

Future of California Elections

Landscape analysis

Information in California county voter guides and sample ballots

Rachel Goddard
Ethan Newby
with
Dana Chisnell
Whitney Quesenbery
Center for Civic Design

hello@centerforcivicdesign.org
centerforcivicdesign.org

This project is supported by a generous grant from the **James Irvine Foundation** as part of the **Future of California Elections**. Our project on how voters get information is in collaboration with **League of Women Voters of California Education Fund**.

Visit the project website: <http://centerforcivicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/>

Information in California county voter guides and sample ballots

This report analyzes data gleaned from the county Voter Guide/Sample Ballot booklets produced for the June 2014 California state primary. Each of California's 58 counties is responsible for mailing out these guides to voters registered in their respective county.

We collected our data for this part of the project from electronic and printed Voter Guide/Sample Ballot booklets found on county elections websites and mailed directly to our research team. We developed a coding template to objectively record guide elements, pages, and design features across all 58 counties using identical criteria.

The elements included in guides varied greatly, with few elements found in every single county. We were surprised that critical information such as a Voter Bill of Rights, a description of the purpose of the guide, and a table of contents were so uncommon as to appear in 15 or fewer guides. Other valuable elements such as polling place addresses, ballot measures, vote by mail deadlines, and information for voters with disabilities were included in 49 or fewer guides. As a result we did not find an example of what a "standard" California county voter guide looks like and we question how this may impact voter engagement between counties.

Overall, we found that the guides could do a better job of helping voters understand the purpose and scope of the documents. The organization of elements within voter guides could be better communicated to the voter through structural and graphic elements such tables of contents and clearer headings. The guides seemed to assume a level of civic literacy that was missing in most of the voters we interviewed and interacted with for this project. These voters would be helped if the guides included more about the mechanics and process of becoming a voter.

Table of Contents

About this project.....	4
How we catalogued the voter guide contents	4
How we analyzed the collection	5
What we found in the guides.....	7
The number of pages varied widely	7
Most guides assumed voters were registered and familiar with voting	8
All guides had contact information for the elections office	8
Information about what is on the ballot	9
Voter Guides focused on information about specific election	9
Facsimile sample ballots were in almost all guides	10
Full legal text of ballot measures was not always included	11
Information about how, when, and where to vote	11
Covers alerted voters to basic <i>what, when, where</i>	11
Polling place address was usually included	11
Information about accessibility and language support at the polls was spotty	12
Vote-by-mail applications and information were readily available	14
Many guides included instructions about how to mark the ballot	14
How the information is organized and presented	15
Tables of contents were rare	15
Guides started with information of most importance to the widest audience	15
Cover designs used fonts, font sizing, and color to organize information	15
Guides included illustrations in the content pages	15
Page layouts fit as much material as possible into a page	16
Candidate statements and ballot measures often look the same	18
Appendix: What we cataloged.....	19

About this project

In April 2014, we collected samples of the Sample Ballots/Voter Information Pamphlets/Voter Guides (which we will call “voter guides” in this report) from all 58 counties in California for the June 2014 primary election.

County election administrators mail voter guides to registered voters, following California legal requirements. We expected to collect at least a printed version from each county. In addition, many counties make electronic (PDF) copies of the guides available online, either posted on their web site, or available as part of the information for voters in a “My Voter Information” feature of the site.

Our collection includes a mix of print and electronic copies. We scanned the print copies to include in the collection. In many cases, local election officials helped us locate the guides on their sites, or mailed printed copies to us. We are grateful for their assistance.

We sought guides for the 2014 primary because the timing was right for our project. But we realize that looking at guides for one election, especially a primary, gives us a specific snapshot. We knew that – based on our larger collection of guides from various other elections – the guides for the election we analyzed might be quite different from other elections.

The collection is available online

<http://civicdesign.org/projects/how-voters-get-information/>

This report is a companion to our recommendations for voter guides. To develop the recommendations, we did interviews with nearly 100 voters, non-voters and infrequent voters across California, and conducted usability tests of prototype voter guides that we developed based on the data from the interviews.

How we catalogued the voter guide contents

After we received a guide, we analyzed its contents according to 60 elements identified by our team as areas of interest for this project. You can find a complete list of these elements in the Appendix to this report. The idea was to see what kind of content in the guides. We wanted to know how consistent the guides were across counties, but we also looked at whether there might be trends or patterns based on characteristics of California, such as jurisdiction size and diversity.

