

# Curriculum



# ***NEW CITIZENS VOTE!***

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# 1. Workshop Introduction

## Estimated Length

5 minutes (from the time you turn off the optional 15 minute videotape that can be played while you wait for participants to arrive)

## Materials Needed

Name tags and pens for participants

VCR and “Why Vote?/¿Por Qué Votar?” Video (optional)

**Voter Action Kit** for Participants

Calculator



## Preparation

- ➡ Prepare brief introductory comments about your agency and why it is doing this workshop.
- ➡ “Why Vote?/¿Por Qué Votar?” Video (Optional)  
Motivational 15 minute video produced by the Center for Civic Literacy on the importance and specifics of voting, to be kept running as participants arrive. Available in Spanish and English.
- ➡ As soon as you know how many participants you have, do the calculations for the Voting Demonstration (Exercise 5) on page 27, and fill in the numbers on page 26.

# 1. Workshop Introduction

## “Why Vote?/Por Que Votar?” Video (Optional)

Play videotape while you wait for participants to arrive. Or, facilitators may decide to show the video to the participants after everyone has arrived, and discuss the information presented.

Turn off video, welcome participants and introduce yourself (yourselves).

Ask participants to fill out name tags writing their first names.

Give overview of the *NEW CITIZENS VOTE!* curriculum.



- *The goal for the workshop is to give immigrants and new citizens the tools they need to become involved in making a difference in the lives of their families and communities.*
- *We will not tell you how to vote on specific issues or candidates, but we hope that by the end of the workshop you will have a good understanding of how to make such decisions, and that you will have the confidence to make your voice be heard at the ballot box and perhaps in other ways in your community.*
- Insert your agency/organizational introduction here: why are you conducting this training?



- *The curriculum is made possible by the Northern California Citizenship Project, a network of community based organizations and foundations in the San Francisco Bay Area which seeks to provide new citizens with the information they need to become involved in the electoral process and other civic activities.*

Pass out **Voter Action Kit** and review day's agenda.

Go over logistics (child care, bathrooms, break times, additional meeting times, if any, etc.).

## 2. Icebreaker

### Estimated Length

10 minutes

### Materials Needed

None

### Preparation

Decide on one of the suggested icebreakers described on the following page, or use one of your own.



## 2. Icebreaker

### Objective

Help participants to feel comfortable about sharing their ideas with one another during the workshop.

### Methodology

To be decided by facilitators.

### Exercise Overview

This is the portion of the curriculum where participants have the opportunity to introduce themselves and get used to speaking in the training. An icebreaker should not be intimidating or require a participant to speak in a way he/she finds overwhelming or uncomfortable. Here are some suggested icebreakers. You may also know of icebreakers of your own:



Ask each participant to introduce him/herself to the group and answer *one* of the following questions:

- What does being involved in your community mean to you?
- Why did you become/why do you want to become a U.S. citizen?
- What are you most proud of in your life?
- Why are you here today?
- Where are you from?

### Tips and Examples for Facilitator

- If your group has more than 20 people, divide them up into smaller groups to answer this question. You can also divide people into pairs to answer these or other questions with each other.

### 3. Local Government and Community Resources

#### Estimated Time

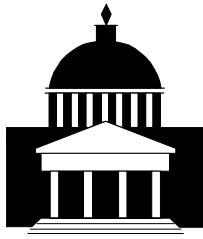
30 minutes

#### Materials Needed

Prepared Butcher Paper Replicas of Local Government and  
Community Resources Charts

Markers

Tape



#### Preparation

- ➔ Facilitator should prepare to do this exercise in conjunction with Exercise 4.
- ➔ Facilitator should prepare butcher paper replicas of the six charts shown at the end of this exercise. Facilitators will be filling in information on the charts, “Local Government and Community Resources” and “How to Get the Attention of Local Officials.” The “Resources in Your Community Chart” on page 15 is provided as an illustration of the variety of resources in a community, but does not have information added during the exercise. A photocopy enlargement could be made of this chart.
- ➔ Facilitator should research and prepare the “*Community Resource Guide*” that is in the **Voter Action Kit** section at the end of the curriculum, and distribute copies to participants if they didn’t receive them at the beginning of the workshop.
- ➔ Facilitator will refer to the “*Community Resource Guide*” during the exercise.
- ➔ Facilitator should distribute photocopies of the Government Blue Pages that appear in the front of the white pages directory of the telephone book. If such listings exist in a foreign language directory in your area, you may want to copy those.
- ➔ If you know of an example of how a group of local residents solved a community problem, prepare a brief description so you can talk to the class about it.

### 3. Local Government and Community Resources

#### Objective

Present participants with an overview of local government structure and of local agencies that can serve community residents as resources for addressing problems.

#### Methodology

Facilitator presentation and large group discussion.

#### Exercise Overview

- Tell participants that they will be getting an overview of how local government can work for them, and about other agencies and organizations that may be available to help solve community problems.
- Tell participants that much of the contact information for the people and agencies that will be discussed is in the “**Community Resource Guide**” and the Government Listings from the telephone directory that you distributed.
- Tell participants that once they are familiar with different resources, they’ll take a look at some real life problems and begin to design solutions for them in the next exercise.
- Post butcher paper charts of Local Governments and Community Resources that you will fill in during the exercise.



*Local government exists to serve residents like you in your community, whether you are a citizen or not. Even though the decisions that are made by the federal and state governments are important and affect everyone in the community, it is the local government that deals directly with you, and where residents can have the greatest impact on decisions that affect them.*

*Many problems can be addressed effectively at the local level, especially if you join together with other people and organizations who share your problems and concerns.*

- Facilitator should ask if anyone has an example of how a group of local residents jointly solved a community problem. If a class participant doesn’t volunteer an example, the facilitator can briefly describe one.



*Local government consists of many elected and appointed officials and agencies that are responsible for different issues faced by residents.*

*Local governments are usually divided into cities, counties and school districts.*

*Let's first focus on your community. As a community member, it is your right and responsibility to make sure that local government is doing its job to serve the residents.*

## **City Government**



*Let's look at the city you live in and figure out how it works. Cities are headed by one elected person, the mayor. The mayor is the executive official of a city, like the President is to the country, and the Governor is to the State. Does anybody know who the mayor of our city is?*

- Facilitator should record the response on the butcher paper chart, referring to the **Community Resource Guide** to supply information not supplied by participants.



*The City Council is the governing body of the city, like the U.S. Congress or the State Legislature. These elected officials pass laws and make other major decisions that affect the lives of all of us. In some cities, city council members represent a particular neighborhood or district, in others they represent all of the residents in the city. Do we have district representation, or citywide representation? Does anybody know how many City Council Members we have? Can anyone name some of our City Council members?*

- Facilitator should record responses on prepared butcher paper, referring to the **Community Resource Guide** to supply information not supplied by participants.



*In addition to elected officials, there are city agencies and departments that are responsible for the smooth running of our communities and for addressing the concerns of community residents. These agencies and departments provide residents with services such as water and power, police, fire, sanitation, and parks. Let's take a look at a few of them.*

- Facilitator should fill in some of the departments and services on the prepared butcher paper chart, and ask the group for the names of others, referring to the **Community Resource Guide** to supply information not supplied by participants.

## County Government



*The county is a larger geographic area than a city, and usually has many cities in it. The Board of Supervisors is the governing body, and its elected officials can also represent districts or the entire population. Are our Supervisors elected by districts? Who are our Supervisors?*

- Facilitator should record responses on prepared butcher paper, referring to the **Community Resource Guide** to supply information not supplied by participants.



*County governments oversee services and issues that are extremely important to the well-being of its residents, such as health and welfare, the courts, libraries, the sheriff's department, taxes and zoning. What are some of the county departments?*

- Facilitator should record responses on butcher paper, referring to **Community Resource Guide** to supply information not supplied by participants.



