate social media. Language access was also an important issue. The organizations requested that we provide information in English, Spanish and Chinese.

**Teamwork:** LWVO members who live in CDs 5, 6, and 7 formed outreach teams to identify the community organizations in their districts and then shared the work of reaching out and inviting them to join meetings of the Collaborative. Between July and November 2020, eight members of the outreach team hosted five Zoom meetings with 30 community organizations to discuss the impact of the new election procedures on voters and to share information about our joint outreach efforts. The Alameda County Registrar of Voters attended one of the meetings to answer questions about the election. Attendance at these meetings ranged from 30-60 individuals representing their organizations. Approximately twenty LWVO members assisted with this collaborative outreach effort.

**LWVO election information:** LWVO understanding of the election process enabled us to collaborate with the organizations to produce multi-lingual election information for the community. Our most popular outreach tools were door hangers, fliers and posters with the message "YOUR VOTE MATTERS" that included reasons for why voting is important (this flier is too large to attach, but is available on request.) We produced "Tips for Voting by Mail," and a flier "Plan to Vote by Mail." Besides the special fliers and tips, LWVO developed a voter registration training Powerpoint presentation that organizations could use independently; provided the organizations with our Oakland Easy Voter Guides; and invited them to candidate forums and pros and cons presentations. LWVO members attended Zoom meetings hosted by the organizations to explain the new voting procedures and how to register to vote.

Our collaborative work with other community organizations, not only helped LWVO gain deeper insight into the needs of Oakland's underserved communities, but also helped lay the foundation for voter outreach work in these communities for future elections. The consistent and ongoing collaborative voter outreach work has the potential to help reverse the low voter participation in CDs 5, 6, and 7 and close the turnout gap between these and the rest of Oakland's council districts.

## **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OAKLAND**

### **An Analysis of Voter Participation in Oakland and Council Districts Five, Six, and Seven for the Last Three Presidential Elections. March 2021**

#### **Co-Authors:**

Elaine Ginnold & Kirsten E. Smayda, PhD

#### **Research Question:**

Did the changes to election procedures for the November 3, 2020 Presidential General election decrease voter participation in Oakland City Council Districts 5, 6, and 7, where voter participation is lower than in the other council districts?

#### **Summary:**

In July before the November 3, 2020 Presidential General election, 23 community based organizations, including the League of Women Voters of Oakland, formed the Oakland Votes Collaborative. Its mission was to inform voters about changes in election procedures and to advocate for vote centers and ballot drop boxes in neighborhoods located between Macarthur Blvd. and the 880 freeway in Oakland. This area is within Council Districts 5, 6, and 7 where voter participation is lower than in the other city council districts. Members of the Collaborative were concerned that the new election procedures might further depress voter participation in these districts. While the exact impact of the Collaborative's outreach efforts on the 2020 election is nearly impossible to measure, this study found that both voter registration and voter turnout increased across Oakland and within CDs 5, 6, 7 from the 2016 to 2020 Presidential General Elections. The results of our analysis suggest that, in spite of changes to election procedures, there was persistent growth in voter engagement in all of Oakland and particularly in CDs 5, 6, and 7.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this analysis is to review the voter education work done by the League of Women Voters Oakland (LWVO) and the Oakland Votes Collaborative, and to characterize the November 2020 General Presidential Election voter participation in Oakland.

#### **Background**

In March 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Gavin Newsom ordered counties to mail ballots to all registered voters before the November 2020 General Election. Each county was to determine how to provide for in-person voting – either at regular polling places or at vote centers, or a combination of both. Alameda County decided to replace its approximately 900 polling places with 100 vote centers and 66 ballot drop boxes distributed throughout the county.

LWVO and other community organizations were concerned that the change in election procedures could depress voter participation because 1) voters would not receive their ballots in

the mail if they were not registered at their current addresses; 2) if there were no polling places, voters who hadn't registered in time would have to travel out of their neighborhoods to find a vote center if they wanted to vote in person; and 3) added stressors of the pandemic could make it difficult to engage fully in the election. All three reasons could become barriers to citizens' engaging fully in the election.