How we analyzed the collection

We grouped the 58 California counties according to the demographics of the county to compare them, as the tables below show. Cataloging the 60 elements gave us a way to deconstruct guides to look at how much information they held, and what the information covered. We discuss these analyses starting in “What we found in the guides,” starting on page 7.

County sizes

Size	Number of counties	Total population
Tiny	11	Under 30,000
Small	12	30,000 – 100,000
Medium	11	100,000 - 260,000
Large	11	260,000 - 800,000
Super	13	More than 800,000

Diversity

Level of diversity	Number of counties	Percentage white, non-Hispanic
Low	11	Less than 36%
Below half	16	36% to 50%
Above half	16	50% - 75%
High	15	Over 75%

Population density

Density	Number of counties	People per square miles
Low	19	Fewer than 40 people
Medium	21	40 – 200 people
Dense	18	More than 200 people

Median household income

Income level	Number of counties	Median income per year
Low	19	Less than \$48,000
Medium	21	\$48,000 - \$60,000
High	18	More than \$60,000

Leading political party

(based on results of the 2012 presidential election)

Party	Number of counties
Democratic	29
Republican	29

We suspected that the population size, density, diversity, and median income of each county might affect the voter guides in terms of guide size, language options, and other variables affected by the resource availability and the level of complexity in local government. The strongest effect of county demographics seems to be in the number of pages of the guides.

- Larger county size typically meant a higher number of pages in its guide. Los Angeles was an outlier, with far fewer pages than its population would suggest.
- Higher population density and higher median income also usually correlated to a higher number of pages in the guide. Population density and median income appear to be closely related.
- On average, guides in counties where the majority party was Democrat had more pages than counties where Republicans were the majority party.

What we found in the guides

We analyzed the guides for their overall structure (the number of pages each contained and how they were organized) and for content (which elements were included and their frequency).

We were pleased to see that though the amount of information in the guides ranged from minimal to heavily documented, key information such as contact information and polling place locations appeared in all the guides.

The number of pages varied widely

We were interested in how large the guides are because of the perception by many voters that they are long, and difficult, making preparing to vote similar to studying for a test.

We also heard from election officials that their decision about what information to include is often driven by technical issues. Booklets are often printed in groups of 4 pages. Election departments figure out how many pages they need for required information, and then fill any extra pages with useful – but optional – information.

Many of the guides we got were electronic and the PDF format did not always *exactly* duplicate the printed version. So not all of the guides we analyzed contained page numbers divisible by 4. In some cases, front and/or back covers might have been missing, leading to an imperfect collection of features commonly found on those pages.

Higher population density within a county tended to lead to a higher number of pages in the voter guide. This is likely due to a larger number of elected offices and ballot measures in more densely populated counties.

County size and number of pages in Voter Guide

County Size Classification	Number of Counties	Number of pages in Voter Guide
Small	9	< 13
Medium	22	13-23
Large	13	24-28
Super	14	> 28

The mean page count was 24 and the median number of pages was 20. The highest page count was 58 in San Bernadino.

Most guides assumed voters were registered and familiar with voting

The law requires that voter guides be sent to *registered voters*, rather than to all eligible voters or to all households as the state voter guide is. However, this makes it harder for the guides to help new and infrequent voters participate in elections effectively.

Content for new voters

How to Register to Vote	How to Update Existing Voter Registration	Does Voter Need to Present ID at the Poll?
11 guides	15 guides	4 guides

Although voters do not need to present ID at the polls, there has been nationwide attention given to this issue in recent years and thus may be a question on many voters' minds.

The guides also assume that voters are familiar with the intended purpose of the booklet.

Indications of purpose of the guide

Letters from Election Officials	Purpose of the Guide	Voter Bill of Rights
13 guides (primarily from counties with larger populations and a higher guide page count)	7 guides	11 guides

Calls for poll workers were found in 20 guides and the solicitation of polling place location suggestion, 3, suggesting that guides are focused on informing voters but are not used to support election administration.

All guides had contact information for the elections office

This information usually includes the office address, phone, and website.