*Mayors, City Council and Board of Supervisors members are elected to represent the interests of all of the people who live in the community. Their offices are open to the public, and they have staff members who are knowledgeable about local departments and services. Staff members may also be able to inform you about state and federal agencies who you can contact to resolve certain problems. You can call the offices of the Mayor, a Councilperson or Supervisor to ask for advice and information.*

*Frequently city and county governments have offices or commissions that specialize in assisting residents with specific matters, such as tenant's rights, problems with the police, children and youth, and the elderly. You will find information about these resources in the materials we gave you.*



*The meetings of city councils and of boards of supervisors are open to the public. You can attend these meetings to see how laws and decisions are made. If you have an issue that is of concern to many members of the community, you can request that the City Council or the Board of Supervisors hold a special public hearing or discuss the issue at one of their regular meetings. Some cities and counties provide foreign language interpreters at public meetings if they are requested.*

*Now that we have the phone numbers of the Mayor and other officials, how do we go about expressing our views and getting their attention? Does anybody have ideas?*

- On butcher paper, facilitator should fill in ideas that participants don't come up with from the following list:
  - 1) Call and ask for a meeting;
  - 2) Organize a neighborhood meeting and invite the appropriate official(s) to attend;
  - 3) Organize a letter writing campaign;
  - 4) Write a letter, preferably signed by many people, asking for a meeting;
  - 5) Ask the official to make a commitment to help solve the problem;
  - 6) Hold a demonstration in front of their office;
  - 7) Talk to reporters about the problem;
  - 8) Other ideas...

## **School District**



*Now we are going to focus on how the local school district is organized. Schools have their own governing body called the Board of Education, whose members are elected in local elections. They are responsible for overseeing the School District, which is the department in charge of running the schools. The Superintendent of Schools is the head of the School District, and in most cases is hired by the Board of Education. Does anybody know who this is?*

- Facilitator should record responses on butcher paper, referring to the **Community Resource Guide** to supply information not supplied by participants.
- Facilitator should go through a similar exercise with school board members.



*School Board meetings are open to the public, and members of the Board can be contacted to discuss concerns and ideas about how the School District or a particular school could do a better job. The School District and the Superintendent's office often have a community relations representative who is responsible for addressing the concerns of students and parents.*

*In addition, parents can play a direct role in making decisions about their children's school by joining the Parent Teachers' Association. PTAs are committees of parents who work together with teachers and principals to make the school more responsive to the needs of students. Examples of PTA activities are: designing creative after school programs for students and other members of the community, teaching conflict resolution skills to students, holding workshops for parents about how to get more involved in their child's education, and representing students' interests in disputes with teachers and other school officials.*

*There are also county and state PTA offices that can help parents start a PTA at their school if there isn't one already. You don't have to speak English – In fact, the only qualification for joining the PTA is having an interest in your children's education. Does anybody participate in the PTA?*

*What are some ways you can get the attention of school officials?*

- Facilitator should record responses on butcher paper, referring to the following list to supply information not supplied by participants. Some examples are:
  - 1) Contact the community relations representative at the School District;
  - 2) Contact other parents and organize a meeting with a teacher, the school principal, a member of the School Board, or the Superintendent;

- 3) Ask the local PTA to help solve a problem;
- 4) Request that the School Board discuss an issue at a public meeting;
- 5) Other ideas...

## **Community Agencies**



*Lastly, there are numerous community agencies that provide services, information and assistance to local residents. If you and your neighbors have a problem, you may be able to contact one of these agencies for information, ideas, and even help in solving a local problem. Some communities have telephone information lines that refer residents to the appropriate agencies.*

*Refer to your Community Resource Guide for information about how you can contact these local agencies.*

- Facilitator should lead participants through a quick overview of some of the community agencies listed in Community Resource Guide.

Questions or comments?

### ***Tips and Examples for Facilitators:***

See sample charts on following pages.

# RESOURCES IN YOUR COMMUNITY



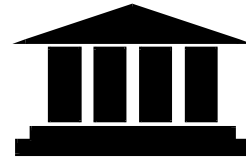
## SCHOOL DISTRICT

Schools  
PTA



## CITY GOVERNMENT

Elected & Appointed Officials  
Departments & Commissions



## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Elected & Appointed Officials  
Departments & Commissions



### Getting their attention

Call    Write    Protest    Attend a Meeting



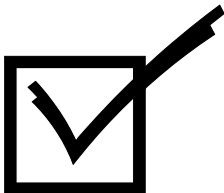
## COMMUNITY GROUPS

Family, Friends and Neighbors  
Churches  
Clubs  
Labor Unions  
etc.

## COMMUNITY AGENCIES

Legal Services  
Tenant's Rights  
Children's Rights  
Immigrant's Rights  
etc.

**Prepare butcher paper charts that look like this;  
facilitator will fill in information during the exercise:**



CITY GOVERNMENT

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

SCHOOL DISTRICT

COMMUNITY AGENCIES

**Getting the Attention of  
Local Officials**

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

**School Officials**

- 
- 
- 
- 
-



## 4. Creating Solutions to Community Problems

### Estimated Time

30 minutes

### Materials Needed

Prepared Scenarios

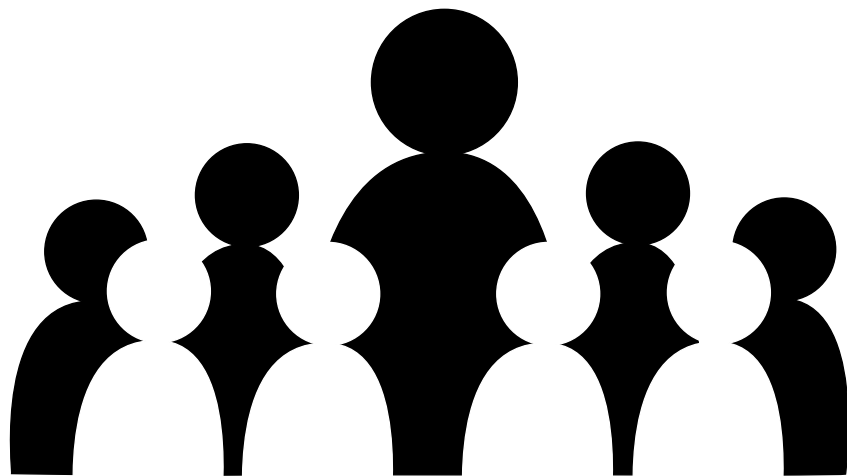
Butcher Paper

Markers

Tape

### Preparation

- ➡ This exercise is meant to be done in conjunction with Exercise 3.
- ➡ Facilitators should distribute copies of the “Community Issues” scenarios to participants (at the end of this section). Facilitators may substitute their own scenarios for this exercise based on their experiences with the issues faced by the communities they work with, recent community actions or press articles.
- ➡ Participants should already have copies of the “*Community Resource Guide*” that is in the **Voter Action Kit** and the Government Blue Pages from local telephone book that were distributed at the beginning of Exercise 3.
- ➡ Facilitator should prepare butcher paper charts with headings which refer to the problems in the prepared scenarios, as illustrated on page 20.



## 4. Creating Solutions to Community Problems

### Objective

Present participants with hypothetical scenarios to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills for addressing common community issues.

### Methodology

Small group exercise reporting back to large group.

