



Orange County Registrar of Voters

2010 Business Plan



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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

The Registrar of Voters department provides election services for the County of Orange that include the registration of voters, conducting elections in the county from the local district to federal levels, and maintaining and supplying election historical data. The majority of the department's functions are defined and mandated by both state and federal law and County Ordinance. We currently have the fifth largest number of registered voters in the United States.

The Registrar of Voters provides overall direction and management of the department working closely with the five units in the department.

Administrative Services: Provides human resources, purchasing and budget support as well as various other services.

Candidate and Voter Services: Handles candidate filing, campaign contribution filing and voter registration processing. Also has a role in ballot creation, sample ballot creation and alternative voting operations such as vote-by-mail and early voting.

Election Services: Conducts polling place and poll worker recruitment. Poll worker recruitment programs include the County Poll Worker Program, and the nationally recognized Student Poll Worker Program.

Community Outreach: Conducts and participates in outreach events throughout the county. They are responsible for the department's adherence to the Voting Rights Act, including bilingual poll worker recruitment, customer service, and translation services for our four covered languages: Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Information and Technology: Our Information and Technology unit provides typical IT support as well as warehouse functions, data entry, and files (which handles voter registration and petition processing). They are also responsible for the precinct and polling place mapping function.

The Registrar of Voters department is dedicated to providing professional and customer service oriented election services. We take pride in the fact that our methods of delivering election services have become the standard for counties throughout the United States. We take our mission - to provide election services for the citizens of Orange County to ensure equal access to the election process, protect the integrity of votes, and maintain a transparent, accurate and fair process - seriously.

In the past year the department enhanced its services to keep in line with our vision of striving for excellence in everything we do while exceeding the expectations of our clients. This is exemplified in the positive results of the multiple surveys we conducted including those completed by voters and volunteers. We conducted two successful special elections, expanded our outreach, made improvements to our voter registration database and more.

Vision, Mission and Core Services



Section I – Vision, Mission and Core Services

Vision Statement

Our vision is the impetus for everything we do. Our vision is to consistently exceed the expectations of Orange County citizens, government, community organizations and the news media in every aspect of our operations. We strive for excellence in overall election management services and in our role as custodians of registered voter records.

Mission Statement

“To provide election services for the citizens of Orange County to ensure equal access to the election process, protect the integrity of votes, and maintain a transparent, accurate and fair process.”

Core Services

The department’s core services are (1) Maintain registered voters list for County of Orange, (2) Provide election services, such as providing ballots and polling places staffed with volunteers, (3) Provide election results, including historical voter and election information to the public, media, political parties, elected officials and other interested individuals or groups.

(1) Maintain registered voters list for County of Orange.

The County of Orange is the fifth largest voting jurisdiction in the United States with over 1.5 million registered voters. Thousands of registration forms are processed yearly. In addition to processing new voter registrations the department must remove people that have died, failed to vote or moved.

Citizens have the right to register and vote. They expect and deserve their registrations be processed in a timely manner. Their name must be in the voter roster when they arrive at the poll site.

Political organizations expect us to provide an accurate voter registration database. Much of a campaign budget goes to direct communication in the form of mail and phone calls with the registered voters. An inaccurate and or out of date database will cost them precious dollars. The media uses the database to measure our county against other Registrar of Voters in the region, state and country. Voter statistics help campaigns market themselves and the media measure the voting habits of the community.

(2) Provide mechanisms in which registered voters can vote.

Voters across the country, including in Orange County, need and demand options for voting. The department provides early voting, vote-by-mail voting and polling place voting for its registered voters.

More than thirty-seven percent of Orange County’s registered voters are permanent vote-by-mail voters. Another five percent request one-time vote-by-mail ballots. They demand their ballots early in the process so that they have time to vote and return them. They also expect that their hundreds of thousands of ballots are scanned, tallied and the results reported immediately after the polls close on Election Day.

The remainder of Orange County voters, approximately 600,000 voters, vote at the polls. Polling place voters expect to easily find their polling place. They need to get the correct ballot. They expect to be in and out of the polling place quickly. A voter should barely notice their interaction with the Registrar of Voters on Election Day.



(3) *Provide election results, including historical voter and elections information, to the public, media, political parties, elected officials and other interested individuals or groups.*

The election process comes to its culmination when the results of each election are posted for the public. The department's customers require and deserve results that are posted quickly, and that are accessible and accurate.

