



*ELECTION
ADMINISTRATION PLAN*

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)

Merced County
Registrar of Voters
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Merced, CA 95340
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INTRODUCTION

Merced County was established April 19, 1855. Merced is located in the heart of California's Central Valley, the agricultural hub of the state. As of March 2021, the voter registration was 121,048.

In 2002, state law was amended to allow voters to register as permanent Vote by Mail. Since then, the number of Vote by Mail (VBM) has steadily grown and is currently 77.45% of the County's registered active voters.

In 2016, Senate Bill 450 created the California Voter's Choice Act (VCA). The VCA model provides that every voter receives a Vote by Mail (VBM) ballot and Voting Assistance Centers replace traditional polling locations. The VCA election model will be effective beginning with the 2022 elections for Merced County. Other counties have implemented VCA since 2018.

Merced County has developed an Election Administration Plan (EAP) in collaboration with our community, and using lessons learned and guidance from other VCA counties and the California Secretary of State's office. Our EAP describes how we plan to educate the public regarding the choices that come with the VCA model. It includes information about our proposed Voting Assistance Centers and ballot drop-off locations, and how they will operate. This plan also includes the mailing of a ballot to every active registered voter. Further, the plan includes a list of in-person voting locations, budget and strategy for outreach and media, health and safety measures to be taken, and strategies to engage voters with limited-English proficiency and those with disabilities. Our goal is to provide information on how our office is planning to administer future elections. This plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State's (SOS) office for comment. The SOS is responsible for review and approval of the education and outreach portion of the plan. However, feedback and recommendations to this plan and future Merced County Registrar of Voters efforts by the public will be accepted at any time.

Merced County Registrar of Voters (ROV) will deploy the EVS Voting System from Election Systems and Software (ES&S). The deployment will include Election Systems & Software (ES&S) ExpressVote accessible ballot marking devices, the DS200 Tabulator, and the ES&S Balotar Ballot Printing System. Merced County will also provide access to DemocracyLive Remote Accessible Vote by Mail System (RAVMB) for those who request an accessible VBM ballot.

VOTE BY MAIL

All active registered voters will be mailed a ballot starting 29 days before the election. Voters will also receive a ballot return envelope with pre-paid postage.

Merced County will make available, Where's My Ballot?, a ballot tracking program that will allow voters to receive updates on the delivery status of their ballot as it progresses through the mail and through processing by the Merced County Registrar of Voters office. Voters who sign up can receive automatic emails, SMS (text), or voice call notification about their ballot. Tracking their VBM when it is mailed, received, and counted has never been easier. Where's My Ballot? is a secure software application that locates ballot envelopes. The system works with elections officials and the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) to send voter messages when their ballot is received.

To increase transparency for the entire VBM process, Merced County will be using Intelligent Mail barcodes (IMb). This is a 65-bar USPS barcode that is used to sort and track mail. It can be used to track individual mail pieces through their journey in the mail system. The IMb is printed on the envelope and helps ensure that the mailings make it to mailboxes. IMb provides higher levels of customer service while enhancing security.

VOTING LOCATIONS AND HOURS

Voting Assistance Centers (VAC) will provide a high level of service and will be open for 11 days (10 days prior to Election Day and Election Day) or 4 days (3 days prior to Election Day and Election Day), including weekends. At least one in-person voting location is required for every 10,000 registered voters for a projected total of 13 four-day VACs and 3 eleven-day VACs.

Considerations evaluated in choosing locations for Voting Assistance Centers and ballot drop boxes included availability of public transportation, communities with historically low Vote by Mail usage, population centers, low-income communities, language minority communities, voters with disabilities, communities with low rates of household vehicle ownership, communities of eligible voters who are not registered to vote and may need access to same day voter registration, geographically isolated populations, accessible and free parking at VACs, distance and time a voter must travel by car or public transportation to a VAC, alternate method for voters with disabilities, traffic patterns and the need for mobile VACs. We used our knowledge of the areas to choose the best locations for our Voting Assistance Centers and drop boxes. Merced County Registrar of Voters will solicit feedback from various stakeholders, interest groups and community members including our language and disability communities.