Contacting the election department

County Elections Website	Elections Office Address	Elections Office Phone Number	QR Codes Linking to Website
52 guides	55 guides (possibly more if the address appears on back covers missing in electronic version of guide)	56 guides	12 guides

Information about what is on the ballot

The legal requirements for the voter guides start with providing information about the current election and what is on the ballot.

Voter Guides focused on information about specific election

In general, the guides assumed that voters were familiar with the terminology and political process in the state of California, and spent little space on explanations. The exception is the Top-Two primary: 52 of the guides included a description of how this new primary system works.

We were surprised to see a lot of small differences in what information was included in each guide, especially information about how and when to vote. Even some basic information was not universally available. The following information is arranged in the order it typically appears in guides.

Number of guides including types of information

All 58 guides	50 or more guides	35 to 49 guides
Paid candidate statements	Date and type of election	Campaign finance reform statement
	How to vote/mark a ballot	Ballot measures
	Top two primary information	Pro/con arguments
	Sample ballot content	Voter registration deadlines
	Party endorsements	Vote by mail dates
	Election office contact	Information for voters with disabilities
		Vote by mail application, Permanent vote by mail option
	Polling place address	

Many of interesting features that could help people vote more effectively appeared in 15 or fewer guides:

Information Appearing in 15 or Fewer Guides

Purpose/Navigation of Guide	Becoming a Voter	Relevant to a Specific Election
Letters from the elections office	Voter Bill of Rights	Changes in elections (districts, rules, system)
Purpose of the guide	How to register	District maps or lists
Table of Contents	How to update your voter registration	Ballot worksheet
FAQ	Voter ID requirements	Voter preference form
Glossary of elections terms		Suggest a polling place
A guide to party and non-party ballots		
Committees or other lists of names		
Confidentiality statement		

Facsimile sample ballots were in almost all guides

One interpretation of “sample ballot” is a facsimile of what a voter will mark in the voting booth. It was surprising when we encountered 4 county guides that either didn’t include a facsimile or only had a list of contests.

Shasta County’s sample ballot came in a 4-page pamphlet voter guide with individual sheets listing ballot measures and candidate statements based on district. It is possible the facsimile sample ballot is also a separate sheet and was not included in the envelope mailed to us by the county elections office.

Sierra County’s guide was titled “Vote by Mail Instructions & Information Pamphlet,” thus the real ballot is mailed to the voter to read over and vote on their own time and therefore no sample ballot is needed.

San Francisco’s guide stated on the first page that the sample ballot was not included in the online version of the guide because exactly what was on a ballot depended on what district a voter lived in. Voters were directed to the website to access their sample ballots and polling place addresses starting in late May for the June primary election.

The guide from Stanislaus County was puzzling. The electronic version we have had both covers and was labeled “Sample Ballot and Voter Information Pamphlet.” It had 27 pages, implying that it might be missing a page within the guide to bring the total guide page count to an even number, but no facsimile ballot and no list of candidates and measures.

The sample ballots and candidate statements were the only elements that guides devote 4 or more pages to. Ballot measures and pro/con statements

averaged 2.6 pages. Typically, remaining topics were covered in 2 or fewer pages.

It seems likely that counties are trying to save money by condensing information into the fewest pages possible.

The way the ballot was presented was almost evenly divided between ballots presented full size and those that were scaled.

Some ballots contained circles or boxes next to candidates' names that were to be filled in, others contain arrows pointing to candidates' names that were to be connected to indicate choice. According to the California Secretary of State's Office, both arrows and circles are valid designs for noting choice on a ballot. We wonder if this has any effect on voter performance when voters move between counties.

Full legal text of ballot measures was not always included

There are many guides where the only time ballot measures were mentioned was in their blurbs on the sample ballot, without any further information. Counties are not required to provide the full legal text of all ballot measures, but some mention must be made in the guide of where to access the full legal text. Usually counties do this by directing the voter to the county elections website.

Only 18 guides included the legal text of the measures and very few of the remaining guides had any notice to voters directing them to the website or another location to read more about ballot measures. We recommend a specific note about how to find the full text of ballot measures.

Information about how, when, and where to vote

Information about when and where to vote in the election is also critical. It both identifies which election is covered, and is how election officials communicate changes in the election process.

Covers alerted voters to basic *what, when, where*

The election type, election date, booklet title, and county name were typically located in the top or middle third of the page. County seals and polling hours were shown less frequently, but were also common.