The Oakland League was especially concerned about voter resources and accommodations in CDs 5, 6, and 7, in which voter registration and turnout were 10-20% lower than in other districts.<sup>1</sup> CD's 5, 6, and 7 have a higher density of African American and Latinx people than elsewhere,<sup>2</sup> and given the voting inequities experienced by Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color (BIPOC) people, the League of Women Voters Oakland sought out opportunities to support the communities in CDs 5, 6, and 7 leading up to and during the 2020 General Presidential Election.

The Oakland League reached out to other community organizations in CD 5, 6, and 7 to enlist their help to act as trusted messengers to inform voters of the election changes. Together we formed the Oakland Votes Collaborative, dedicated to increasing voter participation and informing voters about the changes to election procedures. Leveraging the combined network of all participating organizations made it possible to reach more of the population in Oakland and in particular, those living in CDs 5, 6, and 7.

### **The Oakland Votes Collaborative**

In July 2020, LWVO reached out to over 30 community-based organizations that work in CDs 5, 6, and 7. Twenty-three organizations responded and together we formed the Oakland Votes Collaborative. The Collaborative agreed on three main goals: (1) encourage voter registration so that voters would get their ballots in the mail; (2) inform district residents about the changes in election procedures so they could plan how to vote; and (3) advocate for ballot drop boxes and vote centers in the three council districts to mitigate the lack of polling places. Beginning in July before the election, the community organizations worked diligently to inform their constituencies about the election changes. They distributed fliers and door hangers, hosted Zoom meetings about the new election procedures, discussed the ballot measures, trained their constituencies about how to register to vote, how to vote by mail and where to vote in person at vote centers in the absence of polling places. In addition, the organizations in the Collaborative reached out to the Alameda County Registrar of Voters (ROV) to offer locations for vote centers and ballot drop boxes.

### **Analysis & Results**

While it is nearly impossible to quantify the exact effect of the Collaborative's efforts during the 2020 election, it is important to track progress and review the cumulative effect of the pandemic and voting procedure changes (and all other levers at play) on voter participation in Oakland.

### **Methods**

Total number of registered voters and ballots returned, broken down by precinct or district were sourced from the 2012, 2016 and 2020 Statement of Vote (SOV), available on the ROV website.

---

<sup>1</sup> League of Women Voters of Oakland: *Towards Broader, Stronger Community Bonds*, Julie Lo, May 2019, Table 2.)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Figure 8.

Voter turnout for CDs 1, 3, 5, and 7 was sourced from the 2012 and 2016 Oakland City Council results in the Statement of Vote documents. However, because districts 2, 4, and 6 did not have candidates on the ballot in the 2012 and 2016 elections, the SOV for those years did not show a breakdown of the precincts within these districts. Author EG reached out to the Alameda County Registrar of Voters for any available resources to identify the precincts within districts 2, 4, and 6 in order to find them in the SOV. In addition to the Statement of Vote, other ROV reports used were: Consolidation File Detail for 2012 and 2016 (Report 701.01); Precincts Eligible by Consolidation 2016 (Report #700.03) and a screen shot of home precincts within CDs 2, 4, and 6, for Nov. 2012.

### *Calculations*

The percent of voter turnout was calculated as the number of ballots cast divided by the total number of registered voters on a per-district or city-wide level.

