

Working together for a more inclusive democracy
Future of California Elections 2015 Conference
Last updated 12/12/14

Day 1

11:30-3pm Registration

1-1:30 pm Opening Remarks

1:30– 3:00pm Opening Plenary Day 1

Expanding Participation in California’s Democracy: A look at current reforms and the road ahead

California’s new election practices can help to expand participation. Online Voter Registration is entering its third year and Election Day Registration will be implemented in the near future with the hope of increasing participation. This panel will look at California’s diverse demographics and how election policies and practices can help expand participation in the state’s democracy.

3-3:30pm Break

3:30– 5:00pm Afternoon Sessions

Note: Session D will not repeat on Day 2

Session A: Modernizing Elections: California’s new statewide voter registration database

This panel will provide an update on VoteCal and look at lessons learned from other states with centralized voter registration databases. Panelists will discuss the new voter look up tools and public data available through the VoteCal system and potential uses for increased voter engagement.

Session B: Expanding electoral participation through Language Access

State and federal laws require that counties provide language assistance in covered jurisdictions. Providing language assistance for limited English proficient voters ensures that all voters can participate on Election Day. This panel will explore new and bold efforts that are improving language assistance in California. Participants will learn about the importance of language access advisory committees and expanding the pool of eligible bilingual poll workers.

Session C: Expanding Participation for Voters with Disabilities

All voters have the right to cast a private and independent ballot. Election administrators and advocates work to guarantee this right for voters with disabilities. This panel will



Modernizing Elections.
Expanding Participation.

review the best practices for assisting voters with disabilities. Participants will learn best practices for engaging voters with disabilities in California's democratic process from providing voter information in accessible formats to casting a ballot.

Session D: Expanding Participation for Young Voters

Registering young voters and engaging them to vote helps to develop a life-long habit of voting. However, young voters face challenges to participation: they move frequently, making it harder to make sure they are registered at their current address; many are new to the process and unsure about how to vote; they feel undereducated about what's on their ballot; or may even feel that their vote doesn't matter. In this session participants will contribute to a group discussion on the challenges to youth participation, new opportunities with online voter registration and pre-registration, and how to best use educational institutions and other influencers to encourage youth participation.

5:00pm – 6:30 pm Welcome Reception and Networking

Day 2

8am-12pm Registration

9-10:30am Opening Plenary Day 2

Best practices for voting information

The right messengers and presentation of voting information can improve how voters get the information they need to participate on Election Day. This panel will review best practices for how to present voting information content through design, online platforms, and examine the importance of having the right messengers. Participants will learn best practices for relaying voter information.

10:30-11am Break

11am-12:30pm Morning Sessions

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Session E: Practice for designing an improved voter guide

This workshop will allow participants to use the best practices for voter information by designing a voter guide. Participants will learn how to present election information content through layout and design to produce improved voter guides.

Session F: Voting Options: Increasing ways to cast a ballot beyond Election Day

Across the US states are expanding the concept of Election Day beyond a single day. New voting options like vote centers and vote-by-mail allow voters to cast their ballot over a period of several days or even weeks. This panel will explore what it takes to unhook Election Day from a single day to an Election season. Panelists will discuss the technologies and public education needed to implement new voting methods; the lessons California can learn from other states using vote centers and vote-by-mail elections; and will cover the latest research on California's vote-by-mail electorate.

Session G: Budget Challenges and Funding California's democracy

Each election cycle, election officials are charged with conducting fair and accessible elections for all eligible California voters. Yet cuts in funding and growing mandates pose challenges each election. This panel will explore the cost of elections and the challenges that occur when mandates increase and funding does not. Participants will learn how elections get budgeted and the latest research on the cost of elections.

12:30 – 2pm Lunch Presentation

2pm – 3:30 Afternoon Sessions

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3:30-4pm Break

4-5:30pm Closing Plenary

Closing Plenary: Looking forward to an expanded electorate

The dialogue of low voter turnout in Election 2014 raised much frustration nationally. However, the election community continues to see the silver lining that change is possible. This panel will look at what states and organizers are doing nationally to increase participation and discuss the future policies and practices that may expand the electorate in years to come.