Covers were often limited to a single language. Only 21 featured more than one language.

Polling place address was usually included

Our analysis found 47 counties that included the polling place address. Of the 11 counties where we did not locate it, 1 (El Dorado) stated on the front

cover that the polling place address was located on the enclosed Voter Information Card. It would appear this card is individualized to the voter and thus is not included in the PDF version of the document. Another county (Sierra) was having an all-mail election and thus there was no polling place to include. A third (San Francisco), states that the polling place address and sample ballot are not included in the PDF version of the guide and may be accessed online.

The remaining 8 guides were collected in PDF form and lack back covers or both covers. Although we did not catalog the location of polling place address on the voter guides, it is most often printed on the back cover, next to the voter mailing address. It is likely, then, that the missing polling place addresses were located on the back covers missing from the PDFs. Indeed, 2 of these 8 counties said within the guide that the polling place address is on the back cover.

Information about accessibility and language support at the polls was spotty

Accessibility information was found in 49 guides. Its prominence varied from a full page or a half page to a small blurb on the back cover or the inside back cover page, where it was often near the vote by mail ballot request form.

Although the state of California is required by the Voting Rights Act, Section 203 to provide voting materials for federal elections in Spanish, 31 counties are exempt from this requirement because the percentage of the population in these counties that is Spanish speaking is not high enough. That leaves 27 counties required to produce guides in Spanish. Of these 27, 8 are also required to produce guides in several other languages.

Languages	Number of counties with voter guides in this language	Counties
English only	27	(too many to list)
Spanish	31	(too many to list)
Chinese	9	Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz
Tagalog	5	Alameda, Los Angeles, San Diego, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz
Vietnamese	5	Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Santa Clara

Korean	2	Los Angeles, Orange
Japanese, Khmer, Thai, and Hindi	1	Los Angeles

Requirements for the largest numbers of languages are concentrated in just a few counties:

- Los Angeles had the largest number of required languages, 10, including English.
- Alameda, Orange, and Santa Clara had 5 required languages including English.
- Santa Clara County had an option to request state materials in Japanese, Khmer, Korean, and Hindi, but did not have the option to get county materials in these languages.
- 22 counties provided only English and Spanish guides.
- Several counties provided languages other than English even when not required to.

The additional languages were sometimes in separate booklets, and sometimes in a single bilingual booklet.

- 15 counties had separate booklets for each language.
- 16 had bilingual booklets
- Santa Cruz had English and Spanish in the same guide but Chinese and Tagalog were in separate booklets.

We looked for the number of guides that included a notice that the guide was available in other languages. Of the 31 counties required to provide languages other than English:

- 25 of these guides provided information about other languages
- Only 13 presented this information in those languages.
- 10 counties listed a separate phone number per language. The rest may have language options on the main election office phone line, based on our experiences calling county election offices to request guides.
- Only 15 of the guides addressed the issue of language support at the polls.

Translated candidate statements appear alongside the English statements in 26 of the 58 guides. It is typical for candidates' to have to pay for their statements in the guide.

Vote-by-mail applications and information were readily available

Vote by Mail (VBM) was mentioned in 55 counties, with VBM applications appearing in 47, along with information on opting for Permanent VBM status. 9 of the counties that did not have VBM applications and Permanent VBM options were the counties missing front and/or back covers. Like the polling place addresses, we did not catalog the location of these elements but typically these were tear out forms on the back cover. Of the remaining 2 counties, Sierra was an all-mail election so all voters were already voting by mail and Shasta's guide was a series of pages, which might have been missing a few sheets in our collection sample.

Early voting, however, was only discussed in 20 voter guides.

Many guides included instructions about how to mark the ballot. Most guides (49) included step-by-step instructions for voting, usually one page (39). The majority of sample ballots (47) also contained brief instructions at the top or left hand margin of the ballot next to the contests. 7 ballots did not contain any directions for how to mark them on the ballot itself.

How the information is organized and presented

We were also interested in features that would help voters find information within the guide pages.

Tables of contents were rare

Several different features could be used as a guide to the guide.

- A handful of counties include a letter from county election officials at the beginning of the guide and some sort of statement on the guide's purpose.
- Only 2 counties included tables of contents, only one of which included page numbers.
- One county had an FAQ.