### Exercise Overview

- Divide participants into small groups of 5 -7, and give them a moment to introduce themselves. If the class is smaller, fewer groups (of at least three) who will address the scenarios is appropriate. In a larger group, more than one group can address each of the scenarios presented in this exercise.
- Tell the groups that they will be hearing about individuals who are facing problems in their community. The group's task will be to listen to one of the prepared scenarios and then discuss ideas for solving the problem. After 15 minutes, each group will present their ideas to the other workshop participants.
- Tell participants to consider the following:



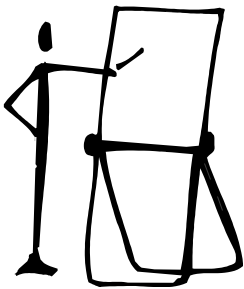
*What do you think the individual can do to solve the problems he/she is facing in this scenario? Think about the resources that may be available.*

*These may include: friends, neighbors, family, churches, local government officials or departments, community agencies such as ethnic associations, civil rights organizations, community centers, and labor organizations. You can also look at the "Community Resource Guide" for ideas.*

*Also think about similar situations you or people you know have faced. What did they do? Where did they get help?*

*Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. There are always many different approaches and solutions to each problem.*

- Ask for a volunteer participant in each group to read to their group the prepared scenario they have been given. Alternatively, agency volunteers can join each group to read the scenarios.
- Ask the groups to choose a recorder to write down all of the participants' suggestions and ideas on butcher paper with the headings illustrated below.
- Distribute prepared sheets of butcher paper with the title of each problem to each small group to record their ideas.
- After 15 minutes the facilitator should ask the group to wrap up their discussion.
- The facilitator should post sheets of butcher paper that participants have prepared.
- Either the facilitator or a participant from each small group should read their scenario out loud to the large group, and then briefly review their group's suggestions for solving the problem that is written on the butcher paper.
- Facilitator may solicit additional suggestions from the large group and record these on the butcher paper charts.



**Preparation, tips and examples for facilitator:**

- The following is an example of what the charts might look like after participants have discussed possible solutions. Facilitator may want to prepare a sample of one chart to show to participants before they begin the exercise.

<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Childcare</b>	<b>Schools</b>	<b>Neighborhood</b>	<b>Crime</b>
Call or organize a union; Sign a petition to the company; Contact an agency dealing with worker issues; Call government labor enforcement agencies.	Organize informal group day care with other neighborhood parents; Contact the city for information on how to establish a child care center.	Call the principal; Go to the next school board meeting; Talk to other parents at the next PTA meeting; Write a letter to the editor of a local paper.	Call the Board of Supervisors; Talk to neighbors; call the Mayor; Block the street in protest; Call the city department of transportation.	Organize a neighborhood watch; Call a neighborhood meeting with police; Call the police; Move to a new neighborhood.

Questions or comments?

### **Community Issue One: Neighborhood Safety**

Alicia, her husband and their three children live in a neighborhood near a busy freeway. Often, cars take a short cut down her street, and they drive very, very fast. Alicia is worried because her children and others who live in the community have to cross this street on their way home from school. There is no stop light or stop sign, and many times children have to run across the street to avoid oncoming cars. Alicia works during the day and cannot escort her children from school. She doesn't know if her neighbors are also concerned about the safety of their children, but she wants to do something. She is afraid that someone will get run over by a car. What should she do?



### **Community Issue Two: Crime**

Vinh, his wife and two children live in a dangerous neighborhood. They are afraid to go out at night because there are so many robberies and other crimes in their neighborhood. They don't have enough money to move to a safer neighborhood.

Last night Vinh saw a man selling something in the alley behind their apartment. His teenage son says that they are selling drugs. Vinh thought about calling the police, but he doesn't speak English very well and in his home country the police are sometimes more dangerous than the criminals. Vinh's children are often harassed by these drug dealers on their way home from school, and he is worried about their safety. What should he do?

### **Community Issue Three: Schools**

Irina and Ori are worried about their son's education. He is in the fourth grade but still doesn't know how to read very well. Irina and Ori feel that the public elementary school he attends does a poor job educating students. They think he might have a learning disability. When they attended a recent parent teacher conference, their son's teacher didn't listen and didn't seem to care. They know several other parents of children in the school who also feel that the school is doing a poor job educating their children and that teachers ignore parents' concerns. What should they do?

### **Community Issue Four: Jobs**

Ming works in a factory cleaning sheets and towels for hotels. The hours are long and the work is very tiring. Ming and her coworkers are on their feet all day. They are paid \$5 per hour and are often asked to work overtime, but they are not paid any extra money, as required by law. One of Ming's coworkers told the supervisor that she cannot work late because she has to pick up her children from school. The factory supervisor yelled at her in front of everyone that he will fire her if she refuses to work overtime. Ming and the other workers think this is unfair. They are worried that if they protest they will be fired. What should Ming do?



### **Community Issue Five: Child Care**

Sandra and Paolo have a three-year-old daughter. Sandra's mother lives in their home country and they have just found out that she is very ill. They need to send her money, but they cannot afford to on Paolo's salary alone. Sandra wants to go to work part-time to earn money, and she has a friend who says she can get Sandra a job taking care of seniors at a nearby center. The pay is good and she will have enough to help pay her mother's medical bills, but she does not know who will take care of her daughter while she is at work. There is one low-cost child care center operated by the city public school in a nearby neighborhood with a 6 month waiting list. What should she do?



## 5. Voting Demonstration

### Estimated Time

20 minutes

### Materials Needed

Many sheets of white and colored 8" x 11" paper

Markers

Small pieces of paper for ballots

Pens for participants



### Preparation

- ➡ Use the chart on page 27 to find the numbers of participants who will be eliminated from the pool of voters, then write these numbers in the exercise on page 26 under points #4, #5, and #6.
- ➡ Use the chart on page 27 to find the number of remaining voters who are white, and the number remaining voters who are over 50 years old. Count out sheets of white paper for the number of remaining voters who are white, and sheets of colored paper to represent remaining voters who are older than 50.

## 5. Voting Demonstration

### Objective

Demonstrate consequences of not participating in voting process.

### Methodology

Mock voting exercise and discussion; overview of actual election outcomes.

### Exercise Overview

- Introduce exercise:



*Voting is one important way of solving problems. But it only works if you vote.*

*In elections, very few people make decisions that affect all of us. For example, in the last general election in 1996, less than half of all eligible voters nation-wide voted in the election.(48.8%)*

*We are going to do a mock election together to illustrate how the voting process sometimes works.*

- Explain the following scenario:



*Many people in your community have complained that the local government needs to do more to improve public safety. Candidate “X” proposes to improve public safety by installing street lights and increasing activities for youth. Candidate “Y” proposes to improve public safety by hiring more police. Soon a new mayor will be elected. Now you get to vote on which candidate you want.*

1. Pass out scraps of paper as ballots. Tell participants to write “Y” or “X” on the paper to indicate their votes. Tell participants to hold on to their ballots.
2. Tell participants that they represent the entire voting age population in California.
3. Ask participants to guess how many people in the room would actually make decisions about Candidate X and Candidate Y on Election Day. Allow several participants to make guesses.

4. **“First Cut”**: Count \_\_\_\_\_ participants and ask them to stand up and move to one side of the room. Tell them that their votes won’t count because they represent 10% of California adults who are eligible to become citizens but have not yet done so and therefore cannot register to vote.
5. **“Second Cut”**: Count off \_\_\_\_\_ more people and ask them to join the standing participants. Tell the group that they represent 30% of California adults who are eligible to register to vote but have not done so.
6. **“Third Cut”**: Count off \_\_\_\_\_ more participants, asking them also to get up and join the non-voters on one side of the room. Tell them that, although they are registered to vote, they represent 40% of registered California voters who did not vote on Election Day.
7. Announce that approximately 38% of the class is left seated, and are therefore eligible to vote. Pick up their ballots and count them. Announce the winning candidate.
8. Pass out the sheets of white and colored paper to the people who just voted. Tell participants that of those who are left seated, approximately 77% are White, even though only 52% of the state’s population is White, and that 42% are over 50 years old.
9. Ask all of the people who could not vote to pass their ballots up. Count them, and compare the results to those who did vote.
10. Ask standing participants to sit down and ask for their reactions.



*Was the election fair and democratic?  
Was our community represented?*

- Whether results were the same or different ask how people feel about how the first vote was done compared to the second.
- Announce the actual voting results on Propositions 227 and 187.



