

# **BILINGUAL ELECTION OFFICER HANDBOOK**



**ORANGE COUNTY  
REGISTRAR OF VOTERS**

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Welcome to the Registrar of Voters!

We are excited to have you as a member of our team. You have been recruited as a bilingual election officer because your bilingual skill is essential in the electoral process as mandated under the federal Voting Rights Act. As a bilingual election officer, you will surely appreciate the opportunity that is given to you to perform your civic duty as an American citizen and serve your community.

The Registrar of Voters is committed to quality and unparalleled voter services as the administrator of elections in Orange County. As part of our team, we believe you will find it rewarding to work together to provide excellent service to every citizen of our community.

To better prepare you as a bilingual election officer, we are providing this supplemental Bilingual Election Officer Handbook in addition to the regular Poll Worker Training Manual.

This handbook contains supplemental information to help you get organized and stay on track as you proceed through your training. The principal sections of the Handbook are titled, in page order, as follows:

- *Duties of a Bilingual Election Officer* explains the important role that bilingual election officers play in the success of an election;
- *Common Scenarios in Voter Assistance* draws scenarios that occur in voter assistance;
- *Bilingual Language Assistance in the Election Process* emphasizes the needs for language assistance in the voting process as required by law;
- *United States Government Structure* illustrates the different branches of government;
- *Agency and Citizen Involvement in the Election Process* describes various functions of different entities involved in the election process;
- *Duties of the Registrar of Voters Office* notes its role and responsibilities for elections; and
- *Election Glossary*: We created a glossary that defines some terminologies that are commonly used in elections.
- *EAC Election Glossary*: We also have provided a copy of the EAC Election Terminology Glossary created for and provided to elections professionals.

Essentially, this handbook emphasizes the importance of having you, the bilingual election officer, as part of our team. We appreciate and want to recognize the contributions of all staff and volunteers.

Welcome aboard! With you, we look forward to another successful election.

Sincerely,

Neal Kelley  
Registrar of Voters

## DUTIES OF A BILINGUAL ELECTION OFFICER

Bilingual election officers play an essential role in our team of volunteers on Election Day. Their additional language skill helps those registered voters who are not fully English proficient and thus cannot effectively participate in the electoral process due to language barriers.

### Duties of Election Officers

All volunteer board members have the following duties:

- Open, prepare and close the poll site
- Assist voters throughout Election Day

**Bilingual-Inspector/Clerk/Student** has the additional responsibility of assisting those voters who need to be helped in the language of preference.

### Things to remember if you are a **BILINGUAL** election officer:

- YOU should wear the visible badge (provided in the supply box on Election Day) identifying you as a bilingual election officer who can provide assistance.
- Try to rotate or learn other duties at the poll site but always be available to help those in need of language assistance.
- Review the glossary of translated election terms and become familiar with election specific vocabulary.
- Include the Inspector in your conversation with a voter. The Inspector is responsible for overseeing the Election Day operations at an assigned polling place.
- Always defer to the Inspector and translate all questions a voter may have regarding voting procedures.
- Notify the voter there is a language ballot on the eSlate as well as paper ballot. Easy to read language instructions and materials are also available for the voter's convenience.
- When the voter needs personal assistance with voting, he/she should receive assistance from not more than two persons. NEVER tell the voter how to vote or make implications on how to vote.
- Make sure the voter knows he/she can call our office for any questions. We have professional bilingual staff available.
- We have a website that offers voting information in our covered languages at [ocvote.com](http://ocvote.com).
- Be culturally sensitive.
- Make sure that you and the other members of the team have translated materials displayed and available to use.
- Always remember you are part of a team!

If you have any questions regarding election officer language assistance at poll sites, call the Poll Worker Customer Service Line at (714) 954-1901.

## COMMON SCENARIOS IN VOTER ASSISTANCE

**Identification Card** Under federal law, a person who is voting for the first time in a federal election is required to provide proof of residence. This is the only time a voter may be asked for proof of residence. Federal and California State Law prohibits you (election officer) from asking voters for identification to verify their eligibility to vote. Many voters will automatically show you their identification. In this case you must decline to use it.

**Poll Site Directions** Voters may be at the wrong poll site location on Election Day. Make sure to check the precinct map provided in your supply box and give them their correct location. The voter may remain at your poll site and cast a provisional ballot. You may also call our office at (714) 954-1901.