Guides started with information of most importance to the widest audience

Allowing for variation, typically the first things in the guide were the nuts and bolts mentioned above – deadlines, how to vote, top two primary, party endorsements, campaign finance statement, sample ballot, candidate statements, ballot measures – followed by any additional information – district maps, poll worker recruitment, and accessibility.

Cover designs used fonts, font sizing, and color to organize information

We cataloged the number of different fonts and font emphasis (italics, bold, regular) on the cover as a way of measuring the clarity of the information hierarchy. The number of different fonts on the cover ranged from 1 (4 counties) to 8 (1 one county) with most using between 2 and 4.

Changing type sizes is more frequently used to separate different types of information than changing fonts. The number of type sizes ranged from 1 (just 1 county) to 10 (also 1 county) with most using 4 or 5.

It was rare to see color anywhere in a guide other than on the cover. 47 counties featured color on their covers. Photos were far less common, appearing in only 13 guides, typically on the front cover. 19 covers featured some kind of illustrations besides calendars or photographs. Colors and photographs did not appear to serve a function other than attracting the voter's attention in hopes that they would open the guide.





















Guides included illustrations in the content pages

53 guides included illustrations, appearing on average on about 3 pages per guide. There was a range of types and purposes of illustrations, from clip art to illustrations on step-by-step instruction pages.

Page layouts fit as much material as possible into a page
 Every guide used multi-column formatting on an average of 13 pages per
 guide, commonly on candidate statement pages.

Pages with more than one layout section for information included columns
 (left/right, more than two) and half page (top/bottom) divisions, as well as
 multiple boxes. Layouts also included grids and tables for large lists, such as
 party nominations or deadlines, to visually organize material.

Bilingual guides used several strategies for presenting translated
 information including left (English)/right (Spanish) columns, top
 (English)/bottom (Spanish) half pages, facing pages, and front and back
 pages.

<p style="text-align: center;">VOTING INSTRUCTIONS</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #f0f0f0;">FOR VOTE-BY-MAIL/MAIL BALLOT VOTERS</p> <p>USE A DARK PEN Fill in the oval completely to the left of the candidate's name of your choice. For measures, fill in the oval to the left of "YES" or "NO".</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>Correct </td> <td>Incorrect </td> <td>Incorrect </td> </tr> </table> <p>IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE If you make a mistake on your ballot, you must clearly draw a line crossing off the whole line of your unintended choice, following this example:  Unintended-Choice Do not write your name, initials or make any identifying marks on your ballot.</p> <p>RETURNING YOUR BALLOT Place your ballot in the return yellow or blue envelope provided. Remember to SIGN your return envelope. Your ballot must be in the office by 8.00 p.m. on Election Day.</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #f0f0f0;">VOTING AT THE POLLS</p>	Correct 	Incorrect 	Incorrect 	<p style="text-align: center;">INSTRUCCIONES PARA VOTAR</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #f0f0f0;">PARA LAS PERSONAS QUE VOTAN POR CORREO</p> <p>UTILICE UNA PLUMA OSCURA Rellene el óvalo a la izquierda del nombre del candidato que elija. Para las medidas, rellene el óvalo a la izquierda del "SÍ" o "NO".</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>Correcta </td> <td>Incorrecta </td> <td>Incorrecta </td> </tr> </table> <p>SI COMETE UN ERROR Si comete un error en su boleta, claramente debe dibujar una línea travesía de toda la línea de su elección no intencionada, siguiendo este ejemplo:  Elección-Ne-Intencionada No escriba su nombre, iniciales o hacer cualquier marcas identificables en su boleta.</p> <p>PARA DEVOLVER SU BOLETA Coloque su boleta en el sobre de devolución azul o amarillo que se le proporcionó con su paquete. Recuerde FIRMAR su sobre de devolución. Su boleta debe ser depositada en la oficina antes de las 8.00 p.m. el día de la Elección.</p> <p style="text-align: center; background-color: #f0f0f0;">CÓMO VOTAR EN LAS CASILLAS</p>	Correcta 	Incorrecta 	Incorrecta 
Correct 	Incorrect 	Incorrect 					
Correcta 	Incorrecta 	Incorrecta 					

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTERS WITH DISABILITIES AT THE POLLING PLACE

 Disabled voters who wish to use the touchscreen voting machine at the precinct will be issued a voter card after signing the roster. To receive comprehensive instructions on the use of the touchscreen machine and begin the voting process, follow these simple instructions:

 Insert the voter access card into the slot at the upper right side of the screen, pushing the card firmly until it clicks.