### **Results**

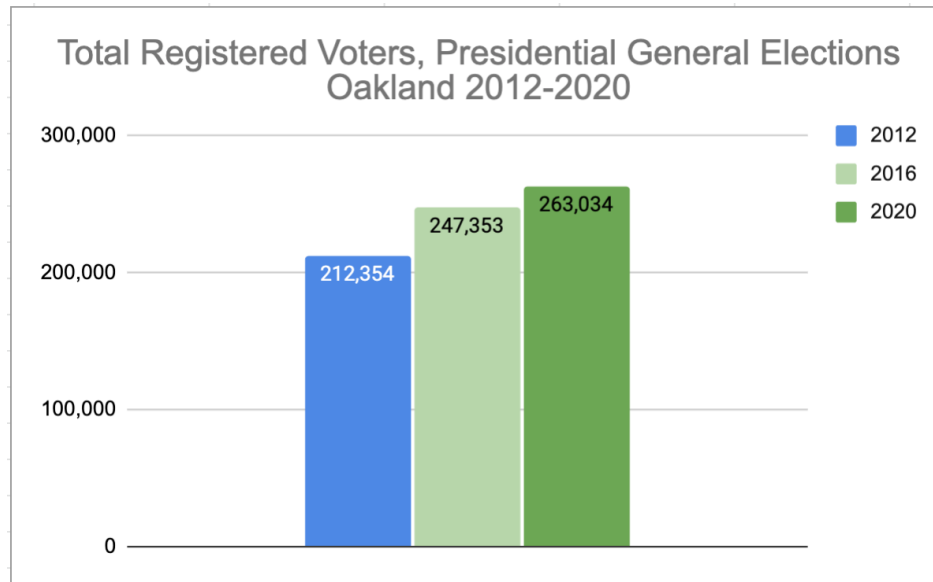
The data suggests that the changes to election procedures in Alameda County for the November 3, 2020 Presidential General Election did not decrease voter participation in CDs 5, 6, and 7. Two main findings of this analysis are:

1. Voter *registration* increased from the 2016 Presidential General Election to the 2020 Presidential General Election, across the entire city and within CDs 5, 6, 7 (Figures 1 and 2).
2. Voter *turnout* increased in CDs 5, 6, and 7 and in all other City Council districts from 2016 to Nov. 2020 (Figure 3)

We first looked at the number of registered voters in Oakland across the last three presidential general elections (2012, 2016, 2020). Registration increased from 2012 to 2016, and again from 2016 to 2020 (Figure 1)

*Figure 1. Total number of registered voters across the last three presidential general elections.*