**Provisional Voting** This method of voting allows elections officials to ensure that no voter votes twice, either intentionally or inadvertently, in a given election. The process allows voters to cast a ballot that is not counted until registration or voting history is researched for validity at the Registrar of Voters office. Provisional voting ensures that no properly registered voter is denied his/her right to cast a ballot if that voter's name is not on the polling place roster due to a clerical, processing, computer, or other error.

**Interpretation** There are times that the roster clerk may not understand the voter's name, or other poll workers cannot communicate with a voter. Bilingual clerks are assigned to targeted polling places to interpret in situations such as these. Voters can also be allowed to search for his or her name in the polling place roster.

**Voting System Assistance** Some voters have never used a voting machine, or may have difficulty in using a voting machine. Poll workers can instruct these voters on how to use the voting machine and assist them as needed. Poll workers can also provide paper ballots to those who feel more comfortable voting on paper.

## Provisional Voting

The following are the **two different** envelopes used for implementing the provisional voting process:

**Blue Provisional** envelope is used only to process:

- Voters listed as “Early Voters” in the combined roster-index but claim not to have voted early.
- Voters listed in the combined roster-index as “Vote-By-Mail” who do not have their Vote-By-Mail ballots to surrender.

NOTE: If the voter brings the Vote-By-Mail ballot and surrenders it he/she can vote under regular voting procedures.

**White Provisional** envelope is mainly used for:

- Voter’s name is not found in the combined roster-index or supplemental voter list.
- Voters with a change of address who have recently moved.
- “Proof of Residence Required” listed voters in the combined roster-index who cannot provide a proof of residence.
- Voters who are not at their correct precinct and insist on voting at your polling site.

Voters may not be familiar with provisional voting and most likely will need assistance to complete the process.

You may follow the provisional procedures found in your Poll Worker Training Manual if needed.

## BILINGUAL LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE IN THE ELECTION PROCESS

Bilingual language assistance is mandated by both federal law and the California Elections Code.

### **Voting Rights Act signed into law in 1965.**

**Language minority  
provisions were added  
in 1975:**

- the provisions were extended in 1982 for ten (10) years and in 1992 for fifteen (15) years;
- the provisions were extended in 2006 for twenty five (25) years.

**For more detailed  
information about  
the provisions, refer to  
the Dept. of Justice's  
website at:**

[www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/  
sec\\_203/203\\_brochure.php](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/sec_203/203_brochure.php)

### LANGUAGE MINORITY PROVISIONS OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

#### **Legal Requirements:**

The language minority provisions are contained in Sections 203 and Section 4(f)(4) of the Voting Rights Act.

Sections 203 and Section 4(f)(4) require that, when a covered state or political subdivision, of which Orange County is one, provides registration or voting notices, forms, instructions, assistance, or other materials of information relating to the electoral process, including ballots, it shall provide them in the language of the applicable minority group as well as in the English language.

#### **Covered Jurisdictions:**

Covered jurisdictions are determined by the Census Bureau after each census based upon a formula set out in the Voting Rights Act. The most recent determinations were made on July 26, 2002.

- Orange County is required to provide minority language assistance in four languages: Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Covered language minorities are limited to American Indians, Asian Americans, Alaskan Natives, and Spanish-heritage citizens - the groups that Congress found to have faced barriers in the political process.

#### **Section 203 Coverage Formula:**

A jurisdiction is covered under Section 203 where the number of United States citizens of voting age is a single language group within the jurisdiction: (1) is more than 10,000; or (2) is more than five percent of all voting age citizens; or (3) on an Indian reservation, exceeds five percent of all reservation residents; and (4) the illiteracy rate of the group is higher than the national illiteracy rate.

California Elections  
Code Division 12  
Chapter 4. Precinct  
Board

Section 12303 (a)

Section 12303 (b)

Section 12303 (c)

Language Proficiency  
Test

## LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS OF PRECINCT BOARD MEMBERS

### **Legal Requirements:**

The language requirement provisions are contained in Division 12 Chapter 4 Section 12303 (a) (b) (c) of the California Elections Code.

No person who cannot read or write the English language is eligible to act as a member of any precinct board.

It is the intent of the Legislature that non-English-speaking citizens, like all other citizens, should be encouraged to vote. Therefore, appropriate efforts should be made to minimize obstacles to voting by citizens who lack sufficient skill in English to vote without assistance.