 The next screen allows you to adjust the magnification and contrast of the screen to increase readability.

 Listen carefully to the instructions on how to vote your ballot using the keypad and audio interface or using the touchscreen interface.

YOU MAY ASK A POLL WORKER FOR ASSISTANCE IF NEEDED.

USEFUL INFORMATION
Please select the sample of your party ballot from the following pages.
To view your ballot in larger text, visit our website: www.sjctrov.org

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ELECTORES DISCAPACITADOS EN LAS CASILLAS DE VOTACIÓN

 Los electores discapacitados que deseen utilizar la máquina de votación con pantalla táctil en las casillas de votación se les entregará una tarjeta de elector después de haber firmado el registro. Para recibir instrucciones detalladas sobre el uso de la máquina con pantalla táctil y comenzar el proceso de votación, siga estas instrucciones sencillas:

 Introduzca la tarjeta electoral en la ranura en la parte de arriba a mano derecha de la pantalla. Empuje la tarjeta firmemente hasta que haga "click".

 La pantalla siguiente le permite ampliar la imagen y ajustar el contraste para que sea más fácil de leer.

 Escuche con cuidado las instrucciones en cómo emitir su voto mediante la interfaz de teclado numérico y audio o utilizando de la interfaz de pantalla táctil.

USTED PUEDE PEDIR A UN TRABAJADOR ELECTORAL AYUDA SI ES NECESARIO.

INFORMACIÓN ÚTIL
Por favor seleccione la boleta de muestra de su partido de las páginas siguientes.
Para ver su boleta en texto más grande, visite nuestro sitio web: www.sjctrov.org

025 N 51-980-083



Information about dates and deadlines could be in lists, or arranged as a calendar. This information could take up a full page or half of a page. When pressed for space, this information appeared only on the back cover (inside or outside), along with the vote-by-mail ballot information. Bilingual guides often had English on the left, Spanish on the right. Other variations on dates' layouts included single language boxed dates next to accessibility information.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR VOTE BY MAIL VOTING		INSTRUCCIONES PARA VOTANTE POR CORREO	
<p>LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR THIS ELECTION</p> <p>If you moved within the county on or before the date shown to the right and did not reregister at your new address, you may vote and register for future elections EITHER at the county elections office OR at the polling place where you now live. If you moved AFTER the date shown, you may vote a vote by mail ballot or vote at the polling place for your current or previous address for this election only. Then, you must reregister and vote at your new address for future elections.</p> <p>LAST DAY TO REQUEST A VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT</p> <p>To qualify for a Vote by Mail Ballot you must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a registered voter in the county. • Make a separate request for each election. • Sign your request in your own handwriting. • Submit your request to the County Elections office no later than 5 p.m. on the date shown (the 7th day prior to Election Day). 	<p>MAY</p> <p>19</p> <p>MAYO</p>	<p>ULTIMO DIA PARA EMPADRONARSE PARA ESTA ELECCION</p> <p>Si usted se mudó dentro del mismo condado antes de la fecha o en la misma indicada a la izquierda y no se empadronó en su nueva dirección usted puede votar y empadronarse por esta elección y futuras ya sea en la oficina electoral del condado o en el centro electoral en donde usted vive ahora. Y si se mudó después de la fecha indicada puede votar una boleta por correo o en el centro electoral correspondiente a su dirección actual o anterior solamente para esta elección. Entónces para las elecciones futuras usted tiene que empadronarse y votar en su nueva dirección.</p>	
	<p>MAY</p> <p>27</p> <p>MAYO</p>	<p>ULTIMO DIA PARA PEDIR LA BOLETA PARA VOTAR POR CORREO</p> <p>Para calificar para Boleta para Votar por Correo Ud. debe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ser un votante registrado en el condado. • Presentar una petición para cada elección. • Firmar su petición personalmente. • Presentar su petición en la oficina de elecciones del Condado antes de las 5 de la tarde de la fecha mostrada (el 7o día anterior al Día de la Elección). 	
SEPARATE HERE		SEPARASE AQUI	

