

STANISLAUS COUNTY  
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS



ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PLAN  
NOVEMBER 2020

Stanislaus County Clerk-Recorder & Registrar of Voters Office  
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## I. Overview

Stanislaus County's Election Administration Plan (EAP) for the Presidential General Election to be held on November 3, 2020, is drafted in accordance to the executive orders and state legislation passed as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 5, 2020, California's governor passed Executive Order N-64-20 requiring elections officials to mail a ballot to each active registered voter in the state. The governor followed with the passage of Executive Order N-67-20 on June 3, 2020, which outlined requirements for the number of in-person voting sites. Subsequently, California lawmakers passed Assembly Bill (AB) 860 on June 18, 2020, and Senate Bill (SB) 423 on August 6, 2020, aligning state law with the governor's executive orders.

Per AB 860, the Stanislaus County Registrar of Voters (ROV) Office will mail a ballot to each registered active voter beginning October 5, 2020, 29 days before Election Day with a postage-paid envelope to return the ballot. Further, it is the Stanislaus County ROV Office's goal to follow the guidelines as outlined in SB 423, to provide one in-person early voting site per 10,000 registered voters opened by the third day before Election Day and one ballot drop box per 15,000 registered voters by October 5, 2020, with at least one exterior ballot box available at least 12 hours per day.

The Stanislaus County ROV endeavors to meet these requirements. However, due to challenges during a global pandemic, the department plans to apply for a partial waiver from the Secretary of State as permitted by SB 423 in case conditions cannot be met by August 28, 2020.

## II. Voter Services in November 2020

The Stanislaus County ROV plans to provide services as required by AB 860 and SB 423 to decrease COVID-19 exposure in our community. Further, with consideration that 77% of Stanislaus County registered voters are already registered to vote by mail, the department's plan as outlined increases access, convenience and value to current voter trends while still ensuring the election's safety and integrity.

### A. Ballot Drop Box Sites

During the 2020 March Presidential Primary Election, the Stanislaus County ROV partnered with seven of the nine City Clerks to provide official ballot drop boxes to voters. Ballot boxes were securely kept in the lobby of each of the City Clerks offices in Ceres, Hughson, Newman, Oakdale, Patterson, Turlock and Waterford.

For the upcoming 2020 Presidential General Election, the Stanislaus County ROV will increase the number of ballot drop box sites to a minimum of 18. This will include City Clerks offices that are currently open to the public. This will allow the Stanislaus County ROV to meet the requirements as outlined in SB 423.

Ballot drop boxes will be available to the public as early as October 5, 2020, and open during regular business hours but no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. A minimum of one drop box will be drive-up accessible and will be open 24 hours per day until 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Under the COVID-19 pandemic, this service protects voters and elections officials as it offers a means for contactless delivery of a voted ballot. The ballot envelopes go from the hands of the voters to the ROV and are collected directly by elections officials on a timely basis.

## **B. Satellite offices**

During the 2020 March Presidential Primary Election, the Stanislaus County ROV established four in-person early voting sites called satellite offices in addition to the 117 polling places accessible to voters. Satellite offices were open the weekend before Election Day.

For the upcoming 2020 November Presidential General Election, it is the Stanislaus County ROV's goal to establish 1 satellite office per 10,000 voters for a total of 26 in-person early voting sites in place of traditional polling places as required by SB 423. The satellite offices will open Saturday, October 31, 2020, through Monday, November 2, 2020, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. On Election Day, the satellite offices will be open traditional polling place hours 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.

With this model, voters are not required to visit an assigned location. Elections officials at satellite offices will have the ability to securely access the Stanislaus County's Election Management System (EMS), allowing satellite office staff to search Stanislaus County's full voter file in real time instead of being limited to a printed roster of voters as seen at traditional polling places to verify the voting status of each voter. This decreases the number of provisional ballots cast through Election Day.

Satellite offices will have the capacity to operate similarly to our main office and provide the following services to voters:

- Register first-time voters or update a voter's current registration. Satellite offices will be equipped to process same-day registrations or re-registrations. Provide Conditional Registration for voters who did not register to vote before the close of registration (14 days prior to the election).
- Issue a replacement vote by mail ballot. Two ballot on demand systems at each site will allow staff to issue the correct ballot to voters regardless of their precinct.
- Utilize an accessible ballot marking device. Three accessible ballot marking devices will be available for use at each satellite office. Staff will be on site to assist voters with specific needs.
- Provide language assistance.

The ROV Office will make a good-faith effort to recruit staff and/or volunteers who are bilingual in Spanish, Syriac, Khmer and Punjabi. Limited English Proficiency voters will have the ability to request translated ballots in these languages.

Security plans will be in place to prevent disruption of voting and to ensure that the election is properly conducted. When satellite offices are closed, the site and equipment will be secured through established security protocols such as seals, and secure storage containers.

Due to the expanded access to voter files at satellite offices and to protect the security of the county voter file, the Stanislaus County ROV will be staffing sites with hired part-time Stanislaus County employees. Additional volunteers will sanitize voting areas and direct voter lines and may be assigned where additional language assistance is needed.

