



THE POLL WORKER PULSE

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY ELECTIONS
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coming in 2018: Trilingual Ballots!

Starting in 2018 all ballots in Contra Costa County will be trilingual in English, Spanish and, for the first time, Chinese.

As the population of Contra Costa County grows and changes, so do the language needs of our voters. When 10,000 voters or 5% of the county's voting age citizens speak a specific language, we must include that language on all election materials, including the ballot. At the end of 2016, new Census data determined that we crossed this threshold with Chinese. This is not the first time we've added a language. Contra Costa first included Spanish in 2002 and offered voters a choice between an English or Spanish ballot. In November 2014, we moved to a single, bilingual ballot. We will do the same with the addition of Chinese, making the new ballot one trilingual document all voters can use. The AutoMARK will also be able to communicate with voters in Chinese, and the Voter Information Guide will include all three languages.

Our poll workers reflect the language diversity of Contra Costa. We have 559 wonderful multilingual poll workers who speak a variety of languages, including Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Hindi, Japanese, Vietnamese, and Korean.

Multilingual workers allow us to serve voters needing language assistance. If you have friends or family members who would consider being poll workers, please have them contact us at eo@vote.cccounty.us or (925) 335-7800 option 1, and let us know which languages they speak and their willingness to serve.

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you have questions...

We Have Answers!



After each election, the Elections Division reads and documents every poll worker survey. We review issues that arose, what worked, what didn't, and we address any questions and/or comments that you had on Election Day.

One of the most common questions we get is: "Why do we have to set up the AutoMARK?" We hear you, but there are good reasons an AutoMARK must be ready at each polling place throughout Contra Costa County.

In 2002, the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) was passed, which included a requirement that all polling places have a means of accessible voting that is in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability and creates provisions to ensure that people with disabilities have a full and equal opportunity to vote.

Contra Costa County meets the HAVA requirement by



deploying the AutoMARK, an accessible ballot-marking machine. The AutoMARK provides autonomy to voters who have any condition or challenge that makes it difficult to mark a traditional ballot privately and/or independently. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 7.3% of Contra Costa County's population identifies as having a disability, roughly 83,000 people, which does not include those with a temporary disability. The AutoMARK is key to empowering all voters who want to vote without assistance.

As a poll worker engaging voters, you are on the front lines of protecting their rights and providing the necessary tools for everyone to mark and cast their ballot on Election Day, which includes access to the AutoMARK. We hope this explains why the AutoMARK is an important part of serving all Contra Costa County voters on Election Day.

Election Wordsearch

D	F	G	T	R	H	N	B	A	Q	P	R	E	V	O	R
P	N	Z	D	C	Y	T	U	J	O	J	E	P	Y	T	J
X	R	T	C	T	N	T	D	L	L	L	Y	R	T	N	Z
I	G	O	R	A	O	I	L	R	E	G	I	S	T	E	R
S	N	A	V	M	N	W	C	C	P	O	L	L	Z	X	Y
T	P	S	A	I	O	D	T	E	U	S	H	T	O	O	B
U	R	R	P	R	S	I	I	T	R	T	M	L	D	M	T
D	K	E	K	E	O	I	R	D	O	P	K	X	N	M	M
E	V	E	T	N	C	E	O	L	A	R	W	M	B	Y	T
N	R	O	Z	S	A	T	L	N	E	T	J	B	G	V	J
T	P	K	T	C	O	A	O	L	A	W	E	Z	D	L	Y
S	M	P	H	E	B	R	C	R	G	L	V	K	T	B	P



balancing precinct

populations

How Is It Done?

In 2014 Contra Costa County had 527,521 registered voters. By 2016 registration was up to a record 608,258, an increase of 15% in just two years! Last year, 49,735 voters registered between the June Primary and the November General Election. Because of this, we evaluated our precinct populations to ensure we are best able to serve our voters.

A precinct is an area our office uses to group voters who vote on the same issues. We use precincts to staff polling places and to produce and count ballots. Most importantly, precincts are a reporting unit for election results.

Keeping precinct populations balanced can be challenging. Registration fluctuates daily as new voters register and others move away. Over the

summer, our staff worked to adjust precinct boundary lines, and planned for the next five years of growth. We evaluated the future needs of every voting precinct in the county, including planning for registration increases in areas where there is potential for growth, such as new housing developments. This resulted in 43 new voting precincts and boundary changes for another nine. We will review our precinct sizes again after the 2020 Census.

Despite the changes, most voters will continue to vote at their current polling place. For poll workers, precincts became mostly invisible in 2016 when we moved from having one roster for each precinct at a polling place to a single consolidated roster for all voters at that polling place. Contra Costa County is growing and we're making sure we're ahead of the curve when it comes to serving our voters.

Wordsearch Words

BALLOT	AUTOMARK	VOTE
POLLWORKER	PROVISIONAL	REGISTER
POLL	PARTY	PRECINCT
CANDIDATE	BOOTH	TYPE
ROSTER	OUTREACH	NPP
STUDENTS	ELECTION	INSPECTOR
CLERK	ROVER	

behind the scenes at the Warehouse



Voting booths come in many shapes and sizes. Last year we introduced 550 new carousel booths to our stock of 900 single station units. The carousel booths provide up to 4 sturdy voting stations and can be reconfigured into a 2 or 3 station unit, depending on the polling place. They are lightweight, delivered in a protective box, and are easy to assemble and break down on a long Election Day. Back at the warehouse after every election, all booths are reassembled, inspected for damage, then cleaned and repacked for deployment. The booths are constructed with replaceable plastic and metal parts, making them easy to repair. After passing inspection they are stored and ready for the next election.

“Although our interests as citizens vary, each one is an artery to the heart that pumps life through the body politic, and each is important to the health of democracy.” - Bill Moyers



law background serves Orinda Woman Well on Election Day



Ruth Strauss is used to learning things fast.

When the transactional lawyer became an inspector during her first go-round as a Contra Costa Elections poll worker, it came as no surprise that she hit the ground running.

"I thought, with my legal background and management experience, that I could handle it," Strauss, 56, said.

Even with experience in large corporate settings, Strauss said her first election presented a unique challenge. Not surprising, since the Orinda resident debuted during the most complex of all elections, a Presidential Primary Election. Strauss said that voters at the Concord polling place she oversaw expressed some confusion over cross-over voting and that a flurry of voters arrived just before polls closed.

Strauss grew up in Washington, D.C., where the Vietnam War, Tent City and Watergate shaped her fascination with politics. Today, Strauss remains interested in politics and the law, especially ongoing constitutional issues around election fairness and free expression.

In the spring of 2016, a local political party member told Strauss that the Contra Costa Elections Division was looking for capable volunteers.

The opportunity piqued Strauss' interest, since for the first time in her life, she had the time for community service. Formerly a partner at an international law firm, she had gone into business for herself to have more flexibility to care for her elderly parents on the East Coast.

Ready for a new challenge, Strauss jumped at the opportunity when asked at a poll worker training class if she would be willing to work as an inspector. Strauss said that being organized and proactive was helpful.

"I made sure to contact all my poll workers, even if it meant leaving some messages. I was vehement that they had to take the latest training," she said. "It was amazing how all these volunteers, most of whom didn't know each other, pulled together as a team and worked incredibly hard."