SEPARATE HERE

<p>RETURNING YOUR VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT Voted vote by mail ballots must be received in the County Elections office or at any polling place within the county not later than 8:00 p.m. on the day of election. If, due to illness or physical disability, you are unable to personally return your ballot, you may designate one of the following to return the ballot for you: spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, or anyone residing in your household.</p> <p>NOTICE TO THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED: If a polling place is not indicated as accessible to the physically handicapped voter, such voter is entitled to vote in the following way: A precinct board member shall take a regular ballot to the physically handicapped person at a place as near as possible to the polling place and which is accessible to such person, qualify that person to vote and return the voted ballot to the polling place.</p> <p>NOTICE TO ALL VOTERS: As of 2002, any voter may request permanent vote by mail status. This means that you would automatically receive a vote by mail ballot by mail for any election in which you are entitled to vote. You can remain a permanent voter by mail voter for as long as you wish. However, failure to return a voted vote by mail ballot for four consecutive statewide general elections will cause your permanent vote by mail standing to be canceled, and you would</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JUNE 3 JUNIO</p> <p>DEVOLVER LA BOLETA DE VOTAR POR CORREO Las boletas de votar por correo deben recibirse, en la oficina de elecciones del Condado o en cualquier lugar de votación, antes de las 8:00 p.m. el día de la elección. Si, como consecuencia de una enfermedad o incapacidad física usted no puede remitir la boleta, podrá designar a una de las siguientes personas para que se encargue de hacerlo: su cónyuge, hijo, padre o madre, abuelo, nieto, hermano, hermana, o cualquier otra persona que viva en su domicilio.</p> <p>AVISO A LOS FISICAMENTE IMPEDIDOS: Si el lugar de votación no está indicado como accesible para el votante físicamente impedido, tal votante tiene derecho a votar en la forma siguiente: Un miembro del colegio electoral entregará una boleta regular a la persona físicamente impedida en un lugar tan cercano como sea posible al lugar de votación, comprobará la calificación de tal persona para votar y devolverá la boleta votada al lugar de votación.</p> <p>AVISO A TODOS LOS VOTANTES: A partir de 2002, todo elector puede solicitar la condición permanente de elector para votar por correo. Esto significa que recibirá automáticamente, por correo, una boleta de elector para votar por correo, para todas las elecciones en las cuales tiene derecho a votar. Puede preservar por el período de tiempo que desee su condición permanente de elector para votar por correo. Sin embargo, si deja de votar y de devolver la boleta de elector para votar por correo en cuatro elecciones consecutivas generales estatales se cancelará su clasificación permanente de "elector para votar por correo" y tendrá que votar en el centro electoral.</p>
<p>NOTICE TO THE PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED: If a polling place is not indicated as accessible to the physically handicapped voter, such voter is entitled to vote in the following way: A precinct board member shall take a regular ballot to the physically handicapped person at a place as near as possible to the polling place and which is accessible to such person, qualify that person to vote and return the voted ballot to the polling place.</p> <p>NOTICE TO ALL VOTERS: As of 2002, any voter may request permanent vote by mail status. This means that you would automatically receive a vote by mail ballot by mail for any election in which you are entitled to vote. You can remain a permanent voter by mail voter for as long as you wish. However, failure to return a voted vote by mail ballot for four consecutive statewide general elections will cause your permanent vote by mail standing to be canceled, and you would</p>	<p>POLLING PLACE ACCESSIBLE?</p> <p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>¿LUGAR DE VOTACION ACCESIBLE?</p>
	

SEPARATE HERE

<p>POLLS OPEN AT 7 A.M. AND CLOSE AT 8 P.M. LAS ELECCIONES EMPIEZAN A LAS 7 A.M. Y TERMINAN A LAS 8 P.M.</p>	
<p>If you find that for any reason you will be unable to vote in person on election day, promptly complete and sign the application for a vote by mail ballot printed above and return it to the Imperial County Registrar not less than 7 days before the day of the election.</p> <p>For further information contact the: </p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>IMPERIAL COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS 940 W MAIN ST., STE. 206 EL CENTRO CA 92243 (760) 482-4226</p> </div>
<p>Assistance to the Visually, Hearing or Speech Impaired The Registrar of Voters Office has a TDD (Telecommunications Device for the Deaf) to provide election information: (760) 482-4375. For the Visually Impaired, assistance for Local Ballot Measures is available from the County Elections Department.</p>	<p>Asistencia a los Discapacitados de la Vista, Oído o Habla La Oficina de Registro de Votantes tiene un TDD (Aparato de Telecomunicaciones para los Sordos) para información sobre la elección: (760) 482-4375. Para los Incapacitados Visualmente, el Departamento de Elecciones del Condado esta disponible para asistencia con la boleta local.</p>
	

Candidate statements and ballot measures often look the same. In many guides, the candidate statements and ballot measures were printed in the same text and page layout style, with no other distinguishing features, making it difficult to differentiate between the two when quickly paging through the guide.