*In November 1994, proposition 187 intended to make undocumented immigrants in California ineligible for public education, public health and many social services. It passed by a vote of 63% to 37%. Only 31% of eligible voters voted in this election.*

*In May 1998, Proposition 227, which severely limits bilingual education in California public schools, passed by a vote of 61% to 39%. Only 43% of eligible voters voted in this election.*

- Questions or comments?

## VOTING DEMONSTRATION CHART

<b>Number in Class</b>	<b>First Cut</b> Immigrants Eligible for Citizenship	<b>Second Cut</b> 30% Eligible Voters Who Don't Register	<b>Third Cut</b> 40% Registered Who Didn't Vote	<b>Percentage of Eligible Who Voted</b>	<b>Remaining Voters Who Are White — 77%</b>	<b>Number Remaining Over 50 Years Old — 42%</b>
10-12	1	3	3	38%	3	2
13-15	1	4	4	39%	4	2
16-18	2	5	4	37%	5	3
19-21	2	5	4	34%	5	3
22-24	2	6	6	38%	7	4
25-27	3	7	6	37%	7	4
28-30	3	7	7	35%	8	4
31-33	3	9	8	38%	9	5
34-36	4	9	9	37%	10	5
37-39	4	10	10	38%	11	6
40-42	4	11	10	38%	12	7
43-45	4	12	11	38%	13	7
46-48	5	12	11	36%	13	7
49-51	5	14	13	38%	15	8
52-54	5	14	13	38%	16	8
55-57	6	15	14	38%	16	9
58-60	6	16	15	38%	17	9
61-63	6	17	16	38%	18	10
64-66	7	17	16	37%	19	10
67-69	7	18	17	38%	20	11
70-72	7	19	18	38%	21	11
73-75	7	20	19	38%	22	12
76-78	8	21	19	38%	22	12
79-81	8	22	20	38%	23	13
82-84	8	23	21	38%	24	13
85-87	9	23	22	38%	25	14
88-90	9	24	22	38%	26	14
91-93	9	25	23	38%	27	15
94-96	10	26	24	38%	27	15
97-99	10	26	25	38%	28	16

## 6. Voting Basics

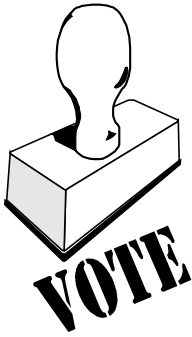
### Estimated Time

10 minutes

### Materials Needed

Prizes (candy, pens, etc.)

### Preparation



- ➡ Facilitators should call their local Registrar of Voters to find out what languages election materials are available in. Fill this information in on page 30, under the question, “Can I Vote in My Own Language?”
- ➡ Make photocopies of the Voting Quiz to hand out to class participants. You will need to fill in information about the month and date of the last presidential election, the next presidential election, and the next election for Governor, and information about what languages voter materials are produced in your county. You can also leave this information blank on the copies that you prepare for participants, and tell them to write it on their papers during the exercise. The Voting Quiz can be found in Appendix 1.

## 6. Voting Basics

### Objective

Cover basic information about voter eligibility and elections.

### Methodology

Group discussion

### Exercise Overview



- Facilitator should lead a brief question and answer discussion, asking the group the questions on the “Voting Quiz,” and supplying answers when participants do not volunteer them. Facilitators can also hand out prizes — candy, pens, etc. every time someone answers a question correctly. Or, you can hand out prizes to everybody!
- At the end of the discussion, pass out photocopies of the “Voting Quiz” (in Appendix 1) for participants’ future reference.

### Preparation, tips and examples for facilitator

- If your class is being held during an election period, you may want to pose some additional questions about issues and candidates that are on the ballot, such as, “Who are the major candidates that are running for Governor?”
- Questions that come up that you are unable to answer can be followed up at a subsequent class, if one is scheduled. If not, remind participants that they now have contact numbers in their “*Community Resource Guide*” for agencies like the Registrar of Voters, where unanswered questions can be addressed.

### Voting Quiz

**Q:** *Does anyone know what the three requirements are to be eligible to vote?*

To vote you must be at least 18, a U.S. citizen and not in prison or on parole for a felony.

**Q:** *What are the two types of things voters vote on?*

Candidates and issues.

**Q: *How often are elections?***

➡ Major elections take place on even years. Every four years there is an election for president. The last presidential election was in \_\_\_\_\_ (*facilitator fill in year*). The next one will be in the year \_\_\_\_\_. The next governor's race in our state will be in \_\_\_\_\_.

Local elections for mayor or city council or county boards can take place in either even or odd years. It depends where you live.

**Q: *True or False?: Registering to vote is very expensive.***

False. Registering and voting costs nothing.

**Q: *True or False?: Someone can help you fill out a voter registration form.***

True! Anyone can help you fill out the voter registration card and even accompany you when you go to the polling place.

**Q: *What is the difference between a primary and a general election?***

In a primary election, a candidate from each party is selected to run in the general election, much like a playoff round in sports. The winning candidate in the general election takes office. Both elections have other important issues on the ballots, such as initiatives and bond measures. In California, primary elections take place in June, but this may change soon. General elections take place in November.

**Q: *True or False?: Once you register for a party you have to vote for that party's candidate in the elections.***

False. You can vote for whoever you want to.

**Q: *Can I vote in my own language?***

➡ Many counties provide ballot information in other languages. Bilingual voter registration cards have a place where you can request election materials in your language. In our county, information on candidates and issues is available in English and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Q: *Will I get called for jury duty if I register to vote?***

Not necessarily. Jury pools are selected from a combination of public records. Serving on a jury can be very interesting and it's an important responsibility of citizenship, but you may request to be excused from serving on a jury if you are unable to do so because of financial or other important factors.



**Q: True or False?: Once you are registered to vote you must vote in every election.**

False! Once you register to vote it is up to you whether and how you will vote.

If you change your name, or address, you must re-register to vote.

**Q: True or False?: If you do not want to go to the polling place, or if you are out of town on election day, you are out of luck and don't get to vote.**

False! If you would like to vote in the privacy of your own home, you can vote by mail. This method of voting is called "absentee voting." The application for requesting an "absentee ballot" is at the back of the County Voter Information Packet. Your absentee ballot must be returned to the Registrar of Voters or to any polling place in your county by 8:00 p.m. on election day. About 20% of voters in California vote by absentee ballot.



**Q: True or False?: When you go to vote on election day, they can ask you for identification and proof of United States citizenship.**

False! The only time a polling place worker can ask you for identification is if you accidentally go to the wrong polling place and your name is not on their list. They can't ask you for proof of U.S. citizenship — when you sign the voter registration card you are swearing that you are a citizen.

**Q: What other questions do you have about voting?** Seek answers from other participants first before providing more information.

## **7. Getting Involved in the Electoral Process**

### **Estimated Time**

10 minutes

### **Materials Needed**

Copies of Skits One and Two for volunteer actors

### **Preparation**

- ➡ Make photocopies of Skit One and Skit Two for class participants. The skits are in Appendix 2.
- ➡ Select volunteers and have them prepared to read Skits One and Two. Skit One has two roles; Skit Two has three roles.
- ➡ If extra volunteers are not available, facilitator can play all parts by donning and removing a paper hat to indicate changes in characters, or using a rolled up piece of paper as, alternatively, a barrette and a mustache. If you are familiar enough with participants to know that some would be comfortable volunteering, make a request for volunteers to read one of the roles.
- ➡ Prepare to supply registration deadline date and location and phone number of appropriate Registrar of Voters.

## 7. Getting Involved in the Electoral Process

### Objective

Introduction and overview of voter registration and voting procedures.

### Methodology

Two skits to be performed by facilitators and/or class volunteers.