As stated before, the media, political parties, campaigns and elected officials have a vested interest in the information held at the Registrar of Voters office. Each demands that the department be open and accessible by providing information in a timely and accurate manner.

The department's stakeholders need current and historical data on the party registration and voter history of the county in order to do their job. Politics is a numbers driven process. It is all about how many people the candidate or party has registered and how many of them they can get to the polls to vote. The media needs the significant numbers that truly make a difference to their story.

Section II – Operational Plan

A. Environment

Clients

The Registrar of Voters provides services to four very diverse groups. They are Orange County citizens, election/campaign organizations, government organizations and the news media. Typically, involving all of our client groups is required to effectively meet any goal.

Of the county's approximately 3,200,000 citizens, 1,800,000 are eligible voters. Currently, about 1,600,000 are registered to vote. Thousands of voter registration cards are processed yearly. There are various processes the department must undertake to ensure that the database is accurate and up to date.

Over one-third of the 1.6 million registered voters in Orange County choose the vote-by-mail (formerly absentee voting) option over voting in their polling place. The percentage of voters voting by mail has steadily increased over the last few years and for some contests they are the primary method of voting. The department has placed much attention on the vote-by-mail process to ensure this growing segment is processed efficiently, and will continue to do so.

Even as the department has seen an increase in the percentage of vote-by-mail voters, the number of polling place voters is increasing. The Registrar of Voters has paid a great amount of attention to polling place voting. In addition to the impact larger numbers of polling place voters has on operations are the laws and regulations placed on election officials by both the state and federal government.

Our clients have a desire for a speedy tally process and a need to know the results as soon as possible. Depending on the unofficial results on Election Day campaigns may have to continue to pay staff and attorneys until the process is complete. Any delay in the vote-by-mail ballot tally process, which can take days after Election Day, can cost them money. They also have a need for the department to be as open as is legally possible with the information we maintain. The Registrar of Voters works diligently to provide open, honest and timely information to its clients.



Challenges

A serious challenge in the coming year is the cost constraints of conducting elections as the difficult economic climate jeopardizes state reimbursements. There are three state elections scheduled for 2010 including the 72nd Assembly District Special General Election, the June Statewide Primary and November General Election. Additionally, we will be conducting the City of Mission Viejo Special Recall Election. Although some costs are recovered from the state and jurisdictions that consolidate their elections, significant costs can be expected for the county.

Poll Worker recruitment is always a challenge. The most difficult election in 2010 to recruit for will be the June Statewide Primary Election. This election will be conducted as people begin to go on summer vacation. Additionally, the 2,000 plus students we can usually count on for an election will be reduced since the election coincides with the end of their school year and/or beginning of their summer break.

Space is at a premium in the department's building that is shared with another county agency. Every square inch inside the office space has been consumed. A portable unit has been installed outside the building to provide space for our public phone bank. Poll worker and Election Day Coordinator training that used to take place within the department has been moved to an outside location due to space issues.

An increase in state and federal regulations places additional burdens on operations. Creating additional checks and balances and/or reports is time consuming and can alter preparations for and certification of elections.

The number and type of elections being held in the calendar year of 2010 provides some unique opportunities for the department as well. The high profile elections and the reputation of Orange County voters turning out can offer positive media exposure to the department, highlighting the outstanding services the county is providing.

Additionally, the department has created its own opportunities to enhance services to its customers, including a Poll Worker *PASS*. New for 2010, the Poll Worker *PASS* will provide volunteers access to a personal online account that allows them to see their volunteer history, the poll site they are currently assigned to, their training class information, and more. It will also be a tool used by the department to track when volunteers have attended training and when they have picked up polling place supplies. The Poll Worker *PASS* is just one of the many opportunities for positive media attention for the county.

Resources

The Registrar of Voters is a General Fund department. There is partial state reimbursement for the mandates of voter registration, vote-by-mail voting and permanent vote-by-mail voter file maintenance under SB 90. The primary revenue source for the department is reimbursements by cities, school districts and special districts for conducting their elections. The remainder of the department's revenue is generated from candidates, campaigns, individuals and the news media for a variety of products and services.

The revenue of the department varies greatly over a two-year cycle. In the even numbered years, the Primary Election is held in June (4th quarter). Revenue from the Primary Election will be received in November (2nd quarter of the following fiscal year). The general election is held in November (2nd quarter) with revenue being received in February (3rd quarter). Understanding this important two-year revenue cycle is critical to responsible budgeting and administrative planning for the department.