Voting Assistance Centers will have more services available than traditional polling places had offered. A Merced County voter will be able to go to any Voting Assistance Center in the county and receive services. A voter will be able to get a replacement Vote by Mail ballot and ballot return envelope, drop off a voted Vote By Mail (VBM) ballot, receive language assistance, mark a ballot using an ADA accessible device, register to vote and vote, or vote a conditional ballot.

Voting Assistance Center staff will have real-time access to VoteCal, the statewide voter registration database and the County's Election Management System which will allow them to look up and update the status of each voter. Secure communication links will be provided by Merced County Registrar of Voters. Each Voting Assistance Center will have at least three ES&S ExpressVote accessible ballot marking machines as well as a number of voting booths available. There will be at least one Ballot on Demand (BOD) printer at each location ensuring that we can provide the proper ballot to each voter. Rovers will be trained and equipped with backup BOD printers in the event there are printer issues or high volume of ballots that need printing.

Security will be ensured through set protocols including secure storage, tamper-evident seals, and strict chain of custody tracking.

Election staff will be trained to assist voters. The County will recruit election workers who will provide language assistance in Spanish, Punjabi, Hmong, Chinese and Mien (Elec. Code §14201). All Voting Assistance Center locations will be supplied with appropriate signage and facsimile ballots in Punjabi, Hmong, Chinese and Mien. All voting materials and ballots are in both English and Spanish per Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, and as

detailed below, each center will be supplied with a Multilingual Virtual Poll Worker (MVP). One way to give voters access to high quality interpreters is via the MVP. The MVP is essentially an iPad that sits atop a rolling stand with an external speaker – providing a simple way to display and communicate real time information in the voter’s native language. It solves language access issues for an affordable cost with video remote interpreting. At the touch of a button we can instantly access a nationwide network of interpreters for real time communication.

A complete list of the proposed Voting Assistance Centers is included in Exhibit A. (Voting Assistance Center locations are subject to change.)

DROP BOX LOCATIONS AND HOURS

At least one (1) drop box is required for every 15,000 registered voters in the County for a projected total of nine (9) required official Ballot Drop Boxes. All of these drop boxes will be available no less than 28 days before Election Day and open during regular business hours of each respective location. These boxes will be secure, accessible, and easy to identify. Both a drive-up and a walk-up Ballot Drop Box will be secured outside the Merced County Administration Building, 2222 M Street, Merced, CA and will be available 24 hours a day.

Voters will be able to deposit their signed envelope into one of the many secure drop boxes available throughout the county. Two (2) Merced County Ballot Retrievers will collect the ballots from the boxes on a mandated schedule.

A complete list of the proposed Drop Box locations is included in Exhibit B. (Drop Box locations are subject to change.)

BUDGET & FISCAL IMPACT

Merced County’s ultimate goal is to increase voter registration, participation, and turnout. We strive to effectively inform and educate voters and potential voters about registration requirements, Vote by Mail, and Voting Assistance Centers. To achieve this goal, extensive voter education and outreach is required. The budget includes advertisements in television, radio, print, social media, participation in events, as well as printing and postage costs for mailings to registered voters.

Voting Assistance Centers will be open longer. However, the total number of poll workers will decrease compared to a traditional polling place model and we anticipate that Voting Assistance Center staff will require additional training to manage the complexity and technology requirements.

Merced County will expend the necessary resources to ensure the voters are informed about the Voter’s Choice Act and the Vote Center model. The Fiscal Year 2021/2022 Elections Budget will include education and outreach along with two mailings (printing and postage) to each voter, and other activities to ensure that voters are fully informed about the Vote Center model voting process.

BUDGET

Elections	Advertising/Media	Postcard Mailings	Outreach Events & Education Materials
March 2020 Presidential Primary Election	\$15,200	\$30,600	\$7400
November 2020 Presidential General Election	\$23,000	\$13,300	\$0
Projected Budget			
June 2022 Statewide Primary Election	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$22,000

Based on the experience gained in 2020, Merced County intends to hire more Voting Assistance Center workers, increase capacity at Voting Assistance Centers and purchase additional equipment as needed. This is being done in an attempt to lessen any delays on Election Day and achieve efficiencies.

