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October 5, 2022

County Clerk/Registrar of Voters (CC/ROV) Memorandum #22251

TO: All County Clerks/Registrars of Voters

FROM: /s/ Ruben Vasquez
Acting Language Accessibility Coordinator

RE: Best Practice for Language Access

The attached best practices were created by Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Asian Law Caucus; Asian Americans Advancing Justice – SoCal; California Common Cause; Chinese for Affirmative Action; Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles; and the Council on American-Islamic Relations – Sacramento Valley/Central California, as part of the California Language Access Workgroup. We are sharing these best practices as they may be a helpful resource for county election officials.

The best practices are organized in three sections by topic: Bilingual Poll Worker Recruitment, Poll Worker Training, and Election Day Language Support.

If you have any questions, please contact Ruben Vasquez at rvasquez2@sos.ca.gov or at (916) 539-5264

Thank you

Best Practices for Language Access

The following best practices were created by Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus; Asian Americans Advancing Justice - SoCal; California Common Cause; Chinese for Affirmative Action; Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles; and the Council on American-Islamic Relations - Sacramento Valley/Central California, as part of the California Language Access Workgroup. We are sharing these best practices as they may be a helpful resource for county elections officials.

The best practices are organized in three sections by topic: Bilingual Poll Worker Recruitment, Poll Worker Training, and Election Day Language Support.

***Please note these are best practice ideas and tips for counties to take into consideration as they review their language assistance programs and are not necessarily mandated by law or regulation.**

Bilingual Poll Worker Recruitment

- Work with members of the county Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) and build on existing relationships to recruit bilingual poll workers. This includes reaching out to identity-based student groups, religious institutions serving language communities, and community centers. Consider also reaching out to other government agencies or departments to share recruitment information with their networks.
- Publicize that lawful permanent residents can serve as poll workers.
- Recruit youth, including high school (16 and older) and college students, to serve as poll workers.
- Consider providing an additional stipend for bilingual poll workers, beyond standard poll worker compensation, if possible.
- To ensure bilingual poll workers are staffed in areas with the most need, consider offering bilingual vote center workers additional stipends if they must travel longer distances to serve at a voting location with language needs.
- Set up a county poll worker program that allows county employees to be paid their normal wage while working as poll workers. Consider providing the poll worker stipend and bilingual poll worker stipend to county employees in addition to their normal wage. Highlight the need for bilingual poll workers when recruiting from other county departments.

Poll Worker Training

- Explain which languages are required under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act and which languages are required under Elections Code section 14201 in the county. Explain that all election-related materials must be translated into Section 203 languages and that may be additional requirements for Section 14201 languages in specific covered precincts.
- Explain what facsimile ballots are, how voters can use them, and why they are important. Explain the statutory requirements of facsimile ballots under Section 14201.
- Include samples of facsimile ballots in poll worker training materials and training sessions, so they can become familiar with what they are, what they look like, and how they differ from votable ballots.
- Use consistent terminology for facsimile ballots within your county's training materials and voter information. While state law uses the phrase "facsimile ballots," many counties use simpler terms to refer to facsimiles, such as "Translated Ballot Guide" or "Translated Reference Ballot." While any of these terms can be used, choose one term and use it consistently throughout materials to reduce voter and poll worker confusion.
- Make sure translated materials have labels identifying the document in the translated language as well as in English, so that all poll workers can easily identify them and provided them to voters.
- Provide a glossary of translated voting terms for bilingual poll workers to help them be prepared to support voters.
- Include training content on cultural sensitivity and how to interact with voters of varying needs without making assumptions about a voter's language needs.
- Train poll workers on the fact that voters may bring up to two individuals with them to the polls in order to assist in voting, as long as those individuals are not representatives of the voter's employer or union.
- Run through different, common scenarios, including how to properly assist a limited English proficiency (LEP) voter or a voter with a disability.
- Perform knowledge checks or fun pop quizzes during the training to ensure that poll workers have absorbed the essential information.