	2012	2016	2020
<b>Total Registered Voters</b>	212,354	247,353	263,034

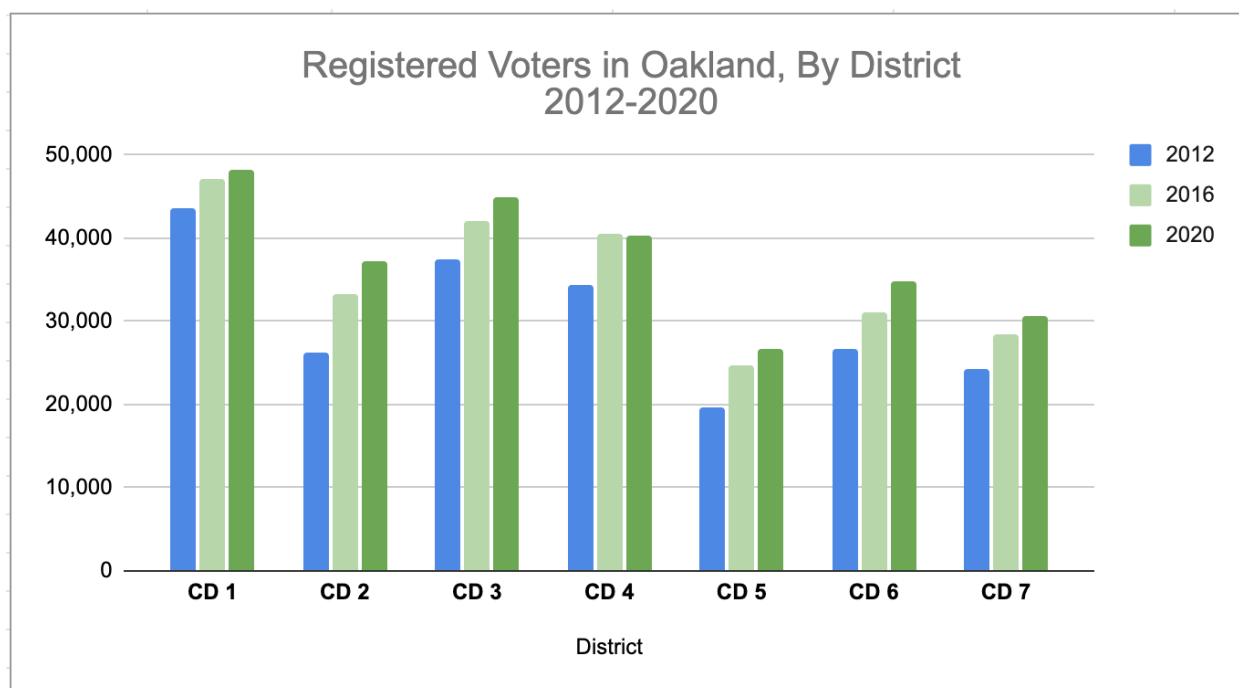




In CDs 5, 6, and 7 between November 2016 and November 2020 general elections, voter registration increased in each of the three council districts (Figure 2).

*Figure 2. Voter registration across all council districts, and percent increase in voter registration from 2016 to 2020.*

District	2012 Registered Voters	2016 Registered Voters	2020 Registered Voters	% Increase 2016 to 2020
CD 1	43,663	47,042	48,279	3%
CD 2	26,326	33,355	37,257	12%
CD 3	37,503	42,155	44,864	6%
CD 4	34,324	40,626	40,418	-1%
CD 5	19,705	24,668	26,770	9%
CD 6	26,640	31,056	34,796	12%
CD 7	24,193	28,451	30,650	8%
Totals	212,354	247,353	263,034	6%



Next, we compared voter turnout in CDs 5, 6, and 7 between 2016 and 2020 because that is where the Collaborative focused its voter education and registration efforts. Voter turnout in all CDs increased between 2016 and 2020 in spite of the changes to election procedures in the November 2020 election. Voter turnout increased between 2012 and 2020 in CDs 1-5; however, turnout in CDs 6 and 7 was higher in 2012 than in 2020 (Figure 3.)

*Figure 3. Voter turnout in 2012, 2016, and 2020 presidential general elections. Percentages are rounded to the nearest percentage point.*

<b>District</b>	<b>2012 Voter Turnout</b>	<b>2016 Voter Turnout</b>	<b>2020 Voter Turnout</b>
CD 1	82%	81%	85%
CD 2	74%	74%	79%
CD 3	75%	71%	77%
CD 4	80%	81%	84%
CD 5	71%	69%	74%
CD 6	75%	69%	73%
CD 7	73%	65%	70%

Although voter participation in council districts 5, 6, and 7 in the November election was lower compared with that of California (80.7%),<sup>3</sup> Alameda County (81%),<sup>4</sup> the City of Oakland (78%;),<sup>5</sup> and the other four city council districts, the increased voter participation of people in CD 5, 6, and 7 in 2020 represents a positive forward movement in political engagement in Oakland.

Lastly, given the order from Governor Newsom to deliver vote-by-mail ballots to all registered voters for the 2020 election, we were interested to understand how the use of vote-by-mail ballots changed over time (Figure 4) and could have affected turnout in 2020. While every district showed a remarkable increase in the use of vote-by-mail ballots, Districts 6 and 7 showed increases over 75% between 2016 and 2020. This result should be interpreted in conjunction with the increase in registered voters between 2016 and 2020, and the fact that the Registrar mailed a ballot to every registered voter in Alameda County.