B. Action Plan

GOAL #1

The Registrar of Voters intends to utilize and maximize the voter registration and poll worker data we work with on a daily basis to improve efficiencies.

The department maintains a database of approximately 1.6 million registered voters. The database also contains thousands of records of people formerly registered with the county. There are over 20,000 people that have served and continue to volunteer on Election Day tracked in the database.

The department desires to make the database more dynamic. We need to continue to explore any and all options for inputting, gathering and reporting data for both internal and external customers.

It is a complicated task to create, build and maintain a database that meets our needs of today while being flexible enough to meet future needs. Thousands of registration forms must be loaded monthly while thousands of volunteers are entered into the system. Accuracy of our data entry as well as the dependability and ease of use of the database are essential to meeting the needs of voters. Hundreds of reports with different requirements from different areas of the system must be readily available for our internal customers and our external customers such as the political parties and media.

Strategies to Meet Goal #1:

Statewide Voter Database.

The State of California will soon be implementing a statewide voter database. This database will make the collection of data, especially as voters move from one county to another, much simpler and faster. The quickness with which new information will be received will increase the quality and accuracy of voter registrations.

Use the information in a different way.

Discussions in past business plans included having the database treat our volunteer records like an account to better serve our volunteers much like the County's AccessOC online customer service tracking in which we can determine who is working on a question for a constituent, what was the outcome and how long did it take to respond. We currently use software from a vendor to track information on volunteers that call our Poll Worker Customer Service Line. Our database vendor has worked on our requests for streamlining the system.

The Poll Worker *PASS* is another way in which we can use technology and the database to enhance our service. We continue to find new ways for poll workers to interact with the department. By making the process of volunteering more interactive and accessible we look to increase the probability the poll worker will return.

Come up with different technical ways to improve on what we do now.

Once the new build of our database is complete and in use we will continue to look for ways to improve upon it.

Operational Plan



FY 08 – 09 Results	FY 09 – 10 Plan	FY 09 – 10 Anticipated Results	FY 10 – 11 Plan	How are we doing?
<p>Debriefed staff from 2008 election cycle. Made initial changes requested.</p> <p>Improved quality of data by ensuring that our major processes are done before important mailing deadlines. (death records, cancelled registrations, eliminate duplicates)</p>	<p>Ensure new changes are made, including eliminating the need for additional software for Poll Worker Customer Service Line call tracking and Poll Worker PASS implemented.</p>	<p>Changes successfully implemented during gubernatorial election cycle.</p>	<p>Using new survey data from gubernatorial election cycle as well as staff input, identify enhancements needed.</p>	<p>The department has identified new needs for the database and communicated them with the vendor. Upgrades are scheduled to be in place prior to the June 2010 Primary Election.</p> <p>Both the voter and poll worker databases have been cleaned.</p>

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: *Determination of what the Registrar of Voters customer needs are related to the voter registration and volunteer database.*

WHAT: *Surveys of internal and external customers were completed regarding additional needs from the voter registration and volunteer database*

WHY: *Improve efficiencies in use of the information.*



GOAL #2

In an effort to provide outstanding cost-effective election services to the County of Orange the Registrar of Voters intends to increase the number of registered voters that volunteer as poll workers.

To accomplish this goal the department realized it needed a consolidated communications piece with one unifying message. Previously the various recruitment programs were handled separately. That resulted in having to communicate multiple times with the same population to get our various messages across. It proved to be an inefficient approach.

Poll worker recruitment consists of various programs that necessitate a unified marketing strategy. The need for poll workers, that includes County and student poll workers, is consolidated in a package that also offers opportunities for participation in a corporate poll worker program and poll site recruitment.

The County of Orange is the fifth largest voting jurisdiction in the United States. There is a need of approximately 6,000 poll workers and 1,200 polling locations that must be recruited for each countywide election. The high numbers the department is dealing with coupled with the demands on the time of its diverse population require a sophisticated and unified approach to recruiting volunteers.

Strategies to Meet Goal #2:

Continue the utilization of unified marketing brochure.

The current marketing program includes the use of a brochure consisting of individual sections advertising the need and benefits of the student poll worker program, corporate poll worker program and poll site recruitment.

Professionals in their respective fields completed the artwork, including graphic design and photography, while the messaging was developed internally. The brochure is provided at the many outreach events attended by the department throughout the year. Requests for the brochure are regularly received via website requests.

Community Election Working Group.