Appendix: What we cataloged

As we collected samples of the voter guides, we cataloged over 75 elements of the content and design.

About the book

Information element	Answer range	Average # of pages with element per guide
Total number of pages	Number	20 average
Number of pages with color	Number	2 average
Number of pages with illustrations	Number	3 average
Number of step-by-step instructions	Number	1 average

Dates and Contacts

Information element	Answer range	# of guides with element
Date and type of the election	Yes/No	57
Deadlines for registration, VBM, other	Yes/No	49
Address of your polling place (or place for it)	Yes/No	46
Website link	Yes/No	51
QR code to site or elections app	Yes/No	12

Languages (of 31 counties with language requirements)

Of the 31 counties that provided languages other than English, these were languages included: English, Spanish, Chinese, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Hindi, Thai, Khmer, Japanese

Information element	Answer range	# of guides with element
Language options shown?	Yes/No	25
Separate booklets or one?	One/Separate	15 separate
Booklets in language show options for other languages?	Yes/No	13
Phone number for each language?	Yes/No	10

Sample ballot

Information element	Answer range	Average # of pages with element per guide
Sample ballot included	Number of pages	4 average
Ballot measures and Pro/Con	Number of pages	1 page of sample ballot average, 1 separate average
Legal text of the measures	Number of pages	1 average
Party endorsements	Number of pages	1 average
Campaign Finance Reform statement	Number of pages	1 average

Information element	Answer range	# of guides with element
Sample an exact copy?	Yes/No	54/1 (3 were unclear)
Sample full sized or scaled?	Scaled/Full Size	28/27
Candidate statements	Yes/No	58
Candidate statements translated	Yes/No	26 in English guide, 15 more in additional translated guides

Forms and opportunities to contact the election office

Information element	Answer range	# of guides with element
Vote by Mail application	Yes/No	55
Permanent VBM option	Yes/No	47
Voter preferences form	Yes/No	3
Sample ballot opt-in/opt out form	Yes/No	22
Ballot worksheet	Yes/No	1
Call for poll workers	Yes/No	20
Suggest a polling place	Yes/No	3
Update your voter registration	Yes/No	15

Information about how to vote

Information element	Answer range	# of guides with element
Top Two Primary information	Yes/No	52
Do I need to show ID	Yes/No	4
How to register	Yes/No	11
Ranked choice	Yes/No	0

Other information

Information element	Answer range	# of guides with element
Purpose of the Guide	Yes/No	7
Letter from the Elections Office	Yes/No	13
FAQ	Yes/No	2
Confidentiality statement	Yes/No	0
Committees or other lists of names	Yes/No	2
Voter bill of rights	Yes/No	11
Table of Contents	Yes/No	2
Page # in TOC	Yes/No	1
Glossary of terms in the measures	Yes/No	0
Glossary of elections terms	Yes/No	1
Guide to Party and Non-Party ballots	Yes/No	12

Analysis of the cover information and design elements

Information element	Position on cover
Election Date	Top Third/ Center Third
Election Type (Primary, General, etc.)	Top Third/ Center Third
Early voting deadlines	Split across all regions when included
Polling hours	Center Third/Bottom Third
County Name	Top Third
County Name only in Seal	Top Third (when relevant)
County Seal	Top Third
Other Graphics	Split across all regions when included
Title of the Booklet	Top Third/Center Third

Analysis of the cover information and design elements

Information element	Answer range	Average # of pages with element per guide
Number of Languages	Number	1 average
# Different type sizes	Number	4-5 average
# Different fonts (regular, italics, bold)	Number	2-4 average

Analysis of the cover information and design elements

Info in Largest Type	List Name	Booklet Name, County Name, Election type
Info in Smallest Type	List Name	Clerk/Registrar, Website, Polling Hours, Election Date, Address, Other