PLANS TO MAKE VOTING LOCATIONS SAFE/HEALTHY

When Voting Assistance Centers are not in operation, the site and equipment will be secured through established security protocols and secure storage facilities. All election equipment goes through extensive Logic & Accuracy (L&A) Testing to ensure each piece of equipment is in proper working order. All equipment is transported by two-person election teams via an appropriately sized vehicle with lift gates. Election equipment is equipped with back up batteries that have a 4-hour life and replacement equipment will be available from County Rover Teams. Information Technology staff is on-site and on call to assist with any technological issues. All Voting Assistance Centers will have a complete list of Voting Assistance Centers so that voters can be referred to the nearest Voting Assistance Center or County Elections Office if needed.

Additional precautions for voters are being developed including plans to regularly disinfect high-touch surfaces, maintain social distancing at Voting Assistance Center facilities, one-time use devices for voters to use at the accessible voting equipment and possibly masks for voters who do not provide their own. All plans and guidelines have been, and are continuing to be, reviewed with Merced County Public Health officials.

The Merced County Sheriff, Merced County District Attorney, California Highway Patrol and Police Departments in the cities of Atwater, Dos Palos, Gustine, Livingston, Los Banos and Merced will be furnished with a list of all Voting Assistance Centers and Ballot Drop Box locations. It is requested that should an issue arise, the agency contact the Merced County Registrar of Voters or the Assistant Registrar of Voters immediately to provide information on the disruption. Voting Assistance Center staff will contact the Election Office Call Center to inform them of any disturbance encountered. The call center will provide direction and dispatch a field team member to assist as needed.

In the event of a major emergency, the Merced County Registrar of Voters will be in contact with the California Secretary of State's Office to make sure that media updates are provided to the public. If a natural disaster occurs that affects a Voting Assistance Center or causes it to need to close, the staff will follow end of day closing procedures to secure all equipment in accordance with state law. If the location is no longer able to be used, notifications and signage will be posted to direct voters to an alternate location. If a ballot drop-off location is affected, signage and notifications will be posted to direct voters to an alternate location.

ENSURING ACCESS TO VBM AND VOTING LOCATIONS

Merced County is committed to providing and improving accessibility in the electoral process. All Voting Assistance Centers will be equipped with ExpressVotes (accessible marking devices) to provide voters with disabilities the ability to vote privately and independently. Each Voting Assistance Center will have bilingual staff as well as a Multilingual Virtual Poll Worker (MVP). Merced County Registrar of Voters office was a recipient of a 2019 Clearinghouse "Clearie" Award for improving accessibility for voters. We received the award for utilizing the MVP to assist voters who are deaf and hard of hearing by providing a direct iPad-based connection to American Sign Language Interpreters. The MVP may also be used to provide interpreters for over 200 languages.

Any voter may also opt to go online, through the Remote Accessible Vote by Mail (RAVMB) system, to request a downloadable ballot. The RAVMB system was created to securely deliver ballots to voters with disabilities and to military and overseas voters. The RAVMB provides voters with the ability to request a VBM ballot be delivered electronically to the voter from an authorized website. The electronic ballot can be downloaded to the voter's computer, marked privately and independently, and then printed. The ballot can then be returned to the Registrar of Voters office to be counted.

Information regarding Voting Assistance Centers, the toll-free voter phone line and voting options (including how to sign up for RAVMB) will be distributed to all voters, including those who may have accessibility challenges, through the following:

- Newspapers
- Radio
- Social Media @MercedCountyROV
- Departmental Website www.mercedelections.org
- Workshops/presentations – coordinated with members or representatives of disability community voters. Public Service Announcements broadly distributed through county agencies and other outlets

Merced County Registrar of Voters will work with local agencies and groups that support and provide services for persons with disabilities to determine the best and most effective methods to deliver this information to the affected groups.

The Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) was established in 2017 and meets quarterly. It is an all-volunteer committee established to advise on issues related to voting accessibility for elections and elections materials. The VAAC advises and assists with implementation of federal and state laws relating to access to the electoral process by voters with disabilities so that all persons eligible to vote can participate in the voting process. It also

provides recommendations identifying and prioritizing activities, programs, and policies to ensure every voter has equal access to the ballot. The committee members can also assist with outreach in their communities.

The Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) was also established in 2017 and meets quarterly. The LAAC is an all-volunteer committee established to provide advice on issues related to language accessibility for voters with limited English proficiency, so that all persons eligible to vote can understand and participate in the voting process. Additionally, the committee can assist with outreach in the communities.

TOLL-FREE VOTER ASSISTANCE

Information promoting the Merced County Registrar of Voters toll-free voter assistance hotline (1-800-561-0619) will be provided on all pre-election mailings sent out to voters, including but not limited to address confirmation mailings and voter information packets.

Section 1 – Voter Education and Outreach Plan

General Requirements

1-A Use of media, including social media, newspapers, radio and television for purposes of informing voters of the availability of a Vote by Mail ballot in an accessible format and the process for requesting such a ballot.

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(VIII\)](#)

Merced County is committed to providing extensive voter education and outreach. We will continue to participate in events that have been attended in the past as well as develop effective ways of communicating with our voters. At Merced County Elections, we have worked to increase our presence and visibility in the community. We continue to establish and maintain partnerships and meet with committees and organizations as well as with our Language Accessibility Advisory and Voting Accessibility Advisory Committees. Our goal is to work with our community partners and provide them with resources and information that they can share with their larger networks.

Information regarding Vote by Mail and for obtaining an accessible ballot will be disseminated using the following outlets and methods:

- Public Service Announcements
- Print Messages
- Social Media and Internet Presence @MercedCountyROV
- Department Website www.mercedelections.org
- Merced County Website
- Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Meetings
- Language Accessibility Advisory Committee Meetings
- Community Partners
- High Schools, Merced Community College and UC Merced
- Materials in other languages
- Language Assistance at Voting Assistance Centers
- Community Outreach Events
- Direct Contact with Voters
- Newspapers
- Radio

Merced has a growing population of college students at Merced Community College and UC Merced. Efforts in voter education to these populations are on-going.

Merced County does not have local television stations that serve primarily Merced County residents. Rather, Merced County residents are served by regional television/radio stations

most of which are located in Fresno and serve the greater Central Valley region. Merced County will reach out to the regional television stations/radio stations. We will also continue to partner with both Madera and Fresno counties to combine our efforts to educate our respective voters using television ads on multiple TV stations.

1-B Community Presence to Educate Voters on the Voter's Choice Act

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(III\)](#)

Merced County's community presence will provide Vote Center Model information directly to the voters and attendees of a wide variety of events. Merced County's goal is to coordinate with our community partners, and the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) and Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC), to identify opportunities to educate our voters, offer demonstrations of the voting equipment, and explain how to request and obtain an accessible ballot. Merced County will make every effort to reach all areas of the County. Voters will have many opportunities to learn about the Vote Center Model and their voting options including, but not limited to, the following:

- Department's VAAC and LAAC
 - Meetings include voting system demonstrations and informational updates
 - Materials development with VAAC and LAAC members, and presented for distribution within their communities

- Presentations to various audiences:
 - Neighborhood associations
 - County Board of Supervisors
 - City Councils and City Clerks
 - Town Hall meetings with elected officials
 - School District Boards
 - Special Districts Boards
 - County Central Committees and Political Committees
 - Faith-based communities
 - Language communities
 - Philanthropic organizations (Rotary, Kiwanis, etc.)
 - Merced County Public Libraries

1-C Use of Resources for Voter Education and Outreach

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(VII\)](#)

Merced County will spend the necessary resources to ensure voters are informed about the Vote Center Model voting process.

1-D Direct contacts with voters providing information on the upcoming election and promoting the toll-free voter assistance hotline

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(X\)](#)

Merced County will contact each registered voter a minimum of two times, by mail, to provide information on the upcoming election and the availability of Merced County's toll-free voter assistance hotline. The two direct contacts will include information about an all-mail ballot election, ballot drop off locations, dates and hours of availability, Voting Assistance Center locations, dates and hours of availability, information about the availability of the Remote

Accessible Vote by Mail System (RAVBM) and additional information about the upcoming election.