**C. RAVBM (Remote Accessible Vote by Mail)**

Stanislaus County registered voters may request from the Elections Office an accessible ballot. RAVBM ballots are available to all voters but may be most useful for disabled individuals. The ballot can be accessed on the voter's computer, marked using the voter's own assistive technology and then printed. This ballot can be returned in the same manner as any VBM ballot. It can be returned by mail, at an authorized ballot drop box or satellite office.

**III. Pre-election Outreach and Challenges**

**A. Satellite Office Locations**

Beginning May 19, 2020, before the passage of Executive Order N-67-20 or AB 423, the Stanislaus County ROV emailed contact persons for previously used polling places. The email surveyed previously used polling places for their availability on November 3, 2020, availability on early voting days, and interest in having a staffed curbside ballot drop-off. Out of the 266 emails sent, only 60 facilities responded with interest. Staff contacted each of the 60 sites to discuss the minimum requirements. This included the duration of time the ROV would reserve the site – Thursday, October 29, 2020, through Wednesday, November 4, 2020. After learning this requirement, only 20 facilities remained interested.

During this same time, the Stanislaus ROV Office began to reach out to City Clerks for recommendations of city-owned properties that could serve as satellite offices. As a group, the City Clerks recommended 13 locations. Stanislaus County's General Services Agency (GSA) served as a liaison connecting the ROV Office to other departments with possible sites. With the GSA's assistance, the ROV Office has secured 8 sites that meet minimum requirements. Stanislaus County's Office of Education also linked the ROV office to 4 sites that meet minimum requirements.

Further efforts were made to reach vacant commercial retail properties, which returned no interest from property owners.

Still, through collaborations with public and private entities, Stanislaus ROV can meet the requirements of SB 423 with one in-person early voting site/satellite office for every 10,000 registered voters in Stanislaus County. Locations will be finalized by the Stanislaus ROV after the closing of candidate filing and subsequent completion of consolidating voters by precinct.

## **B. Volunteers**

On May 22, 2020, before the passage of Executive Order N-67-20 or AB 423, the Stanislaus County ROV followed normal pre-election planning practice and mailed poll workers a postcard to survey their interest and availability to volunteer. The postcard asked poll workers to indicate their availability for Election Day, November 3, 2020, and availability to work on early voting days.

A total of 3,675 postcards were mailed. Ninety-eight postcards were returned as undeliverable with no forwarding address. Staff attempted to contact these individuals but were unable to reach them. As of the beginning of August, 141 volunteers have indicated availability on Election Day only and 265 have indicated availability on Election Day and early voting days.

Considering the trend of 26% of volunteers cancelling before Election Day, the number of volunteers who have responded satisfactorily allows the Stanislaus County ROV Office to meet the staffing requirements for the 2020 Presidential General Election under this new model. This group of volunteers will be trained to maintain COVID-19 sanitation guidelines, greet voters and assist voters to use accessible ballot marking devices. Due to the higher level of training required to safely and accurately access the voter file, these individuals will not be assigned to work at check-in or registering voters. Therefore, there is a need to hire additional staff.

## **C. Staffing**

To ensure the security of elections and protect voter registration information, the Stanislaus County ROV determined that part-time staff will be hired for the 26 satellite offices so that they undergo fingerprinting background checks. These staff will undergo rigorous training with emphasis in voter registration procedures so they can effectively assist voters at check-in and accurately register or re-register voters at satellite offices.

The recruitment was opened on June 26, 2020, and remained open through August 14 to allow for a sufficient number of applicants to apply. Seasoned poll workers were contacted directly and encouraged to apply. Applicants who meet the minimum qualifications, pass the written exam and are cleared during the background check are being hired in groups of 25. Each group will receive training in voter registration

procedures to build their basic knowledge, then they will receive training in satellite office procedures. This cycle of training began August 17, 2020. This leaves the Stanislaus County ROV little time to appropriately train staff and determine their eligibility to work at a satellite office. Due to challenges in recruiting candidates who can effectively assist voters accurately at a satellite office, the Stanislaus County ROV will request for the California Secretary of State to partially waive the requirement of 26 in-person voting locations should the staffing levels be deemed to be insufficient.

#### **IV. Voter Education and Outreach**

Stanislaus ROV will begin educating voters through a direct postcard mailing that will explain how all active voters will receive a ballot by mail for the 2020 November General Election. The postcard will explain the convenience of voting by mail and how Stanislaus County ROV keeps the process secure. The postcards will begin mailing August 11, 2020.

While the Stanislaus County EAP offers safer and more accessible services for voters, the ROV recognizes the change for the one-third of voters who are used to visiting traditional polling places. As a response, the Stanislaus County ROV has partnered with the county's public information officer to launch a social media campaign starting in August 2020. The campaign will include a collaborative effort with notable and reputable members of community organization including CSU Stanislaus, Latino Community Roundtable and Kiwanis Club, to name a few. These volunteers will be recorded in a series of videos to educate voters on the convenience and safety of voting by mail.

Stanislaus County is partnering with several surrounding counties to deliver through several media sources education and informational information to voters, providing messaging in a similar way allow for a consistent message to voters. This partnership will help deliver consistent messaging to voters in a cost-effective way. This should decrease voter confusion that may come from inconsistent messages from each county.

The Stanislaus County ROV will update [www.stanvote.com](http://www.stanvote.com) regularly and conduct direct mailings to voters.