*Figure 4. Vote by mail ballots returned in 2012, 2016, and 2020 presidential general elections.*

<b>District</b>	<b>2012 Vote-by-Mail Ballots</b>	<b>2016 Vote-by-Mail Ballots</b>	<b>2020 Vote-by-Mail Ballots</b>	<b>% Increase 2016-2020</b>
CD 1	19,565	26,214	39,366	50%
CD 2	11,107	17,240	28,058	63%
CD 3	14,733	19,333	32,237	67%
CD 4	16,315	23,021	32,574	41%
CD 5	7,807	11,073	18,497	67%
CD 6	9,955	12,990	23,651	82%
CD 7	8,505	11,041	19,645	78%
<b>Totals</b>	<b>87,987</b>	<b>120,912</b>	<b>194,028</b>	<b>60%</b>

<sup>3</sup> CA Secretary of State

<sup>4</sup> Alameda County Registrar of Voters (ALCO) Statement of Vote, November General Election

<sup>5</sup> ALCO Registrar of Voters Statement of Vote, Oakland At Large, Nov. 3, 2020 General Election

## Discussion

These results indicate that while 2020 created obstacles that could have halted progress in voter participation, progress persisted across all districts, including CD 5, 6, and 7.

*Possible explanations for these findings include:*

*First*, people are resilient. In a year marked by increased stress, uncertainty, and persistent racial injustices, Americans showed their resiliency and engaged in their fundamental right to vote for a new president, some for the first time.

*Second*, the ROV mailed a ballot to every registered voter in the County. Californians have had the option to vote by mail since 1976, and changes to CA election laws since 2001 removed many of the barriers to voting by mail (See appendix 3 for a list of the key CA election law changes that affected voting by mail). Now more Oakland voters vote by mail than at the polls<sup>6</sup>. One of the most significant changes in election law was the passage of the Voter's Choice Act (SB450) in 2016 that allowed any County the option to mail ballots to every registered voter and to provide Vote Centers for in-person voting. A 2018 study of voter turnout in five California Voters Choice Act (VCA) counties by the New Electorate Project, found that voter turnout in the November 2018 General Election increased by 3% in VCA counties in which voters automatically received their ballots in the mail.<sup>7</sup> In the November 2020 election, the increased emphasis on voting by mail due to safety restrictions, and the order by Governor Newsom to have all ballots mailed to the voter could have encouraged and accustomed more people, especially those who normally vote at the polls or do not normally vote, to the process of voting by mail. Importantly, mailing a ballot to every registered voter could not only increase turnout, but also increase equity in the voting process and benefit especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color voters.

*Third*: The November 3, 2020 election generated a high level of interest in voting. Not only was it a presidential election when voter participation tends to be higher than in other elections, but CDs 1,3,5, and 7 all had Oakland City Council and School District candidates on the ballot. The election campaigns for the local offices and the outreach efforts of the Oakland Voters Collaborative within these districts also contributed to the increase in voter registration and turnout.

## Reflection

Voter participation is important because it can affect the allocation of resources such as housing, transportation, park maintenance, schools, and street repair within a city. Areas of Oakland with higher voter participation tend to have better-resourced schools, well maintained parks, and better-maintained streets.

Accurate voter information is important in every election, especially when voting procedures change. There is a good possibility that the voter information provided by the trusted messengers in the Oakland Votes Collaborative paid off in that there was a significant increase in voter registration and voter turnout. Most important was the Collaborative's emphasis on registering to

---

<sup>6</sup> ALCO Registrar of Voters SOV, 2012-2018

<sup>7</sup> *New Electorate Study: How Did the Voter's Choice Act Affect Turnout in 2018?* Eric McGhee et al., New Electorate Project

vote before a mail ballot election, and its advocacy for vote centers and ballot drop boxes in CDs 5, 6 and 7.

### **Data Management**

Voter data can be a complicated asset to maintain if documentation of historical choices made for each election, like precinct-to-district labeling and geographic boundaries, are not maintained close to the data source. These data are very important and represent a fluctuating system of democracy. After having worked with the data, the authors would like to advocate for the following updates to the data to improve its integrity and utility over time:

- a) intuitive district-precinct alphanumeric values for each election's precinct-to-district relationship;
- b) written documentation on the consolidation of precincts and lists of the consolidated precincts with their polling locations for all districts within the county preserved on-line and available to the public for every election.