1-E Postage-paid postcard for requesting materials in an alternate language or an accessible format VBM

[EC §4005\(a\)\(8\)\(B\)\(iii\)](#)

All registered voters will receive a postage-paid postcard with their bilingual County Voter Information Guide for requesting materials in languages other than English and to request a Vote by Mail ballot in an alternate format. Instructions will be included in the Voter Information Guide and on the Registrar of Voters' website for completing and returning the postcard.

The Merced County Registrar of Voters website (www.mercedelections.org) has a page dedicated to information about the Voter's Choice Act. Information is in accessible formats (when possible) and is publicly available. This includes the Election Administration Plan and other information related to the Voter's Choice Act, including scheduled public presentations, developed infographics, public notices, digital versions of material used to educate the public and LAAC/VAAC agendas, minutes and information. The website also contains information about registering to vote and getting involved in the election process, including working at a Voting Assistance Center. Additional information found on the website is addressed in the appropriate sections of this plan.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH WITH THE LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(I\)](#)

The Registrar of Voters established a Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) in October 2017 to advise and assist with implementation of federal and state laws relating to access to the electoral process by non-English preference voters. The LAAC is comprised of local residents who advocate on behalf of the County's minority language communities.

1-F Inform Voters of the Upcoming Election and Promote the Toll-Free Voter Assistance Hotline with Media Serving Language Minority Communities

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(I\)](#)

Information sharing with language minority communities, including information about the Vote Center Model, voting options, and toll-free voter assistance hotline for assistance, will be conducted to include:

- Television (KSEE 24, ABC 30, CBS 47)
- Newspapers (Adjudicated Newspapers of General Circulation in Merced County: Merced Sun Star, Merced County Times)
- Radio (Radio Merced: Hot 104.7, Radio Lobo 98.7, KYOS 1480, K97.5)
- Social Media and Department's Website @MercedCountyROV
www.mercedelections.org
- Materials sharing with such groups as community partners, elected officials for their newsletters, cities, special districts, school districts, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and Public Information Officers
- Media Availability Sessions
- Public Service Announcements, broadly distributed to outlets serving the County
- County Departments (such as Human Services Agency, Veteran Services, Probation, and Child Support Services)

****Merced County does not have local television stations that serve primarily Merced County residents. Rather, Merced County residents are served by regional television stations most of which are located in Fresno and serve the greater Central Valley region.***

To mitigate this limitation, the Merced County Registrar's Office has initiated an intense effort to educate voters, as suggested by stakeholders during our VAAC and LAAC meetings. Stakeholders have indicated that voters in their communities are most likely to respond to outreach efforts conducted through local organizations, groups and agencies with whom they already have existing relationships with. Accordingly, the Registrar's Office plans to conduct presentations with community partners. The Registrar's website will have a similar list that will be updated regularly, affording interested parties the opportunity to choose when and where they can participate.

The specific media outlets that will be utilized for outreach to the non-English preference voters has yet to be determined. The determination will be made in consultation with the Language Accessibility Advisory Committee based on available resources, media audiences and experience.

Additionally, Merced County will coordinate with the Secretary of State's Office on targeted television Public Service Announcements (PSAs) for distribution to cable and satellite television providers. It is expected that these PSAs will only reach Merced County audiences. This method will allow the use of television media while minimizing, to the greatest extent possible, voter confusion.

1-G Identifying Language Minority Voters

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(V\)](#)

The Registrar of Voters uses the voter's language preference selection shown on their voter registration form to identify language minority voters. Voters may also contact us by telephone or email to update their language preference or provide their language preference to precinct officials during an election. Additionally, most voter information produced by the Registrar is printed in both English and Spanish.

1-H Voter Education Workshop for Minority Language Voters

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(VI\)](#), [EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(VI\)\(ia\)](#)

The Registrar of Voters will hold a bilingual voter education workshop for each of Merced County's federal and state required languages. At the time of preparing this plan, Merced's required languages, other than English and Spanish, are Chinese, Hmong, Mien and Punjabi.