### **Section 12303 Coverage Formula:**

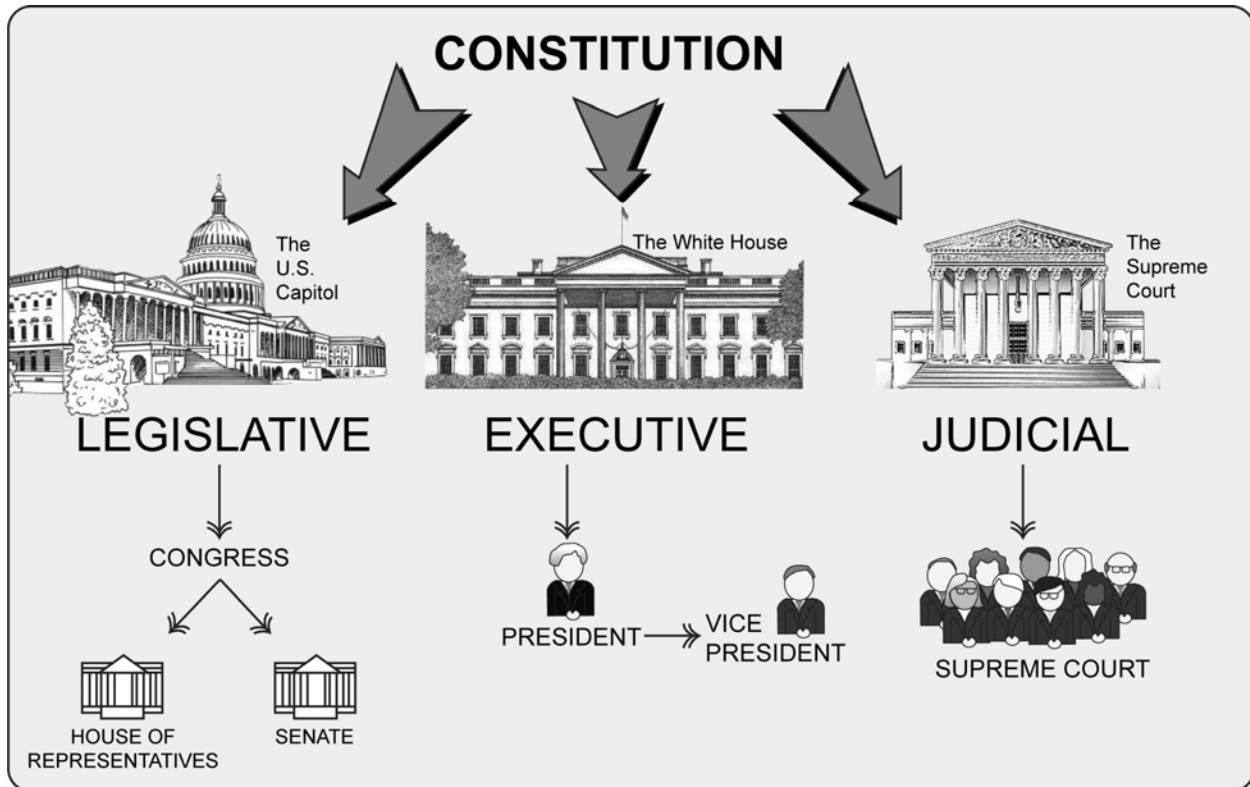
Where the non-English-speaking citizens approximate three percent or more of the voting-age residents of a precinct, or in the event that interested citizens or organizations provided information which indicates a need for voting assistance for non-English-speaking citizens, the election official shall make reasonable efforts to recruit election officers who are fluent in a language used by the non-English-speaking citizens and in English.

- In Orange County, election materials including ballots are translated and provided in the covered languages to help non-English speaking citizens cast their votes in their languages without assistance.

A prospective bilingual election officer is tested and evaluated for his/her ability to read and speak both the English language and the target language by a Registrar of Voters Community Program Specialist.

- Sample questions for the language proficiency test are drafted and utilized by Community Program Specialists at the Registrar of Voters.

## UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE



**Constitution:** The U.S. Constitution divides the powers of the government into three branches: The Executive, headed by the President; the Legislative, which includes both houses of Congress (the Senate and the House of Representatives); and the Judicial with the Supreme Court at the top. The Constitution limits the role of each branch through a system of checks and balances to prevent any one branch from gaining undue power.

