



# **Voter Information Barriers for Limited English Communities**

**Presented by Zainab Badi  
Claiming Our Democracy Fellow  
Greenlining Institute**



# Two (2) Key Findings



- Limited-English proficient (LEP) voters reported having issues with obtaining in-language, accessible voter information before an Election.



- Nearly everyone reported the official state voter guide is “too complex,” “confusing,” and written in “legalese.” They desire information that is more easily identified and understood.

# What People Had to Say

**“The legal jargon used in the voter guide is language that we would not normally use in Korean. The translations are hard”**

**“Sometimes you have to read it two or three times to understand”**

**“I think they purposely try to be confusing”**

**“I have a son who has a disability and is very involved but I had to sit down and go over it with him so I don't think it's geared for your average person”**

---

# Plain language voter information



*Communication your audience can understand the **first time** they hear or read it.*



# Plain Language - Before & After

Voter Instructions BEFORE	Voter Instructions AFTER
If you wrongly mark, tear or deface any portion of your ballot sheet, replace the sheet in the secrecy folder and return it to the Precinct Board Member and obtain another ballot.	<b>If you make a mistake or damage your ballot, ask a poll worker for another ballot.</b>
The location of your polling place is shown on the back cover of this sample ballot.	<b>See back cover to find out where to vote.</b>

**\*\*\*Additional implications for Translated Material\*\*\***



# Information Design

The League of Women Voters conducted 30+ interviews with infrequent voters to learn about how information design influenced voters. The following pages were identified as the most useful.

Mark your calendar  
Don't forget to vote on  
**November 6, 2012**

October 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
21	22 Last day to register to vote for this election	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 Curbside Drop-off for Vote-by-Mail ballots begins	30 Last day to request a Vote-by-Mail ballot by mail	31 * Last day to mail your voted Vote-by-Mail ballot locally			

\* Vote-by-Mail ballots must be received at the Solano County Registrar of Voters Office or any polling place in Solano County by 8:00 p.m. on November 6, 2012. Postmarks do not count.

November 2012

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Registrar of Voters Office will be open 8:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.
4	5	6 ★ ELECTION DAY	7	8	9	10

**WARNING !!!** Your **POLLING PLACE** for this election may be different from the polling place you went to for the last election. Please check the front or back page of this pamphlet for the correct location or visit our website at: [www.solanocounty.com/elections](http://www.solanocounty.com/elections).



## 4 WAYS TO *vote*

<p><b>VOTE IN PERSON</b></p> <p>29 days before the election, the Butte County Elections Office opens as a polling place. This provides voters the opportunity to cast their ballot or pick up a ballot to take home.</p> <p>Monday through Friday 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.</p> 	<p><b>VOTE BY MAIL</b></p> <p>Voters may request a ballot be mailed to them. See back cover for application.</p> <p>Vote by mail ballots must be received no later than 8 p.m. Election Day (postmarks are not acceptable).</p> 
<p><b>SATURDAY VOTING</b></p> <p>Vote in person, pick up a ballot, or drop your voted ballot at the Butte County Elections Office.</p> <p>Last minute voters should consider using this opportunity on:</p> <p>Saturday, November 3, 2012 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.</p> 	<p><b>VOTE AT THE POLLS</b></p> <p>Where is Your Polling Place???</p> <p>The location of your polling place is shown on the back cover of this booklet to the left of your address.</p> <p>Decide how you want to vote before you go to the polls.</p> <p>Mark your choices in this booklet, bring it to the polls with you and refer to it when voting your official ballot. This will save you time in the booth, and will also shorten the time for the next voter.</p> <p>On Election Day the polls open at 7 a.m. and close at 8 p.m.</p>



## Find Your Polling Place

Polling places are established by county elections officials. When you receive your county sample ballot booklet in the mail a few weeks before Election Day, look for your polling place address on the back cover.

If you moved to your new address after October 20, 2014, you may vote at your former polling place.

Many county elections offices offer polling place look-up assistance through websites or phone numbers. For more information, visit the Secretary of State's website at [www.os.sr.gov/electionsofficialfind-polling-place.htm](http://www.os.sr.gov/electionsofficialfind-polling-place.htm) or call the toll-free Voter Hotline at (800) 345-8683.

On Election Day, polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. If you are in line before 8:00 p.m., you will be able to vote.

If your name is not on the voter list at your polling place, you have the right to vote a provisional ballot. A provisional ballot looks like a regular ballot but you will place it in a special envelope. Your provisional ballot will be counted after elections officials have confirmed that you are registered to vote in that county and you did not already vote in that election.

You may vote a provisional ballot at any polling place in the county in which you are registered to vote.

---

## How to Vote

You have two choices when voting. You may vote in person at a polling place in your county or you may vote by mail. You do not have to vote in every contest on your ballot. Your vote will be counted for each contest you vote in. For more information about your voting rights, see page 79 of this guide.

### Voting at the Polling Place on Election Day

When you arrive at your polling place, a poll worker will ask for your name and check the official list of registered voters for that polling place. After you sign next to your name on the list, the poll worker will give you a paper ballot, unique passcode, or computer memory card, depending on the voting system your county uses. Go to a private booth and start voting.

Poll workers are there to assist voters. If you are not familiar with how to mark a ballot, ask a poll worker for instructions. If you make a mistake in marking the ballot, ask a poll worker how to correct a mistake or ask for a new ballot and start over.

State and federal laws require polling places to be physically accessible to voters with disabilities. Every person who works in a polling place is trained in elections laws and voter rights, including the need to make reasonable modifications of policies and procedures to ensure equal access.

### Voting by Mail

After you mark your choices on your vote-by-mail ballot, put it in the official envelope provided by your county elections office and seal it. Sign the outside of the envelope where directed. To ensure it arrives by the deadline, return your ballot either:

- By mail, as long as your ballot is received by your county elections office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day. Since postmarks do not count, mail your ballot a few days before Election Day.
- In person, to your county elections office or any polling place in your county before 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.

Even if you receive your vote-by-mail ballot, you can change your mind and vote at your polling place on Election Day. Bring your vote-by-mail ballot to the polling place and give it to a poll worker to exchange for a polling place ballot. If you do not have your vote-by-mail ballot, you will be allowed to vote on a provisional ballot.

# Recommendations

1. Improve voter preference tracking for faster delivery of needed information



2. Adopting Plain Language



3. Increase public awareness of what is available







# For more information

Zainab Badi, Claiming Our Democracy Fellow

The Greenlining Institute

Ph: (510) 926-4016

Email: [Zainabb@greenlining.org](mailto:Zainabb@greenlining.org)

---