### Exercise Overview:

- Facilitator says we can begin to change the current voting dynamic by learning how to register to vote right now!
- Introduce the volunteers who have been briefed beforehand to perform in skits.
- Perform Skit One.
- Ask if there are any questions or reactions.
- Perform Skit Two.
- Ask if there are any questions or reactions.
- Emphasize the following points about voter registration and voting:



1. *It is free.*
2. *It is a right and responsibility of citizenship.*
3. *Voters do not have to vote on everything; they may vote only for the candidates and issues that they know something about.*
4. *Someone can help you at the polling place. Either bring someone with you or ask a polling place volunteer for assistance in the voting booth to translate or assist you in reading the ballot, or in casting the ballot if you are physically unable to do so.*
5. *You can bring notes or other information to refer to in the polling booth.*
6. *But in order to vote, you must register first! You need to register 29 days before an election. The registration deadline for the next election is*  
➡ \_\_\_\_\_.



7. If you become a new citizen after the registration deadline, you can register up to seven days before an election by going to the Registrar of Voters in your County. If you do this, you must also vote at the same time. You must bring with you a photo identification and a copy of your naturalization certificate, or your naturalization certificate number and the date you went to the swearing-in ceremony.

- Questions or Comments?



## **Voting Skit One**

*At the Supermarket (2 roles)*

**Voter registration volunteer:** Last chance to register to vote here!  
(sees voter) Hi, are you registered to vote?

**Voter:** No, I'm just here to buy milk. I don't have any extra money or time to stop.

**Volunteer:** It's free and it takes just 5 minutes.

**Voter:** **What do I have to do?**

**Volunteer:** Just fill out this form. Today is your last chance because registration ends 29 days before the election.

*Hands form to voter who begins to fill it out.*

**Voter:** **Oh, I don't know which political party to pick right now.**

**Volunteer:** If you don't know or don't want to pick a political party, you can choose the "Decline to State" box.

**Voter:** **My friend is becoming a new citizen next week. Does that mean she can't vote?**

**Volunteer:** Actually, once she goes through the ceremony she can vote if she goes to the  
➡ main office of the Registrar of Voters at ( insert location here: \_\_\_\_\_). New citizens are allowed to register and vote there up to seven days before the election.

**Voter:** That's all she has to do? Go to this office?

**Volunteer:** As long as she brings her naturalization certificate and picture identification, or, if she's mailed that off to the passport office, she should write down her naturalization number from her certificate and bring that along. Then she can register to vote at the office. Be sure to tell her that she also will be voting there right after she registers.

**Voter:** Thanks for the information – I'll pass it along to my friend. I'm done registering, what should I do with the form?

**Volunteer:** Make sure you sign it. Then, just tear off your receipt from the bottom of the card and put the card in the mailbox. You don't even need a stamp. And don't forget to vote!

**Voter:** Thanks, I will (walks off, but turns around and comes back again). I forgot to ask you where I need to go to vote.

**Volunteer:** Now that you have registered, you'll get a Sample Ballot in the mail — here's what it looks like (*shows Sample Ballot*). It will tell you where you need to go vote — just look at the mailing label. It also tells you what candidates and issues you will be voting on.



## **Voting Skit Two**

*At the polling place (3 roles)*

**Voter:** Hi, I'm here to vote.

**Poll Worker:** What's your name?

**Voter:** (Gives name)

**Poll Worker:** (Finds name on list) Please sign here next to your name. Here's your ballot. Just wait in line for the next private booth to be free.

**Voter:** I've never voted before — can someone show me how to mark my ballot?

**Poll Worker:** Of course, one of our volunteers will go into the booth with you.

*Voter and volunteer go into booth*

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** THIS IS HOW YOU MARK YOUR CHOICES.

**Voter:** Do I have to vote on everything?

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** NO, YOU CAN VOTE JUST ON THE THINGS YOU WANT.

**Voter:** It's hard to remember who and what I want to vote for, even though I wrote down my choices beforehand. I wish I could look at my notes.

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** YOU CAN! YOU CAN BRING IN ANY NOTES YOU WANT.

**Voter:** Great, I will (reaches in pocket and refers to notes while filling out ballot).

**Voter:** Oh no, I didn't want to vote for him! Can I start over?

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** OF COURSE, JUST TAKE THE BALLOT YOU ALREADY HAVE AND EXCHANGE IT AT THE CHECK IN DESK FOR A NEW ONE.

**Voter:** Thanks, I think I have the hang of this now!



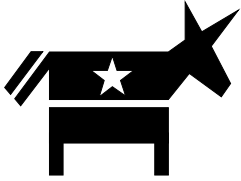
## 8. Political Parties

### Estimated Time

5 minutes

### Materials Needed

None



## 8. Political Parties

### Objective

Explain the role of political parties and provide information on how to select one.

### Methodology

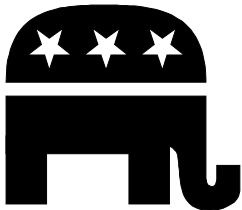
Brief presentation of Talking Points by Facilitator and Optional Discussion Questions

### Exercise Overview



#### Talking Points for Facilitators:

1. *A political party is a group of people who join together because they share many ideas about what the government should do.*
2. *When you register to vote you are asked to state a political party. You do not have to choose a political party – just fill in the box that says, “decline to state.”*
3. *If you do choose a political party when you register to vote, you will receive a lot of material in the mail from that party and from the candidates that are members of that party. They may also send you “slate cards” which are the party’s recommendations on how you should vote on issues and candidates.*
4. *If you register for a political party it doesn’t mean that you have to vote for the candidates in that party, nor vote the way the party recommends. You can vote however you want to.*
5. *You’ll notice that in the Easy Reading Voter Guide there are eight political parties registered in California, but as you probably know, the Democratic and Republican parties continue to be the two major political parties in the American political system.*





6. *Sometimes it is hard to see the difference between the two major parties from reading their descriptions in the voter handbook. It is helpful to think about some specific issues that are important to you, such as welfare reform, increasing taxes for school spending, or affirmative action. What are the two major parties' positions on those issues?*
7. *You can also find out which party some elected officials that you know of belong to.*
8. *Frequently candidates at the local level, such as the mayor and the city council, are not formally affiliated with any political party – this is called a non-partisan race.*
9. *The following are brief summaries of the two major political parties based on their descriptions in the Easy Reading Voter Guide.*

*Generally, the Democratic Party believes that it is the government's role to protect the health and welfare of individuals in society. There are about 6.8 million registered Democrats in California.*

*Generally, the Republican party believes that individuals should take care of themselves with minimum government assistance or involvement. There are about 5.3 million registered Republicans in California.*

### **Optional Discussion Questions:**

- Who are some prominent Republicans?
- Who are some prominent Democrats?

*Questions or Comments?*



## **9. Ballot Measures, Propositions, Initiatives and Ordinances**

### **Estimated Time**

10 minutes

### **Materials Needed**

None



## 9. Ballot Measures, Propositions, Initiatives and Ordinances

### Objective

Describe ballot measures, propositions, initiatives and ordinances.

### Methodology

Brief presentation of talking points by facilitator, followed by a brief group discussion to identify recent ballot measures.