These workshops will be held in early 2022 and will provide an opportunity for the County's language communities to receive information about materials and assistance available in the specified language, in addition to the Vote Center Model voting process. All workshops will have language-specific interpreters to assist attendees. Information about workshop events will be announced at least 10 days in advance of the meeting date.

1-I Public Service Announcement for Minority Language Citizens

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(IX\)](#)

The Merced County Registrar of Voters will use Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to inform voters in minority language communities of the upcoming election and the toll-free voter assistance hotline. The PSAs will be distributed through minority language television, radio and newspapers.

EDUCATION AND OUTREACH WITH THE DISABILITY COMMUNITIES

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(A\)\(ii\)](#)

The Merced County Registrar of Voters established a Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) in October 2017 to advise and assist with access to the electoral process by voters with disabilities. The VAAC is comprised of local residents who advocate on behalf of the disability community. Various organizations are invited to these meetings including: Center of Vision Enhancement (COVE), Cerebral Palsy Association, Department of Rehabilitation (DOR) and Merced College Disabled Students Program & Services among many others. We continue to work closely with the Center of Vision Enhancement (COVE) to offer in-person demonstrations of our accessibility devices. Each election we provide COVE with an ExpressVote in their locations to provide those voters with vision impairments access to the device to assist in marking their ballot.

1-J Website has publicly available accessible information

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(IV\)](#)

Information on the Merced County Registrar of Voters website (www.mercedelections.org) is in accessible formats and is publicly available. This includes the Election Administration Plan and other information related to the Voter's Choice Act, as well as information about registering to vote and getting involved in the election process. Election-specific information is also available on the website in an accessible format. The information to be provided will include the following:

- All voters will receive a Vote by Mail (VBM) ballot.
- The option to use an accessible voting device at any Voting Assistance Center, and how to use the device.
- The method for requesting, marking and submitting an accessible ballot through the County's Remote Accessible Vote by Mail (RAVBM) program.

1-K A description of how the county elections official will educate and communicate the provisions of this section to the public, including: The disability community, including organizations and individuals that advocate on behalf of, or provide services to, individuals with disabilities. The county elections official shall hold at least one voter education workshop to increase accessibility and participation of eligible voters with disabilities.

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(VI\)](#), [§4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(i\)\(VI\)\(ib\)](#)

Information sharing with the disability community, including information about the Vote Center Model, voting options, including RAVBM, and toll-free voter access hotline for assistance will be conducted to include:

- Television (KSEE 24, ABC 30, CBS 47)
- Newspapers (Adjudicated Newspapers of General Circulation in Merced County)
- Radio (Radio Merced: Hot 104.7, Radio Lobo 98.7, KYOS 1480, K97.5)

- Social Media and Department's Website @MercedCountyROV www.mercedelections.org
- Materials sharing with such groups as community partners, elected officials for their newsletters, cities, special districts, school districts, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and Public Information Officers
- Media Availability Sessions
- Public Service Announcements, broadly distributed to outlets serving the County
- County Departments (such as Human Services Agency, Veteran Services, Probation, and Child Support Services)

When applicable, PSAs will be accessible for the visually impaired and/or hard of hearing voters.

Additionally, Merced County will coordinate with the Secretary of State's Office on targeted television PSA's for distribution to cable and satellite television providers. It is expected that these PSA's will only reach Merced County audiences. This method will allow the use of television media while minimizing, to the greatest extent possible, voter confusion.

The Merced County Registrar of Voters will hold a voter education workshop in early 2022 to increase accessibility and participation of eligible voters with disabilities. The workshop will include, but not be limited to, education about the Vote Center Model, new voting equipment demonstrations, the accessibility of the voting equipment, ballot drop-off information, and options for obtaining an accessible Vote by Mail ballot electronically. Information about the workshop will be announced at least 10 days in advance of the meeting date.

