

CALIFORNIA CIVIC PARTICIPATION:

ADDRESSING THE CALIFORNIA VOTER PARTICIPATION GAP



Data For Social Good Foundation

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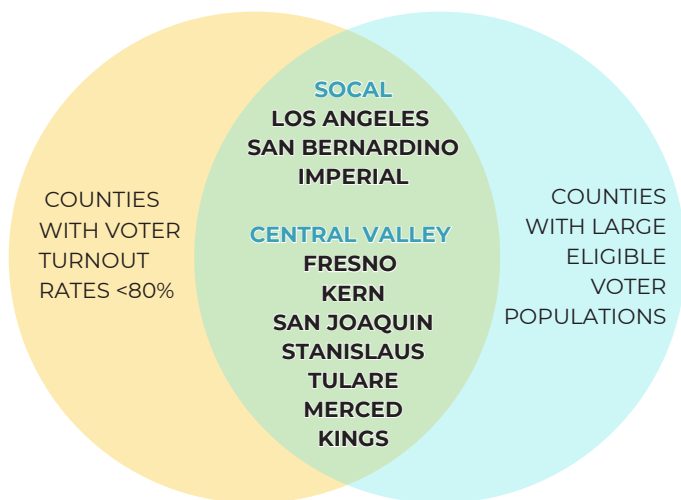
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SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study identifies the top 10 counties in California that experienced the lowest voter turnout in the 2020 Presidential Election as a proportion of the total registered voters in the county (Table 2, page 12). Delving into the demographics of the eligible voting population (i.e. Citizen Voting Age Population, or CVAP), we find significant disparities in who is registered and who casts a ballot. Our selected data sources show that 18-44-year-olds trail behind 45+ year-olds in voter registration and participation. By simultaneously increasing registration among underperforming groups and working to mobilize newly registered and previously registered voters, participation gaps across age groups can be diminished, while increasing overall voter participation. The counties listed below would greatly benefit from additional resources from the state to increase civic engagement, especially among voters of color and young voters who have historically been underrepresented in elections and who, as a result, require additional outreach and mobilization in order to shift their voting behavior:

1. Los Angeles County
2. San Bernardino County
3. Fresno County
4. Kern County
5. San Joaquin County
6. Stanislaus County
7. Tulare County
8. Merced County
9. Imperial County
10. Kings County



**USING 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VOTER PARTICIPATION ESTIMATES
(More information on this graphic on page 7)*

Although these participation gaps exist within all California counties, we recommend focusing on these 10 counties because they have the greatest need, and, shifting their voting patterns will have a larger impact on registration and participation rates statewide. To increase civic engagement in the 10 priority counties, we recommend implementing a state-level partnership between the Secretary of State (SoS) and the Governor’s Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC) for standardization of processes, reporting, and budgeting. Their efforts should be complemented at the county level through partnerships between county elections officials and local community-based organizations (CBOs) to develop and implement jurisdiction-specific voter outreach and education programs.

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

There are two steps an eligible voter must take before their vote can be counted: registration and voting. California has relatively high registration rates; however, even with the important electoral reforms that have been implemented, not all eligible California voters are registered. Moreover, many Californians who are registered to vote have not engaged in the second step by casting a ballot. We believe that realizing true democracy requires full participation of all eligible voters and that the state needs to ensure that all of California's eligible voters cast a ballot, regardless of their demographic background.

The size of California's eligible voter population, and its continual growth, is unprecedented in the United States. From US Census, American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates, we know that from 2019 to 2023, 455,883 and 255,183 new eligible Latinos and Asians, respectively, entered the electoral system. These include individuals entering the electorate by turning 18, becoming citizens, or becoming a new state resident. We will need to continually educate these newly eligible voters about the process and importance of voting. Given that California has not reached 100% registration among its eligible voters, the state needs to continually invest in education and outreach in order to achieve this goal.

- Eligible Unregistered Voters (2020): This group requires broad efforts, including education about the importance of voting and ensuring that registering and voting is easy for them. As of 2020, there were **3,043,069 eligible and unregistered voters** in the state of California. We used an internet marketing model as a frame, to approximate the cost of educating and registering these eligible voters. Using that frame, we concluded that it would cost \$8.58 to register each eligible unregistered voter. Given the size of the eligible unregistered voter population, the annual cost for this effort would be **\$26,109,532**.
- Registered Non-Voters (2020): These are eligible and registered voters who, for whatever reason, feel that engaging in voting is not going to make a difference in their lives. Changing their perspective requires more intentional and deeper engagement. A meta-analysis that we conducted reviewing over 300 experimental studies evaluating voter turnout efforts among non-white voters showed that meaningful, in-person engagement, either at the door or on the phone, with a message that connects to the target voter's day-to-day life, is most effective in shifting these voters' sense of political efficacy. People who have registered but choose to sit out during an election are *behaving rationally*. They do not feel: they have enough trusted information to be confident in their choices; the candidates are trustworthy; they have information in their preferred language they can understand; or that the candidates are speaking about issues they face on a day-to-day basis.