### Exercise Overview

#### Talking Points for Facilitators:



*In addition to electing public officials, we also vote for or against laws at the state, county and city level that affect many aspects of our lives, such as education, public safety, taxes, parks and other public spaces, welfare and housing.*

*These proposed laws are referred to by many names – measures, propositions, initiatives, and ordinances – so let’s look at these terms.*

- 1. MEASURES: A measure is a proposal to change the law. A measure can be a proposed law that will be voted on by bodies of elected officials, such as a county Board of Supervisors or the State Legislature or the U.S. Congress, or it can be placed on the ballot to be voted on by the general public.*
- 2. BALLOT MEASURE: A measure that is on the ballot to be voted on by the general public is called a ballot measure. Voters are asked to vote “yes” or “no” on a ballot measure. If you vote “yes” on a proposition that means you want a change in law to happen. If you vote “no” it means that you do not agree with the proposed change and you want the law to remain the same.*
- 3. PROPOSITION: A proposition is another word for describing a ballot measure.*
- 4. Propositions or ballot measures can be placed on the ballot either by bodies of elected officials, such as the legislature or a county Board of Supervisors, or by the initiative process.*



5. *INITIATIVES: The initiative process allows voters to bypass the legislature and propose ballot measures. An initiative can propose to amend the state constitution, or it can propose to change an existing law or pass a new law, sometimes called a statute. The proponents or sponsors of an initiative must circulate petitions to obtain the signatures of registered voters who want the proposed measure to appear on the ballot. At the state level in California, approximately 450,000 signatures are needed to qualify an initiative statute, and approximately 700,000 signatures are needed for an initiative constitutional amendment.*
6. *The initiative process originally came about because voters who were frustrated by the influence of big business and other wealthy special interest groups on the legislative process organized to demand the right to propose laws that would appear on the state ballot so everyone could vote on them. Unfortunately, it has become so expensive to qualify an initiative for the ballot, and to pay for the publicity necessary to convince voters to vote for or against it, that initiative campaigns are very often controlled by wealthy special interests. The initiative process does not exist in every state.*
7. *The initiative process can also be used at the local level to place a measure on the ballot. Decisions about schools, property taxes, parks and stadiums are among the issues that are decided by local ballot measures.*
8. *ORDINANCES: Laws at the municipal or local level are oftentimes referred to as ordinances.*
9. *Ballot measures can be written in a very confusing manner. The Easy Reading Voter Guide discusses all of the state ballot measures. It is also very useful to know who the major financial contributors are. It is sometimes hard to know who they are. Read the papers or call the campaign offices to find out who is a campaign contributor. Remember, if you don't feel you have a good enough understanding of the issue, you don't have to vote on it.*



### **Discussion Questions:**

- *What are some ballot measures that have appeared on recent ballots in California?*
- *Does our county have ballot measures?*
- *If so, what was or is a recent county ballot measure?*

*Questions or comments?*

## **10. How to Get Information About Candidates and Issues**

### **Estimated Time**

20 minutes

### **Materials Needed**

Butcher Paper

Markers

### **Preparation**

- ➡ Facilitator should prepare a butcher paper chart with the headings as shown on page 48.



## 10. How to Get Information About Candidates and Issues

### Objective

Provide a brief overview of the sources of information available for making decisions about issues and candidates.

### Methodology

Large group discussion.

### Exercise Overview

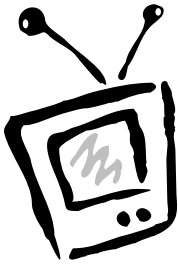


*When choosing a candidate or a political party, you can make a decision based upon what that person or party says they will do in the future, and/or what positions they have taken or how they have voted in the past.*

- 1. Sometimes it is easy to figure out what a party or candidate's position would be on a particular issue. But elected officials do not always take the same position on an issue that their party does, especially when it comes to topics related to religious beliefs, such as capital punishment or a woman's right to have an abortion. Also, especially at the local government level, many elected officials are not affiliated with political parties, such as many mayors, Boards of Supervisors and City Councils, and school board members.*
- 2. Just because a candidate is the same sex as you are, or the same race or ethnicity, it doesn't mean that they necessarily have the same values or opinions that you have. It is preferable to make a choice based upon what a candidate or party's positions are on issues that are important to you.*
- 3. Millions of dollars are spent on political campaigns. Just because a candidate or party has more ads than another doesn't mean they're better, it just means they have more money.*
- 4. In your action kits you will find resources about where to get information about candidates.*



9. Speeches and public appearances
10. Televised debates
11. Campaign Literature
12. Magazines
13. Project Vote Smart — free information by phone in English & Spanish about candidates, voting records, and much more:  
**1-888-VOTESMART** (1-888-868-3762)
14. Internet Web Sites — for example, Project Vote Smart:  
**www.vote-smart.org/** (There is a list of web sites in the Introduction)
15. You can call an elected official's or candidate's office and find out what their positions are on issues that are important to you. You can also ask what an official's vote or position was on an issue or piece of legislation in the past.
16. You can call the headquarters of the political party that you are interested in knowing more about and ask them to send you information.
17. "Slate Cards" are postcards or pamphlets prepared by political parties that list their recommendations about candidates and ballot measures.
18. Recommendations by organizations you belong to or whose values you share, such as the PTA (Parent Teachers' Association), the Sierra Club, or a community group. Some of these organizations also prepare "slate cards."
19. Other ideas...



## 11. Voter Registration Demonstration

### Estimated Time

15 minutes

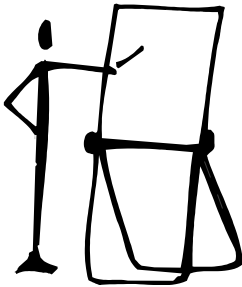
### Materials Needed

Butcher Paper

Markers

Overhead Projector (if available)

### Preparation



- ➡ If an overhead projector is not available, facilitator should prepare beforehand an enlarged reproduction of voter registration card on butcher paper. There is a transparency of the voter registration card in Appendix 4. Many copy shops can make large photocopies 3 feet wide, and as long as you need. A 3 ft. x 4 ft. enlargement of the voter registration card costs about \$6.
- ➡ **Brief extra volunteers, if available, on filling out voter registration cards.**
- ➡ Make *photocopies* of the sample registration card in Appendix 3. Original voter registration cards may be included in the **Voter Action Kit** that you prepare beforehand for participants. Have participants practice filling out the photocopies, so that even individuals who are not yet citizens can have an opportunity to learn how to fill out the card.
- ➡ Prepare information on voter registration deadline and languages available in your County.

## 11. Voter Registration Demonstration

### Objective

Demonstrate how to fill out a sample voter registration card.

### Methodology

Voter registration walk-through.

### Exercise Overview



- Hand out photocopies of voter registration forms and put copy of card on overhead projector (or put up large mock-up of card prepared beforehand).
- Tell participants that in this exercise you will all fill out a sample of the voter registration card, so they can see how easy it is. Since this is just a sample, everyone in the class can fill it out, even if they aren't eligible to vote yet. Remind participants that they must be a U.S. citizen before they can register to vote.
- Go over form line by line as participants fill out form, alert to questions from participants. If extra assistance is available, helpers should circulate to see if folks need extra help filling out copy of voter registration card.
- Tell participants what the registration deadline is before the next election:  
➡ Registration Deadline: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Reiterate the languages that voter registration cards are available in your County.  
➡ Languages: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Tell participants that now they know just as much as you do about filling out a voter registration card and can help others — family members and friends — to register also. Voter registration cards are in the Voter Action Kit they will take with them when they leave the workshop. You do not need to be a citizen in order to help register someone else to vote.
- Questions or comments?

## 12. Election Issues

### Estimated Time

60 minutes

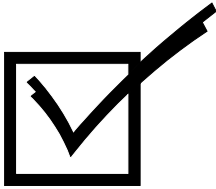
### Materials Needed

Lap Voting booths or absentee ballots from Registrar of Voters

Easy Reading Voting Guide

Opposing campaign and candidates' materials

### Preparation



➡ See facilitators' guide for suggestions for inviting outside speakers.

## 12. Election Issues

### Objective

To introduce participants to ballot issues and candidates.

### Methodology

Overview of candidates and issues on ballot. Presentations by facilitators or invited speakers, followed by question and answer period.

### Exercise Overview



- Remind participants that elections are an opportunity to vote for a candidate or an issue.
- Use *Easy Reading Voter Guide*, lap voting booths (if you were able to borrow them from the Registrar of Voters), or absentee ballots to go over candidates and issues in the election.
- Rather than invite outside speakers, facilitators may present all or part of Exercise 12 themselves. This will require additional preparation and some independent research. You can use some of the resources listed at the end of the Introduction to gather relevant information. Ideally, facilitators can provide a more in-depth synopsis of relevant candidates and issues than the *Easy Reading Voters Guide* offers. If you choose to present the overview of election issues yourself, remember to present both sides of an issue and reserve your own opinions to allow participants to formulate their own decisions.
- Speakers should allow plenty of time for questions and comments from workshop participants.