Section 2 – Security and Contingency Plans

Security and Contingency Plans

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(vi)(VIII)

Ensuring the Security of Voting

EC §4005(a)(10)(I)(iv)

The Merced County Elections Office will ensure the security of voting conducted at Voting Assistance Centers using the following methods and standards:

- All VAC staff will be well trained and prepared to assist eligible voters in every way possible.
- VAC staff will have access to the same election management system (EMS) used in the past and will be able to determine if a voter is properly registered, whether the voter has received a ballot, whether the voter has returned a ballot, and what type of ballot to issue the voter to ensure every eligible voter casts the ballot he or she is eligible to vote in each election.
- Furthermore, all laptops connected to the election management system will also be connected to VoteCal, the official statewide voter registration database managed by California Secretary of State. VoteCal will track voters across the state and notify Voting Assistance Center staff if a voter is actively registered in another county and if the voter has received and/or returned a ballot in another county.
- Any and all equipment that will be connected to the election management system's server will be in full compliance with all security measures and regulations (EC§20158) with the assistance of Merced County Information Services staff.
- Each Voting Assistance Center will have equipment, resources, and signage placed strategically to ensure every voter has the opportunity to cast a private and independent vote.
- The ExpressVote ballot marking device and DS200 precinct tabulator will not be connected to any network. All equipment will be sealed with official election seals and will be shut down and locked when Voting Assistance Centers are not open.
- Any and all recorded votes, including paper ballots, ballots submitted on voting equipment, Conditional Voter Registration (CVR), provisional ballots, and Vote by Mail ballots, will be securely transported to the Merced County Elections processing center daily after the Voting Assistance Center closes.

Prevention Measures and Potential Disruptions

[EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(VIII\)\(ia\)](#), [EC §4005\(a\)\(10\)\(I\)\(vi\)\(VIII\)\(ib\)](#)

All elections and Voting Assistance Center staff will be well trained and prepared for potential disruptions at Voting Assistance Centers. The Merced County Registrar of Voters office will have experienced staff on duty to be able to distribute needed replacement materials and equipment. Furthermore, staff will be equipped to troubleshoot equipment. All Voting Assistance Centers will have cell phones in order to connect quickly with the Merced County Registrar of Voters office when necessary.

EXHIBIT A

VOTING ASSISTANCE CENTER (VAC) LOCATIONS

Voting Assistance Centers

The following locations will be open ten (10) days prior to the election and on Election Day for early voting:

Livingston Veteran's Memorial Building
1605 Seventh Street
Livingston, CA 95334

Los Banos Community Center
645 7th Street
Los Banos, CA 93635

The following locations will be open three (3) days prior to the election and on Election Day for early voting:

Al Goman Community Center
745 Linden Avenue
Gustine, CA 95322

Atwater Community Center
760 E. Bellevue Road
Atwater, CA 95301

College Greens Park Scripps Building
1815 Scripps Drive
Los Banos, CA 93635

Del Hale Hall
931 Center Street
Dos Palos, CA 93620

Delhi Veterans Memorial Building
9799 Stephens Street
Delhi, CA 95315

Department of Child Support Services
3368 N. Highway 59, Suite I
Merced, CA 95348

Hilmar Grange
8188 Lander Avenue
Hilmar, CA 95324

Planada Community Center
9167 Stanford Avenue
Planada, CA 95365

Snelling Community Recreation Building
3351 E. Merced Falls Road
Snelling, CA 95369

Winton Community Hall
7091 W. Walnut Avenue
Winton, CA 95388

EXHIBIT B

DROP BOX LOCATIONS AND HOURS

You may drop off your VBM at any of the following locations beginning 28 days before and through Election Day during regular business hours:

City of Atwater	650 Bellevue Road	Atwater, CA 95301
City of Dos Palos	2174 Blossom Street	Dos Palos, CA 93620
City of Gustine	352 Fifth Street	Gustine, CA 95322
City of Livingston	1416 C Street	Livingston, CA 95334
City of Los Banos	520 J Street	Los Banos, CA 93635
City of Merced	678 West 18 th Street	Merced, CA 95340
Merced County Administration Building (lobby)	2222 M Street	Merced, CA 95340

Exterior Drop Boxes will be available at the following locations beginning 28 days before and through Election Day:

Merced County Administration Building (walk up)	2222 M Street	Merced, CA 95340
Merced County Administration Building (drive up)	2222 M Street	Merced, CA 95340