



DEAN C. LOGAN
Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

Safe Presidential Election Plan

CONTACT: Aaron Nevarez, Assistant Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk; 12400 Imperial Highway, Norwalk, CA 90650; Phone: (562) 462-2800; Email: ANevarez@rrcc.lacounty.gov

OVERVIEW: Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) developed and implemented a comprehensive plan to maintain the health and safety of voters and Election Workers.

CHALLENGE: Conducting the November 2020 Presidential General Election during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although election and health officials advised voters to participate in the election by staying home and using their Vote By Mail ballot, many voters needed or wanted to cast their ballot in person. The highly anticipated public interest of this election caused concern, and the potential, for large crowds to form at a Vote Center and lead to an elevated risk to voters and 18,000+ Election Workers.

SOLUTION: To protect the voters and workers, the RR/CC established the Safe Presidential Election Plan to reduce the risks of being exposed to COVID-19 and to make the voting experience as safe as possible. The plan included the following: disinfection protocols for surfaces and voting equipment, distancing guidelines, use of personal protective equipment (PPE), room layout instructions, signs, floor decals, room capacity instructions, daily screening protocol for workers, and emergency action plans. One highlight of the plan was the creation of a new Election Worker role called the Stop Station Clerk. At the entrance to every Vote Center, Election Workers were stationed in front of a facility at a table with signs, hand sanitizer, gloves, and face masks. The role of the Stop Station Clerk was to greet every voter

and ensure they received hand sanitizer upon entering, wore a face mask, and provide the COVID-19 protocols.

INNOVATION: The RR/CC took an innovative approach in creating the Safe Presidential Election Plan by collaborating with the California Secretary of State (CA SOS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the Los Angeles Department of Public Health (LA DPH) to seek guidance and consultation on all processes, procedures, and guidelines. The best example that showcases the benefits of this collaboration was the set-up and simulation of a Vote Center. This setting provided advantages as LA DPH witnessed the real-life challenges that came from using portable equipment and borrowed rooms. Through this simulation, LA DPH provided valuable input and confirmed the precautions taking place in this election would maintain the health and safety of all.

RESULTS: In a post-election survey voters were asked: “How safe did you feel at the Vote Center (amid COVID-19)?” Of the 60,500 voters who participated in this survey, 90% responded that they felt safe, 8% said neutral, and 3% felt unsafe. Additionally, of the 18,814 Election Workers, the RR/CC received 9 reports of positive COVID-19 cases. Overall, the Safe Presidential Election Plan succeeded in reducing the risks of exposure to COVID-19.

REPLICABILITY: Jurisdictions throughout the country were required to implement a plan specific to their needs. The collaboration between government agencies illustrated the power of working together to solve an extraordinary challenge. The detailed documentation, guidelines, and resources could easily be shared with other jurisdictions if needed. Additionally, since the November 2020 General Election, the RR/CC has conducted eight (8) elections and will conduct a Countywide election in September 2021 using the same model, guidelines, procedures, and lessons learned in the Safe Presidential Election Plan to keep voters and workers safe.