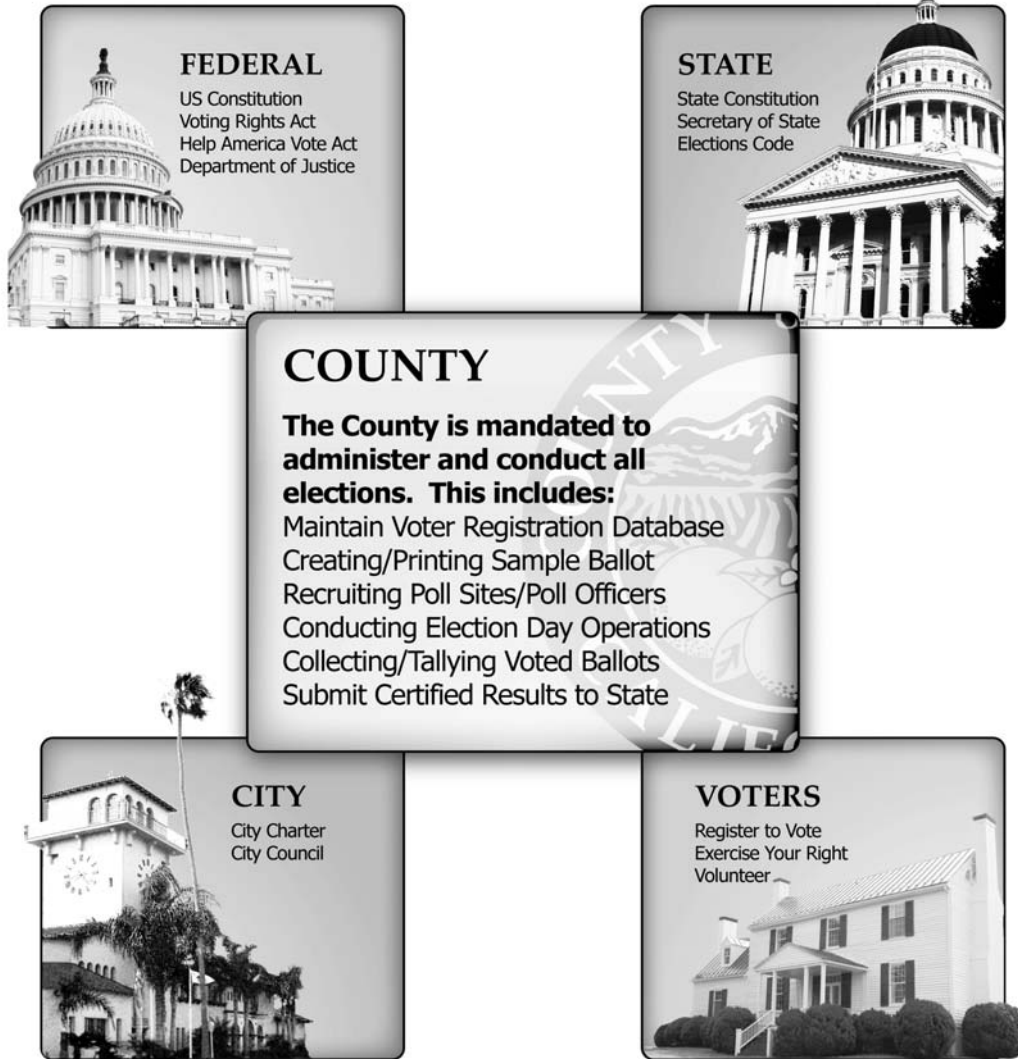
**Executive Branch:** The chief executive of the United States is the President, who together with the Vice President is elected to a four-year term. As a result of a 1951 constitutional amendment, a president may be elected to only two terms. The President's powers are formidable but not unlimited. The executive branch of the government is responsible for enforcing the laws of the land. The Vice President, department heads (Cabinet members), and heads of independent agencies assist in this capacity. Unlike the powers of the President, their responsibilities are not defined in the Constitution, but each has special powers and functions.

**Legislative Branch:** The legislative branch is made up of elected representatives (Senate and House of Representatives) from each of the 50 states. The Constitution sets up a bi-cameral body known as the U.S. Congress to raise and spend national revenue and to draft laws. It is the only branch of the U.S. government that can make federal laws, declare war and put foreign treaties into effect.