Election Day Language Access Support

Directional Signs

- All directional signs should be translated into all Section 203-covered languages, as required by federal law. The translated content should be visible and easy to read.
- Translate directional signs into Section 14201-covered languages as well, as a best practice.

Bilingual Poll Worker Signs & Name Tags

- Post a sign, in-language, indicating the languages spoken by bilingual poll workers on site, as required by state law. Consider including county or Secretary of State voter hotline numbers for Section 203 and Section 14201 languages on the sign, in case bilingual poll workers are not available.
 - For Vote Centers or early voting sites that will be open for multiple days, if pre-printed signs listing the languages for which bilingual poll workers are available on site, provide painter's tape or some other way for poll workers to cover and uncover the languages on the sign to make sure it is current for which language there is a bilingual poll worker present that day.
- Provide name tags for bilingual poll workers to identify themselves, as required by state law. Use sturdy name tags or lanyards and include extra name tags for bilingual poll workers in case someone forgets or misplaces theirs (especially for vote centers when staff is coming on multiple days), or if additional bilingual workers are present. Write the name of the spoken language in that same language.

Phone Interpreter Service

- Use the third-party telephone-based interpreter vendor services that the Secretary of State's office offers to provide interpretation for languages that are not spoken by bilingual poll workers on site.
- Train poll workers on the availability of the telephone-based interpreter services.
- Post a sign, in all Section 203 and Section 14201 languages, indicating that telephone-based interpretation services are available.

Displaying Translated Ballots and Voter Information Guides

- Provide a folding table to be used as a “language resource center” where facsimile ballots and translated county voter information guides can be displayed in one place, to ensure each voting location will have sufficient counter/table space.
- Fan out materials that are in different languages, rather than stacking them. This may help voters easily spot that there are translated materials available to them.
- When selecting voting locations, strive to select voting locations that are large enough to allow for all materials to be displayed.

Displaying Facsimile Ballots

- Post facsimile ballots prominently so that they are easily seen by voters. By law, facsimile ballots must be posted “conspicuously.”
- Options for vote centers (instead of posting a copy of every ballot type in each language that’s covered):
 - Display a sample facsimile ballot for each language, and then print the facsimile for a voter’s language on demand.
 - If displaying ballots in a binder or booklet, be sure to clearly label the binder or booklet in-language. Voters should easily see and understand that the translated ballot is available in their language.
- As required by law, in precincts where facsimile ballots are available, place a sign near the check-in area notifying voters that facsimile ballots are available. The sign must be in English and the covered Section 14201 languages.
- To make sure voters know facsimile ballots are available, even if they missed them at the check in area, consider posting a sign in each voting booth or at each voting machine notifying people, in-language, that facsimile ballots are available.

Other Language Supplies

- Display the translated Voter Bill of Rights.

- Consider providing vote center staff with a language identification guide, which shows languages in the language name and in English for all languages commonly spoken in your county. If a voter comes in and needs to use a language line, they can use the language identification guide to indicate what language they need.

Sample Set-Up Checklist

- Create a checklist for poll workers to use when setting up a voting location to confirm they have properly displayed and posted language assistance materials.
- Consider bundling all language materials into a multilingual supply kit. For example, a supply kit may include:
 - Translated provisional ballot materials
 - Translated standard ballot materials
 - Translated CVIGs for display
 - Copies of facsimile ballots for display
 - Multilingual poll worker language sign indicating which languages are spoken by poll workers at the voting location
 - Multilingual facsimile ballot sign indicating that facsimile ballots are available
 - Multilingual sign with hotline information for language groups or telephone referral cards
 - “Multilingual Audio Point To” card that voters can use to indicate the language they speak
 - Multilingual “Vote Here” polling place sign
 - Multilingual “Curbside Voting” sign
 - Translated “Voter Bill of Rights”
 - Multilingual “Tampering” poster sign
 - Multilingual Voter Instructions and Regulations