### **Forward-Looking & Conclusion**

The work necessary to increase voter participation in CD 5, 6, and 7 is ongoing and year-round. The League of Women Voters of Oakland plans to continue its outreach work to community organizations both during election time and throughout the year on other city matters that affect voting and voters, such as redistricting.

LWVO's ongoing contribution will be to provide accurate and timely election information on voting procedures, registration, candidates and measures at election time and to address other city issues that impact voting and voters, such as redistricting throughout the year. Its offerings include: the Easy Voter Guide, presentations on the pros and cons of ballot measures, candidate forums, informational fliers, and voter registration assistance.

In this article we reviewed the work done by Oakland Votes Collaborative, analyzed voter registration and turnout across the years which showed increases across the city of Oakland, reflected on the changes in election process in the 2020 Presidential General Election, and advocated for data management practices that can enhance the usability of voter data in the future. Lastly, the authors hope this article serves the City of Oakland, are open to all discussions, feedback or collaboration this work may promote.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors would like to thank the Registrar of Voters Staff for their help in finding and sending the precinct listings and precinct consolidation details for use in this analysis.

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Organizations that actively participated in the Oakland Voters Collaborative before the November 3, 2020 Presidential General Election

Acta Non Verba, Block by Block Organizing Network D7 (BBBON), Meals on Wheels, Allen Temple Baptist Church Public Ministry, Alameda County Food Bank, Oakland Housing Authority, East Bay Housing Organizations (EBHO), East Oakland Senior Center, Faith in Action East Bay, The Unity Council, MLK Freedom Center, Latino Task Force, Roots Community Health Center, Lyons Creek East Bay Asian Local Development Corp (EBALDC), Chinese American Citizens Alliance, Shiloh Church, Peralta Hacienda Historical Park, Youth Uprising, Clinica de la Raza, Spanish Speaking Citizens Foundation, East Oakland Pillars, East Bay Asian Youth Center (EBAYC), Cypress Mandela Training Center, League of Women Voters of Oakland.

Appendix 2: Changes to CA election laws have removed barriers to voting by mail. These changes have resulted in a dramatic increase in the percentage of voters who vote by mail rather than at the polls. Since 2000, the percentage of voters voting by mail in California has increased from 27.09% in the 2000 Presidential election to 86.72% in the 2020 presidential election. Concurrently, voter turnout in California increased from 70.94% in 2000 to 80.67% in the 2020 Presidential election when ballots were mailed to all voters.

*Changes to CA Election Laws that removed barriers to voting by mail 2001-2018*

2001: AB 1520 (Ch.922, 2001) authorizes any voter to become a permanent vote mail voter.

2016: AB 2070 (Ch.225) allows ballots postmarked by election day to be counted if they arrived by mail in the election's office within three days after the election.

2016: AB1921 (Ch820) followed by AB306 (Ch.203) allows voters unable to return their ballots to choose any person to return the ballot within three days of receiving it from the voter. Before AB 1921 was passed, only someone living in the same household as the voter or a designated relative could return the ballot for a voter

2016: SB450 (Ch.832) Voters Choice Act gives counties the option to mail ballots to every registered voter and allows voters to return their ballots at any vote center in the county.

2018: AB216(Ch120) requires counties to provide pre-paid postage on ballot return envelopes.



## ATTENTION ALAMEDA COUNTY VOTERS: PLAN TO VOTE BY MAIL IN THE NOVEMBER 3 ELECTION

The Alameda County Registrar of Voters will mail ballots to all registered voters in the County in early October. There will be no neighborhood polling places. Instead there will be 100 vote centers and 66 ballot drop boxes in all of Alameda County. The Vote Centers will have accessible voting machines and are mainly for voters who need assistance.

### ACT NOW TO MAKE SURE YOU ARE REGISTERED TO VOTE

- Make sure you are registered to vote at your current address so you will get your ballot in the mail. **Deadline to register is October 19.**
- Register to vote, update your address, or check your registration at [registertovote.ca.gov](https://registertovote.ca.gov).