The department has consolidated its various committees into a single working group designed to provide a consistent and timely message to all parties involved in Orange County elections. The Community Election Working Group (CEW) brings together diverse backgrounds, each committed to making sure elections are open and accessible. Strong input from the community starts with members of our Community Election Working Group who are independent, engaged, committed, and effective. Our members advise the Registrar of Voters on the election process and provide a forum to communicate back to the community on important election topics. Part of their mission will be assisting with new poll worker recruitment.

Increase Corporate Participation.

The corporate polling place sponsorship program provides a unique opportunity for both the department and civic-minded corporations. One benefit for both is the great potential for positive media

Operational Plan



attention. The Registrar of Voters is arguably the most visible department in the County and when partnered with corporations that have a presence in Orange County they become even more so. The County will benefit by filling its polling places with professional poll workers while the corporation gets attention for fulfilling its community service goals.

Wells Fargo Bank became the first corporate sponsor in November of 2008 providing poll workers, including bilingual volunteers. The result, in addition to providing new poll workers, was positive nationwide media attention for the company and the County.

FY 08 – 09 Results	FY 09 – 10 Plan	FY 09 – 10 Anticipated Results	FY 10 – 11 Plan	How are we doing?
<p>Designed and disseminated brochures consolidating all departments volunteer opportunities. Website updated with the information.</p> <p>Increased database with 4,892 new volunteers between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009.</p>	<p>Continue to utilize brochure. Work with Community Election Working Group to increase volunteer database. Grow the number of corporate sponsors.</p>	<p>Continue to increase the number of potential volunteers in the poll worker database.</p>	<p>Continue successful program to increase the number of potential volunteers in the poll worker database understanding that there are no scheduled elections in 2011 to provide greater awareness and interest to potential volunteers.</p>	<p>The department recruited a sufficient number of volunteers for the November 2008 Presidential General Election, May 2009 Statewide Special Election and November 2009 72nd Assembly District Special Primary Election.</p>

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: *The number of registered voters listed as volunteers in department's database.*

WHAT: *Increase in the volunteer database acquired through campaign.*

WHY: *Increases the available volunteers for any given election ensuring adequate service at polling places throughout the county.*



GOAL #3

To enhance the voting experience in the polling place by providing voting options, such as vote-by-mail, to voters.

As the population of Orange County grows the number of registered voters grows. With nearly 1.6 million voters registered and approximately 1,000 voters assigned to each polling place the potential for lines is great.

Increasing the percentage of vote-by-mail voters is not meant to replace poll site voting on Election Day. The goal is to advertise the option to those voters that may find voting by mail more convenient for their lifestyle and to enhance the voting experience for polling place voters by reducing the time they may wait in line to vote.

Modifications to the county's voting system, specifically the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) printers required by state law, have increased the time voters spend in the voting booth. This problem is further exacerbated when there are long ballots in a particular precinct or county as a whole.

Approximately 37% of Orange County's registered voters are permanent vote-by-mail voters while another 5% ask for a vote-by-mail ballot for a single election. The department will initially target the 5% one-time vote-by-mail requesters to becoming permanent vote-by-mail voters. Success in this area would decrease poll site voters by 100 per site. That equates to 100 voters not waiting in line to vote. With the average voter taking 5 – 7 minutes to complete their ballot we will save between 500 – 700 minutes for the remaining voters in the polling place.

Vote-by-mail ballots received prior to Election Day are scanned and readied for tally immediately upon the closure of the polls. Therefore, in addition to reducing lines at the polls, a higher number of vote-by-mail voters will increase the percentage of votes tallied and reported at 8:05 p.m. on Election Day. The more information we can provide to our stakeholders on the front end of the certification process the better.

Strategies to Meet Goal #3:

Advertise, by direct mail, the permanent vote-by-mail option to registered voters that have requested vote-by-mail ballots for a single election.

A direct mail piece will be mailed to the approximately 80,000 registered voters that have requested a one-time vote-by-mail ballot in the most recently held elections. As voters that have experienced the benefit of voting by mail they are most likely to become permanent vote-by-mail voters.

Provide vote-by-mail option on prominent section of website.

A link to the vote-by-mail application is provided for on the front page of the department's website. It is most popular with campaigns that use the application for their constituency. This is a proven method as the Registrar of Voters website is among the most visited in the County and rises to the top as Election Day draws near.



Engage media regarding the benefits of vote-by-mail for voters and the county.

Vote-by-mail voting continually garners media attention across the state as the percentage of vote-by-mail voters increases. In fact, inquiries are consistently made to the department regarding vote-by-mail statistics.