### Tips and Examples for Facilitators

- ➡ If you have invited speakers, refer to the recommendations on page *x* in the Introduction about time keeping and discussion format.
- ➡ Point out mock voting booth, if available, and announce that there will be time at end of session for individuals to practice voting.

## 13. Questions and Review

### Estimated Time

10 minutes

### Materials Needed

None

### Objective

Provide opportunities for questions and review.

### Methodology

Questions and Answers

### Exercise Overview



- *Any questions about the material covered or things you want to review again?*

## 14. Participants' Evaluation

### Estimated Time

5 minutes

### Materials Needed

Paper for facilitators' notes  
Practice Voting Booths

### Objective

Provide opportunity for participants to give feedback on the workshop.

### Methodology

Large group discussion/individual comments

### Exercise Overview

Ask questions below and take notes on participants' comments.



1. *What did you like most about this workshop?*
2. *What would you have liked to see more of?*
3. *What did you like least?*
4. *Were there confusing things about this workshop?*

### Tips, Preparation and Examples for Facilitators

- Take notes on participants' comments so you can keep them in mind the next time you host a voter education workshop.
- Remind participants that those who are eligible to register to vote should do so as soon as they can, even if the next election isn't for a while.
- Remind participants that they have the opportunity to practice at the voting booth before they leave.



## Facilitators' Evaluation

Please take a few minutes after your training is completed to fill out this brief evaluation form. We are very interested in your suggestions. Return the form to the Northern California Citizenship Project, 116 New Montgomery Street, Suite 742, San Francisco, CA 94105. Fax: 415-777-1714



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Training: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Language Training Was Presented In: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Sessions Training Was Presented In: \_\_\_\_\_

1) What sections of the curriculum did you use?

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Did you add or change any sections of the curriculum? Please describe.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) What was most effective about the curriculum?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) What was least effective about the curriculum?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Were the time periods allotted for each section adequate?

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6) Do you plan any follow-up activities with your participants?

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7) Please summarize the comments of class participants per the questions in the Participant Evaluation.

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Do you have any other comments?

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# Appendices



# Appendix 1

## Voting Quiz



## Voting Quiz

**Q: Does anyone know what the three requirements are to be eligible to vote?**

To vote you must be at least 18, a U.S. citizen and not in prison or on parole for a felony.

**Q: What are the two types of things voters vote on?**

Candidates and issues.

**Q: How often are elections?**

➡ Major elections take place on even years. Every four years there is an election for president. The last presidential election was in \_\_\_\_\_ (facilitator fill in year). The next one will be in the year \_\_\_\_\_. The next governor's race in our state will be in \_\_\_\_\_. Local elections for mayor or city council or county boards can take place in either even or odd years. It depends where you live.



**Q: True or False?: Registering to vote is very expensive.**

False. Registering and voting costs nothing.

**Q: True or False?: Someone can help you fill out a voter registration form.**

True! Anyone can help you fill out the voter registration card and even accompany you when you go to the polling place.

**Q: What is the difference between a primary and a general election?**

In a primary election, a candidate from each party is selected to run in the general election, much like a playoff round in sports. The winning candidate in the general election takes office. Both elections have other important issues on the ballots, such as initiatives and bond measures. In California, primary elections take place in June, but this may change soon. General elections take place in November.

**Q: True or False?: Once you register for a party you have to vote for that party's candidate in the elections.**

False. You can vote for whoever you want to.

**Q: Can I vote in my own language?**

➡ Many counties provide ballot information in other languages. Bilingual voter registration cards have a place where you can request election materials in your language. In our county, information on candidates and issues is available in English and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Q: Will I get called for jury duty if I register to vote?**

Not necessarily. Jury pools are selected from a combination of public records. Serving on a jury can be very interesting and it's an important responsibility of citizenship, but you may request to be excused from serving on a jury if you are unable to do so because of financial or other important factors.

**Q: True or False?: Once you are registered to vote you must vote in every election.**

False! Once you register to vote it is up to you whether and how you will vote.

If you change your name, or address, you must re-register to vote.

**Q: True or False?: If you do not want to go to the polling place, or if you are out of town on election day, you are out of luck and don't get to vote.**

False! If you would like to vote in the privacy of your own home, you can vote by mail. This method of voting is called "absentee voting." The application for requesting an "absentee ballot" is at the back of the County Voter Information Packet. Your absentee ballot must be returned to the Registrar of Voters or to any polling place in your county by 8:00 p.m. on election day. About 20% of voters in California vote by absentee ballot.

**Q: True or False?: When you go to vote on election day, they can ask you for identification and proof of United States citizenship.**

False! The only time a polling place worker can ask you for identification is if you accidentally go to the wrong polling place and your name is not on their list. They can't ask you for proof of U.S. citizenship — when you sign the voter registration card you are swearing that you are a citizen.

**Q: What other questions do you have about voting?:** Seek answers from other participants first before providing more information.

## **Appendix 2**

# **Voting Skit One and Voting Skit Two**



# Voting Skit One

## At the Supermarket (2 roles)

**Voter registration volunteer:** Last chance to register to vote here!  
(sees voter) Hi, are you registered to vote?

**Voter:** No, I'm just here to buy milk. I don't have any extra money or time to stop.

**Volunteer:** It's free and it takes just 5 minutes.

**Voter:** What do I have to do?

**Volunteer:** Just fill out this form. Today is your last chance because registration ends 29 days before the election.

*Hands form to voter who begins to fill it out.*

**Voter:** Oh, I don't know which political party to pick right now.

**Volunteer:** If you don't know or don't want to pick a political party, you can choose the "Decline to State" box.

**Voter:** My friend is becoming a new citizen next week. Does that mean she can't vote?

**Volunteer:** Actually, once she goes through the ceremony she can vote if she goes to the

➡ main office of the Registrar of Voters at (*insert location here:* \_\_\_\_\_). New citizens are allowed to register and vote there up to seven days before the election.

**Voter:** That's all she has to do? Go to this office?

**Volunteer:** As long as she brings her naturalization certificate and picture identification, or, if she's mailed that off to the passport office, she should write down her naturalization number from her certificate and bring that along. Then she can register to vote at the office. Be sure to tell her that she also will be voting there right after she registers.

**Voter:** Thanks for the information – I'll pass it along to my friend. I'm done registering, what should I do with the form?

**Volunteer:** Make sure you sign it. Then, just tear off your receipt from the bottom of the card and put the card in the mailbox. You don't even need a stamp. And don't forget to vote!



**Voter:** Thanks, I will (walks off but turns around and comes back again). I forgot to ask you where I need to go to vote.

**Volunteer:** Now that you have registered, you'll get a Sample Ballot in the mail — here's what it looks like (shows Sample Ballot). It will tell you where you need to go vote — just look at the mailing label. It also tells you what candidates and issues you will be voting on.

## Voting Skit Two

### At the polling place (3 roles)

**Voter:** Hi, I'm here to vote.

**Poll Worker:** What's your name?

**Voter:** (Gives name)

**Poll Worker:** (Finds name on list) Please sign here next to your name. Here's your ballot. Just wait in line for the next private booth to be free.



**Voter:** I've never voted before – can someone show me how to mark my ballot?

**Poll Worker:** Of course, one of our volunteers will go into the booth with you.

*Voter and volunteer go into booth*

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** THIS IS HOW YOU MARK YOUR CHOICES.

**Voter:** Do I have to vote on everything?

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** NO, YOU CAN VOTE JUST ON THE THINGS YOU WANT.

**Voter:** It's hard to remember who and what I want to vote for, even though I wrote down my choices beforehand. I wish I could look at my notes.

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** YOU CAN! YOU CAN BRING IN ANY NOTES YOU WANT.