**Judicial Branch:** The judicial branch is headed by the U.S. Supreme Court, which consists of the Chief Justice of the United States and such number of Associate Justices as may be fixed by Congress, which is currently fixed at eight. Power to nominate the Justices is vested in the President of the United States, and appointments are made with the advice and consent of the Senate. The role of the judicial branch is to decide cases arising under federal laws and under the Constitution of the United States. The judicial branch interprets laws that have been passed by the Congress and approved by the President.



## AGENCY AND CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN THE ELECTION PROCESS



### Three Basic Types of Election:

**A general election:** A general election is an election in which most offices of a given political body are up for election. General election is also a term used to differentiate from a primary election. In the United States, primary elections serve to narrow down a field of candidates, and general elections actually elect candidates to offices. The general election is held on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even-numbered years.

**A primary election (nominating primary):** Also referred to simply as a primary, a primary election is an election in which voters in a jurisdiction select candidates for a subsequent general election. In other words, primary elections are one means by which a political party nominates candidates for the following general election.

**A special election:** Usually special elections are held to fill vacancies created by death, resignation or removal from office. Special elections are also held for special districts such as water districts, etc. In California, special elections can also be called by the governor, county board of supervisors or city council for ballot measures or initiative petitions.

## DUTIES OF THE REGISTRAR OF VOTERS OFFICE

The Orange County Registrar of Voters office is a non-partisan, county-level government agency responsible for administering elections, including all federal, state and special elections. Cities may conduct their own elections, but the cities in Orange County typically contract with the Registrar of Voters office. The mission of our department is “to ensure the integrity of elections in a uniform, consistent and accessible manner.”

With over 1.6 million active registered voters, Orange County is the fourth largest voting jurisdiction in the United States. Among its many important responsibilities, the Orange County Registrar of Voters office maintains voter registration information, processes candidate filing, sets up and staffs polling places, and releases official election results. It also actively reaches out to the diverse Orange County community in order to drive participation in elections.

Successful elections depend on dedicated and experienced people to run them. The Registrar of Voters staff includes 50 full time employees, numerous election aides during election time, and up to ten thousand volunteers on Election Day, representing the broad spectrum of Orange County’s population.

If you would like to learn more about our various community outreach programs, our bilingual community outreach staff is available to assist you:

Chinese Community Program	Delicia Hsu	(714) 567-5143
Korean Community Program	Jay Koo	(714) 567-5141
Latino Community Program	Rosa Vizcarra	(714) 567-7581
Vietnamese Community Program	Ben Hamatake	(714) 567-5106
	Cady Nguyen	(714) 567-7585

If you have questions about other services our office provides, please contact us at the following phone numbers for more information:

Main Telephone Number	(voter registration, vote-by-mail, etc.)	(714) 567-7600
Student Poll Worker Program		(714) 567-7575
City, County, or State Poll Worker Program		(714) 567-7575

## **ELECTION GLOSSARY**

The following glossary is provided to you as a guideline for translating commonly used election terms as our department translates them. These translations have been developed over a period of years as we perfected the best way to reach the majority of voters that speak the language.

### **Abandoned ballot**

Ballot that the voter did not place in the ballot box or record as cast on direct recording electronic voting system before leaving the polling place.

### **Absentee Ballot**

*See also: vote-by-mail*

Ballot cast by a voter unable to vote in person at his or other polling place on Election Day.

### **Access Code**

A four-digit code issued at the polling place to allow a voter access to voting on the electronic voting system.

### **Accessible Voting Station**

Voting station equipped for individuals with disabilities.

### **Acceptance Testing**

Examination of a voting system and its components by the purchasing election authority (usually in a simulated-use environment) to validate performance of delivered units in accordance with procurement requirements, and to validate that the delivered system is, in fact, the certified system purchased.

### **Active Registered Voter**

A voter listed in the white section of a precinct roster indicating he or she is currently registered at the address provided on the registration form.

### **Affidavit**

Sworn statement form (voter registration form).

### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

A law enacted in 1990 that prohibits discrimination based on disability. Polling places are required to provide physical accessibility for people with disabilities.

### **Ballot**

A device or a sheet of paper containing the list of all candidates and issues upon which a voter is entitled to vote in an election.

### **Ballot Measure**

A contest on a ballot where the voter may vote yes or no.

### **Ballot Rotation**

Process of varying the order of the candidate names within a given contest.