### VOTE AS SOON AS YOU GET YOUR BALLOT IN THE MAIL

- Find out what's on your ballot at [votersedge.org/ca](https://votersedge.org/ca)
- Make sure you sign your OWN ballot envelope

#### SIGN UP TO TRACK YOUR BALLOT

Confirm the Registrar has received and counted your ballot at:  
[wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov](https://wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov)

### RETURN YOUR BALLOT EARLY - AT LEAST ONE WEEK BEFORE ELECTION DAY

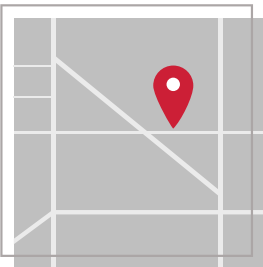
#### HERE ARE THE WAYS...



#### BY MAIL:

**Must be postmarked by November 3, no postage necessary.**

Mail early so your votes will be part of the first results posted on Election Night.



#### IN PERSON: (by 8:00p.m. on Election Night )

REGISTRAR OF VOTERS' OFFICE: 1225 Fallon St., Oakland 94612

Starting October 5 through Election Day, November 3

BALLOT DROP BOXES: Starting October 5

VOTE CENTERS: October 31 to November 2: 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Election Day, November 3: 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Find drop box and vote center locations at [acvote.org](https://acvote.org) or call (510) 272-6973

# -YOUR- VOTE MATTERS

Does my vote make a difference?  
Why should I vote?



Yes!



When you vote, you become part of the decision making that affects your life.

When you don't vote, others will make the decisions for you.

When you vote you make it clear what sort of community you expect

**DO  
YOU  
WANT**


- A fairer criminal justice system?
- More affordable housing?
- Better schools?

Your Government — national, state, and local — runs all these services and more.

When you vote, you tell the people you elect

what your community wants and you help hold them accountable.

**Make a Plan to Vote November 3rd!**

Ballots will be mailed to all voters in early October 

**SIGN UP!**

Sign Up To Vote  
Or  
Update Your Info At  
[RegistertoVote.ca.gov](https://registertovote.ca.gov)



**CHECK UP!**

Check Your Info At  
[Voterstatus.sos.ca.gov](https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov)



**TRACK IT!**

Sign Up To Track  
Your Ballot At  
[WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov](https://wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov)



**Voting matters. Use your voice and vote.**



[www.lwvoakland.org](https://www.lwvoakland.org)

Need information about the candidates  
or propositions on the ballot?

Visit: [Votersedge.org/ca](https://votersedge.org/ca)

Designed by Nika Ghavamizadeh, student at Berkeley City College 2020

# TU VOTO IMPORTA

¿Es verdad que mi voto cuenta?  
¿Porqué debo votar?

Sí

Cuando votas tienes voz en las decisiones que afectan tu vida.

Cuando no votas, otros harán las decisiones por tí.

Cuando votas estás diciendo qué tipo de comunidad quieres.

Quieres

¿ Un sistema de juicio más justo?


¿ Rentas más económicas?

¿ Mejores escuelas?

Tu gobierno – nacional, estatal y local – es responsable por estos servicios y mucho más!

Cuando votas estás diciendo a los oficiales elegidos qué quieres en la comunidad y que los vas a ser responsables por cumplir con sus promesas.

## Haga un plan para votar el 3 de Nov!

Las boletas se enviarán por correo a todos los votantes a principios de Octubre 

REGÍSTRATE!

Regístrate para votar o actualizar tu información en [RegistertoVote.ca.gov](https://registertoVote.ca.gov)



CHEQUEO!

Consulta tu información en [Voterstatus.sos.ca.gov](https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov)



RASTREALO!

Regístrate para rastrear tu boleta en [WheresMyBallot.sos.ca.gov](https://wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov)



**Tu voz cuenta. Usa tu voz y vota.**