**Voter:** Great, I will (reaches in pocket and refers to notes while filling out ballot)

**Voter:** Oh no, I didn't want to vote for him! Can I start over?

**POLL VOLUNTEER:** OF COURSE, JUST TAKE THE BALLOT YOU ALREADY HAVE AND EXCHANGE IT AT THE CHECK IN DESK FOR A NEW ONE.

**Voter:** Thanks, I think I have the hang of this now!



## **Appendix 3**

# **Sample Voter Registration Card**



## **Appendix 4**

# **Transparency of Voter Registration Card**

**For use on overhead projector**



## **Appendix 5**

# **Easy Reading Voter Guide**

**Order Form**

# **Why Vote? ¿Por Qué Votar?**

**15 minute video tape**

**Order Form**



# **Appendix 6**

## **Sample Publicity Materials**



# New Citizens Vote!



**Your Vote Can:**



**Increase Opportunities for Your Community**

**Benefit Your Child's Future**

**Create a Stronger Voice for New Citizens  
and Immigrants**

*Come to an information meeting to learn about:*



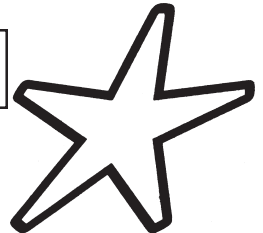
- How to get information on Issues and Candidates
- How Local government works and what it can do for you

Date:

Place:

Time:

*Child Care Available*



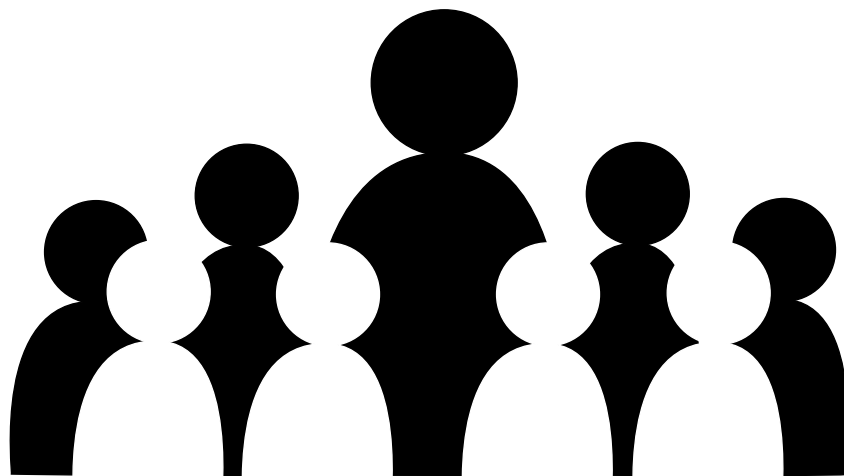
*For more information contact:*





# **“Voter Action Kit”**

## **Participant Packets**





## **New Citizens Vote!**

# **Voting Overview**

### **Who Can Vote?**

U.S. Citizens

At least 18 years old

Not in prison or on parole for a felony

Who register to vote at least 29 days before an election

New citizens can register to vote at their County Registrar's Office up to 7 days before an election



### **How Can I Register?**

Fill out a voter registration form! You can get them from your local post office, community agencies, local library, or County Registrar of Voters' office.

Forms in many languages may be available. Just ask!

Someone can help you fill out a form if you want.

Just put the form in the mail. You don't even need a stamp!

### **When should I Register?**

You have to register at least 29 days before an election to be able to vote.

If you become a new citizen between 28 and 7 days before an election, just go to your County Registrar of Voters office with your naturalization certificate or number and a photo identification. You can register and VOTE right there!

### **Where Do I Vote?**

About three weeks before the election, you will get information from the Registrar of Voters called a "Sample Ballot". It will tell you on the mailing label where to vote in your neighborhood.

Neighborhood voting can take place in churches, schools, community centers or garages. The Sample Ballot will tell you the exact address.

## **Voting By Mail**

You can also vote by mail by requesting an “Absentee Ballot”. Call the Registrar of Voters to request an application for an Absentee Ballot, or fill in the form on the back of the Sample Ballot that registered voters receive in the mail prior to an election.

Requests for Absentee Ballots must be received seven days before the election.

Absentee Ballots will be mailed directly to your home. Just vote at home and mail the ballot back by Election Day!



## **New Citizens Vote!**

# **Going to the Polls**

Your polling place could be at a church, school, community center, fire station — anyplace in your neighborhood!

Polls are open between 7 am and 8 pm.

Here is what happens at the polling place:

1. You check in with polling volunteers. They will:
  - Ask you for your name;
  - Check for it on their list of registered voters;
  - Ask you to sign your name on this list;
  - Hand you a ballot.
2. You mark your ballot.
  - You go into a small, private booth;
  - You mark your ballot with your choices.
3. You put your ballot in a sealed box when you have finished voting.

### ***Things to keep in mind:***

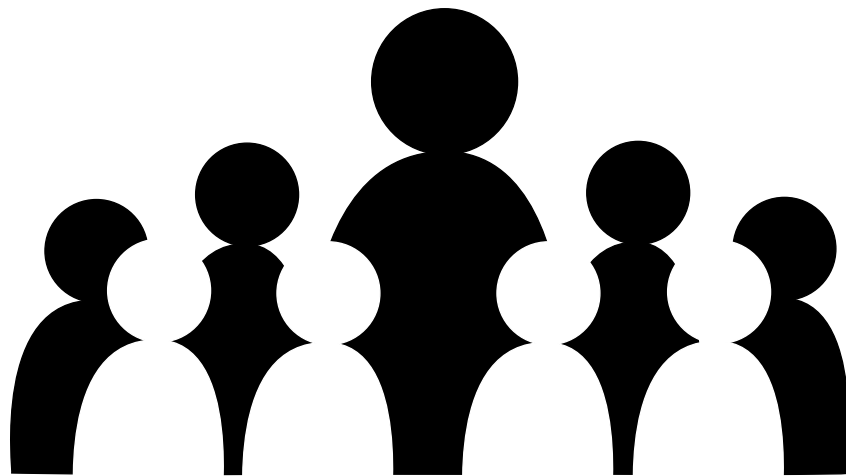
You can ask for help if you want.

You can take a friend or relative into the booth with you to help.

You can take your notes with you.

You don't have to vote on everything.

If you make a mistake, just ask for another ballot!



## **New Citizens Vote!**

# **Community Involvement — Action Ideas**

Community Involvement can take many forms including:

### **Learning...**

By reading the newspaper and watching the news on television

About your rights and responsibilities as a community member

About your neighbors' concerns

*Other ideas:*

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### **Volunteering...**

In a community agency

At your child's school

On a local committee trying to improve the community

To coach a local sports team

*Other ideas:*

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### **Speaking Out...**

Writing, calling or visiting your elected officials

Organize a neighborhood meeting

Writing to your local newspaper about a problem

Voting

*Other ideas:*

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Local Resources	Name	Phone Number	Public Meeting Dates
Animal Control			
Battered Women's Hotline and Shelter Referral			
Children & Youth			
Fire Department			
Housing			
Local Volunteer Center			
Parks & Recreation			
Police Department <i>(non-emergency number)</i>			
Public Library			
Public Works <i>(streets, traffic, storm drains, sidewalks, street lights, etc.)</i>			
Rape Crisis Center			
Recycling & Energy Assistance			
Rent Board <i>(assistance for renters)</i>			
Water Department			
<b>County Government</b>			
General Information			

<b>Local Resources</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>	<b>Public Meeting Dates</b>
Board of Supervisors			
Alcohol & Drug Recovery Services			
Birth & Death Certificates			
Courts			
Department of Public Health <i>(clinics, immunizations, family planning, Medi-Cal/Medicaid, testing for sexually transmitted diseases)</i>			
Department of Social Services <i>(foodstamps; welfare)</i>			
District Attorney			
Housing & Community Development			
Public Defender			
Registrar of Voters			
Sheriff			
Tax Collector			
WIC Food Supplements Program			