### **Ballot Type / Ballot Style**

Ballot content varies depending on where a voter lives. In addition to federal and state contests, a voter may also vote on local offices and/or measures.

### **Bilingual Precinct**

A precinct mandated by law to provide language assistance based on certain criteria.

### **Canvass**

Compilation of election returns and validation of the outcome that forms the basis of the official results by political subdivision.

### **Cast Ballot**

Ballot that has been deposited by the voter in the ballot box or electronically submitted for tabulation.

### **Closed Primary**

Primary election in which voters receive a ballot listing only those candidates running for office in the political party with which the voters are affiliated. In some states, non-partisan contests and ballot issues may be included. In some cases, political parties may allow unaffiliated voters to vote in their party primary.

### **Combined Roster Index**

A book containing a list of voters within a precinct.

### **Central Counting Station**

Voted ballots are placed into secure storage and transported or transmitted to the Registrar of Voters Office where all ballots are tallied.

### **Certification of Election**

Procedure by which election results are verified by the Registrar of Voters as having met specified requirements.

### **Certification Testing**

Testing performed under either national or state certification processes to verify voting system conformance to requirements.

### **Chad**

A small piece of waste paper produced by punching a hole in punched card or tape (as in a ballot).

### **Challenged Ballot**

Ballot provided to individuals who claim they are registered and eligible to vote but whose eligibility or registration status cannot be confirmed when they present themselves to vote. Once voted, such ballots must be kept separate from other ballots and are not included in the tabulation until after the voter's eligibility is confirmed.

### **Close of Registration**

The deadline to register for an election.

### **Consolidated Election**

An election in which different jurisdictions have contests on the same ballot and/or on the same day.

### **Contest**

A choice available on the ballot such as an office or a proposition.

### **Curbside Voting**

Occurs when a voter is unable to enter a poll site to vote and must vote from his/her car. The poll worker unhooks the DAU Unit from the group of eBooths and take it to the parking lot for the voter to vote.

### **Daisy Chain**

Method used to connect data cables to each slate machine.

### **Decertification**

Revocation of national or state certification of voting system hardware and software.

### **Decline To State (DTS)**

A voter who has chosen NOT to affiliate with a particular party. A DTS voter is a non-partisan, independent voter different from an "American Independent" voter who actually belongs to a political party.

### **Direct Recording Electronic (DRE) Voting System**

An electronic voting system that utilizes electronic components for the functions of ballot presentation, vote capture, vote recording, and tabulation which are logically and physically integrated into a single unit. A DRE produces a tabulation of the voting data stored in a removable memory component and in printed hardcopy.

### **Disabled Access Unit (DAU)**

A special eSlate provided for voters with disabilities. It is set up at the end of the row of eSlate booths at each polling place.

### **eSlate**

The electronic voting system used in Orange County.

### **Early Voting**

Allows any registered voter in Orange County the opportunity to vote in a polling place setting for a period of 10 days prior to Election Day.

### **Election Code**

A set of laws and regulations governing how an election is conducted.

### **Electioneering**

Campaigning for a candidate or a proposition; the behavior of trying to persuade voters.

### **Election Management System**

Set of processing functions and databases within a voting system that defines, develops and maintains election databases, performs election definitions and setup functions, format ballots, count votes, consolidates and report results and maintains audit trails.

### **Elected Official**

A person who holds a government office through an open election.

### **Election Officials**

The people associated with administering and conducting elections, including government personnel and poll workers.

### **Fail-Safe Voting**

If a voter presents himself at a polling place on the date of an election but no record of his voter registration can be located by poll workers on the precinct voter registration list, such voter shall be permitted to vote only under certain conditions.

### **Federal Election**

An election in which voters choose individuals to hold federal offices.

### **Forms of Identification**

Documents used to verify a person's identity.

### **General Election**

An election held in even-number years to elect candidates nominated in a primary election to offices.

### **Help America Vote Act (HAVA)**

A federal law passed in 2002 to establish election administration standards. The law mandates that all states and localities upgrade many aspects of their election procedures, including their voting machines, registration processes and poll worker training.

### **Inactive Voter**

A voter's registration status is considered inactive if the registered address is invalid due to returned or undeliverable mail.

### **Judge's Booth Controller (JBC)**

The control unit of the eSlate voting system that regulates access to the eSlates and tallies the votes.