The nature of voting by mail changes the way in which parties and candidates advertise to their constituency and the media has an interest in their particular strategies. The Registrar of Voters can take advantage of media interest to advertise their desire to increase the number of Orange County voters voting by mail.

Use Sample Ballot as vote-by-mail advertising piece.

The department has recently updated information on vote-by-mail voting in sample ballots delivered to every registered voter for every election conducted. An application for a vote-by-mail ballot is provided with every sample ballot.

FY 08 – 09 Results	FY 09 – 10 Plan	FY 09 – 10 Anticipated Results	FY 10 – 11 Plan	How are we doing?
37% of registered voters are permanent vote-by-mail. This is an increase of 7% over the last two years.	Permanent vote-by-mail voters listed meets or exceeds 42% of total voter registration.	Permanent vote-by-mail voters listed meets or exceeds 42% of total voter registration.	Permanent vote-by-mail voters listed meets or exceed 44% of total voter registration. With no scheduled elections for 2011 increases would be expected only in the first half of the fiscal year.	The number of vote-by-mail voters has increased 7% over the last two years with a dedicated campaign. This bodes well for continued success in FY 09 – 10 and FY 10 – 11.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: *Number of permanent vote-by-mail voters.*

WHAT: *The percent of voters choosing to vote-by-mail versus vote at a poll site.*

WHY: *Decreases the number of voters going to the poll sites thereby reducing lines and voters' time spent at the polls.*



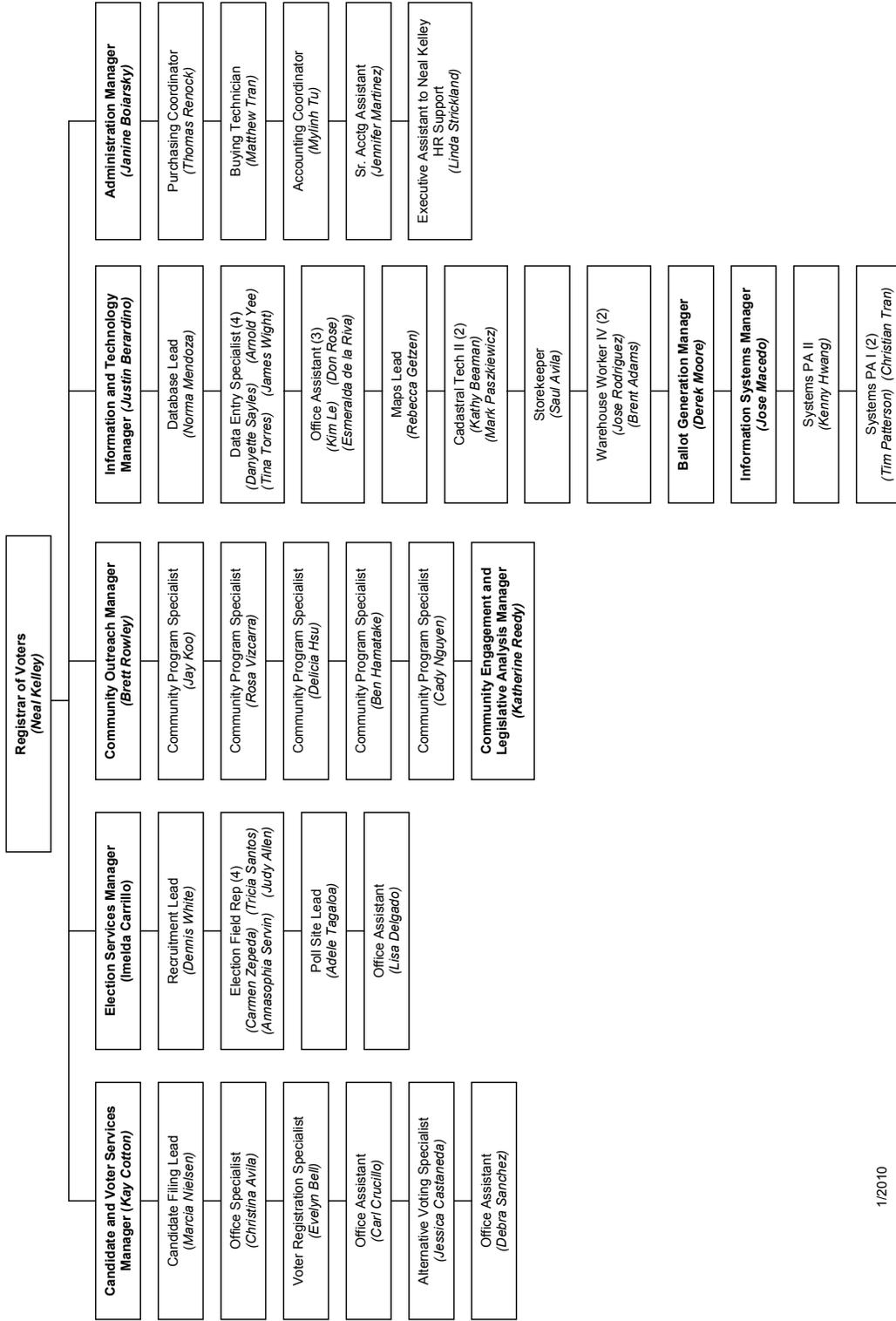
Section III – Appendices:

- A. Organizational Chart**
- B. Significant Accomplishments**
- C. Critical Demographics/Service Expectations**



A. Organizational Chart

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



1/2010



B. Significant Accomplishments

- On May 19, 2009 we conducted the Statewide Special Election. This election involved the entire county (approximately 1.6 million registered voters). The election was held successfully without major incident.
- On November 17, 2009 we conducted the 72nd Assembly District Special Primary Election. This election involved 14% of the voters in the county (approximately 220,000) this election was conducted successfully without major incident.
- Enhanced community outreach by expanding to events such as concerts held at Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre in Irvine. This allowed us to reach thousands of citizens of various demographic groups.
- Improved processing of vote-by-mail ballots. We now sort by precinct, making the certification of elections more efficient, thereby saving taxpayer dollars.
- We have consolidated our separate community groups into one Community Election Working Group. The new working group will allow for all of our interested parties to cover any election related topic together. As a single group we will meet regularly and share all discussions.
- Improved poll worker database allowing for more efficient volunteer support.
- Made improvements to voter registration database, including purging old information and updating voter information.
- Created translation-tracking system. Allows for increased accuracy in tracking translations in the various languages. Items to be translated for certain elections can be between 300-400 in four different languages.
- A Bilingual Poll Worker Handbook was created to provide additional education to bilingual poll workers that may not be as well versed in the American democratic process as natural born citizens.
- Began Crew Resource Management training conducting a mock election and communications training for managers. A full Crew Resource Management training program will be conducted in 2010 with key election planning personnel.
- Saved thousands of dollars with new supply distribution and tracking procedures.
- Surveys conducted of volunteers and voters showed a high satisfaction rate for various services provided by the department.



C. Critical Demographic/Service Expectations

By state mandate and county organization, the Registrar of Voters is the primary election service provider and sole voter registration custodian for the citizens of Orange County. Various federal, state and local statutes, acts, policies and procedures govern the department's functions. These include many unfunded federal and state mandates.

Listed below are some of the functions involved in conducting major elections.

1. Receiving and processing approximately 250,000 registration transactions per year.
2. Filing nomination documents for approximately 350 candidates for each major election. Accepting/rejecting ballot designations. Providing guidance to all candidates regarding qualifications and acceptable campaign practices/campaign disclosure. Accepting/rejecting ballot arguments and rebuttals for county measures. Coordinating with 34 cities for election consolidation.
3. Typesetting and proofreading up to 450 Statements of Qualification and providing for translations of the same. Providing camera-ready copy in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean for sample ballot pamphlets and official ballots, including transliteration of names for character-based languages.
4. Recruiting over 7,000 precinct officers and over 1,750 polling places. Organizing delivery of voting equipment to polling sites and distribution of supplies and equipment to precinct Inspectors.
5. Coordinating printing and delivery of sample ballot pamphlets, official and vote-by-mail ballots during a 30-day time period. Preparation of mailing file and printing mailing addresses onto sample ballot pamphlets for approximately 1.3 million voters in a 19-day time frame. Mailing approximately 70,000 Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese sample ballot pamphlets during the same time period.
6. Issuing vote-by-mail ballots to approximately 600,000 voters. All signatures on voted ballots are verified.
7. Programming all vote tallying software, testing and depositing programs with Secretary of State several days prior to Election Day.
8. Monitoring all polling place operations for approximately 600,000 voters on Election Day and operating the vote tally center and 23 collection centers on election night.
9. Hand tallying votes in 1% of the precincts immediately after the election in order to verify accuracy of machine count. Conduct official canvass/audit of election operations and printing multi-volume statement of votes cast book.