### **Mailed Ballot Precinct**

A precinct where there is no polling place set up and voters receive vote-by-mail ballots due to the fact that there are 250 or less registered voters in a precinct.

### **Municipal Election**

A local election held in a city to choose representatives such as mayor or council members.

### **Open Primary**

Primary election in which all voters can participate regardless of political affiliation. Some states require voters to publicly declare choice of party ballot at the polling place, after which the poll worker provides or activates the appropriate ballot. In other states the voters can make their choice of party ballot within the privacy of the voting booth.

### **Party Affiliation**

Associated with a political party as a member.

### **Paper Ballot**

A ballot printed on paper where the voter marks his or her choice with a provided device.

### **Petition**

A formal request containing voter signatures that is submitted to election officials in support of a cause.

### **Poll Worker / Election Officer**

A volunteer trained by the Register of Voters to assist with polling place operations.

### **Polling Place**

The location where voters go to vote. A polling place may serve multiple precincts.

### **Poll Monitor / Poll Watcher**

An individual assigned by a candidate, party or organization to observe polling place operations. They have a right to be there but they may not disrupt or interfere with the election process.

### **Precinct**

An election district where people vote on common contests and are assigned to the same polling place to cast their ballots. A polling place may include more than one precinct.

### **Precinct Board**

The group of poll workers assigned to a polling place for a precinct, including an inspector and clerks.



### **Proof of Residence**

First-time voters in a federal election are required by the Help America Vote Act to provide a proof of residence. See training manual for a list of acceptable documents.

### **Primary Election**

A preliminary election in which voters select party nominees for office. Members of the political parties compete to represent their party in the general election. They will run against other party nominees in the general election.

### **Proposition**

A proposal on the ballot submitted to voters for approval.

### **Provisional Voting**

A voter whose registration status needs to be verified before his/her ballot can be counted must vote provisionally.

### **Recall Election**

A procedure by which voters can remove an elected official from office.

### **Recount**

Retabulation of the votes cast in an election.

### **Registrar of Voters**

The county-level government agency responsible for administering elections, maintaining voting registration information and releasing voting results.

### **Run-Off Election**

Election to select a winner following a primary or a general election in which no candidate in the contest received the required minimum percentage of the votes cast. The two candidates receiving the most votes for the contest in question proceed to the run-off election.

### **Sample Ballot**

A booklet containing election and contest information that is mailed to each voter prior to an election.

### **Secrecy Envelope**

Used to ensure the privacy of a cast ballot.

### **Special Election**

A special election may be held to fill a vacant political office between regularly scheduled elections or to submit public measures for voters' approval.

### **Spoiled Ballot**

A ballot that has been rendered invalid.

### **Touchscreen Voting System**

A voting machine that utilizes a computer screen to display the ballot and allows the voter to indicate his or her selections by touching designated locations on the screen.

### **Vote-By-Mail Voter**

A voter who requests to receive a ballot by mail. You can request a one-time vote-by-mail ballot for a specific election, or you can apply to become a permanent vote-by-mail voter for all elections.

### **Voter Bill of Rights**

The document hung clearly at the polling place that states each voter's rights.

### **Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT)**

The printer adjacent to the eSlate that stores a paper copy of the electronic ballot cast.

### **Voting Rights Act**

The legislation enacted in 1965 to ban discriminatory voting practices in many southern states after the Civil War and to ensure the right to vote for all citizens of the United States regardless of race or color.

### **Voter Fraud**

Deceptive acts committed by voters in the electoral process such as illegitimate attempt to vote or to register.

### **Voter Turnout**

The percentage of eligible voters who cast a ballot in an election.

### **Voting Booth**

An enclosure location within a polling place where a voter actually record his or her votes in privacy.

### **Write-In Candidate**

A qualified individual not listed on the ballot. In some jurisdictions, voters may choose to enter the name of a write-in candidate.

### **Zero Tape Report**

A report printed on the JBC at the beginning of Election Day to show there is no ballot cast.

**UNITED STATES  
ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION  
GLOSSARY OF ELECTION TERMINOLOGY**

The United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) established the Language Accessibility Program to conduct research and other activities to assist election officials in meeting the needs of voters with limited English-proficiency. One of the first activities the EAC embarked upon was a *Glossary of Key Election Terminology*. We believe the EAC's glossary is a great resource for our volunteers and trust that you will find it useful in helping voters with limited English proficiency.