Disengagement among these voters is a *rational response* to how they have been socialized into politics. Re-socialization is what is necessary. That cannot be done by a mailer, a text, or a postcard.

SECTION 1: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)

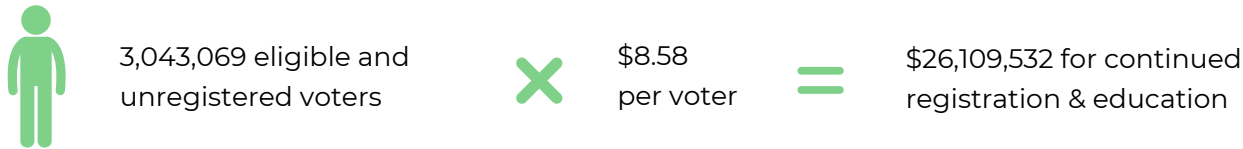
To shift the behavior of registered voters who have not turned out to vote, we recommend an investment of **\$20.25** per voter, for a total of **\$86,311,514** (see funding formula below).

For these two activities, the suggested total annual budget recommendation is **\$112,421,046**.

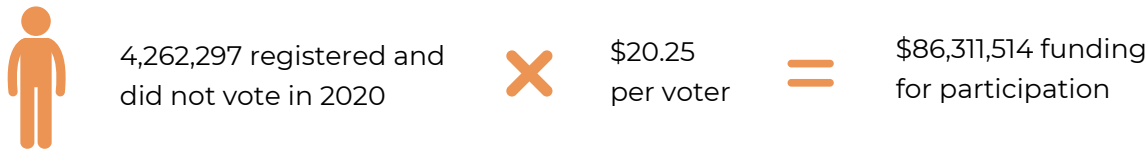
We propose that the majority of the resources go to 10 counties we identified, which have the greatest need for these sorts of investments. These **10 counties** contained **35.5% of the Eligible Unregistered Voters** and **52.1% of Registered Non-Voters** in California in the 2020 General Presidential election. The total for the 10 counties set aside would be **\$54,273,031**.

STATEWIDE FUNDING FORMULA

Eligible Unregistered Voters Statewide (2020)

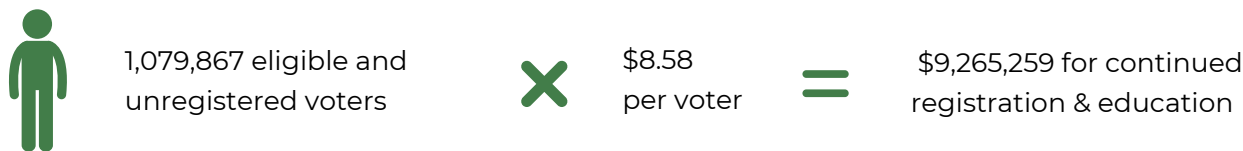


Registered Non-Voters Statewide (2020)

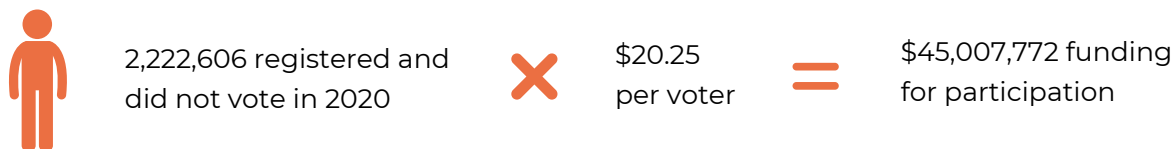


10 COUNTY FUNDING FORMULA

Eligible Unregistered Voters 10 Counties(2020)



Registered Non-Voters 10 Counties (2020)



(More information on this graphic on page 21)

SECTION 2: DATA & METHODOLOGY

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE (SOS)

The California Secretary of State (SoS)¹ works to ensure that government actions regarding elections, business, political campaigning, legislative advocacy, and historical records are made accessible to the public. Part of their role includes providing annual voter registration statistics as well as primary and election results across the state. We leverage this data by analyzing the county-level registration and election results for the 2020 General Presidential Election.² It is important to note that this election was chosen because, at the time this research was conducted, this was the most recent General Presidential election that had occurred in California.

AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS) 1-YEAR REPORTS

The American Community Survey (ACS)³ is an annual survey (distinct from the decennial Census survey) that is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and provides demographic estimates of educational attainment, employment, homeownership, and more, at the local (city and county), state, and national levels. The ACS provides annual estimates of the eligible electorate (i.e. Citizen Voting Age Population, or CVAP) at the state and county levels that captures those who are 18 years old and citizens. In this report, estimates of the eligible electorate (CVAP) of a county were derived from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year reports.⁴ Although the SoS also includes estimates of eligible voting populations in their voter participation reports, they are generally not as descriptive as ACS reports and thus they limit our ability to explore CVAP breakdowns by demographic characteristics. We also considered using the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey (CPS), but ultimately selected ACS because the survey is more comprehensive and provides data for all 58 California counties.

L2 REGISTRATION AND VOTING DATA

L2⁵ is a nationwide database that provides registration and voting data for all states, broken down by political jurisdiction. For both registration and election results, L2 provides imputed age, ethnoracial, and gender breakdowns that allows us to determine if there are registration and participation disparities in California. For registration, we focused on those who were registered on or before the November 3, 2020 Presidential Election.

Though frequently updated and arguably considered one of the more reliable data providers, we acknowledge that L2, like any imputed data source, has shortcomings. L2 provides information about registered voters, not CVAP.

As is true of any study comparing eligible, registered, and active voters, we are using distinct data sources, each with its strengths and weaknesses, to try to determine what gaps exist. For the purposes of our research, when comparing registration and turnout estimates by age and ethno-racial data, we utilize ACS estimates in conjunction with L2.

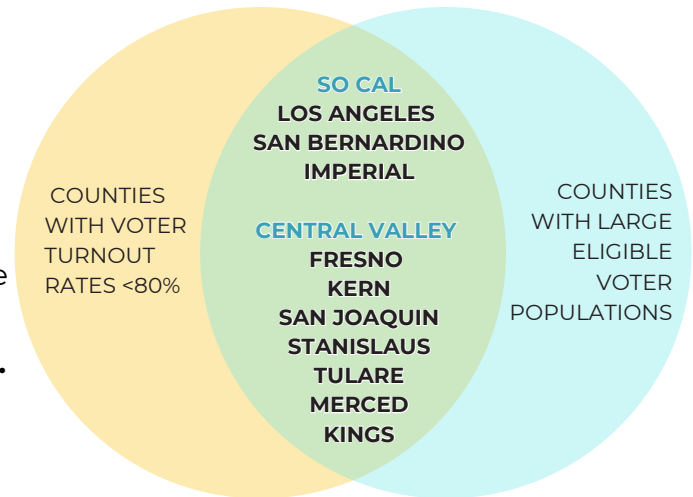
1. [California Secretary of State](#)
2. [California 2020 General Presidential Results](#)
3. [American Community Survey](#)
4. [2019 CVAP ACS 1-Year Estimates](#)
5. [L2](#)

SECTION 2: DATA & METHODOLOGY

HOW 10 COUNTIES WERE IDENTIFIED AS GREATEST NEED

To identify the counties in need of targeted outreach we:

1. Ranked all 58 California counties by the percentage of **voter turnout** (turnout ÷ total registered × 100) for the 2020 Presidential General election
2. Compared these proportions against the state average turnout (80.67%). There were 16 counties that had **under 80% turnout in 2020**.
3. **Sorted the counties by their eligible voting population size** (or CVAP) from largest to smallest. Using this methodology, 10 counties were identified as presenting the greatest need for targeted state investment.



USING 2020 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VOTER PARTICIPATION ESTIMATES

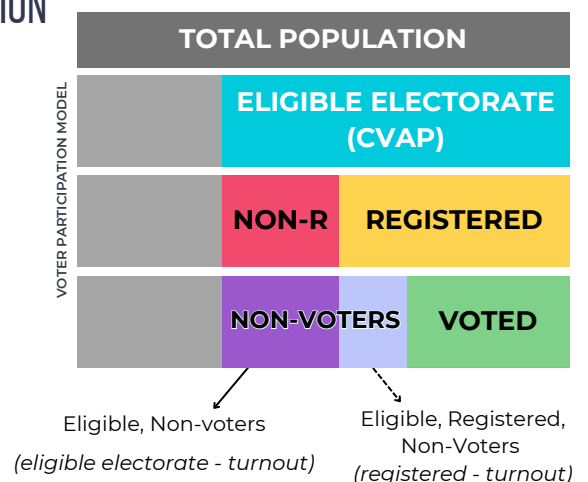
CVAP ESTIMATES USING ACS 1-YEAR REPORTS FOR COUNTY-LEVEL COMPARISONS

After identifying the 10 counties with the lowest participation in the 2020 Presidential Election and the highest eligible voter population, we analyze the demographics and trends of the eligible electorate in each to highlight the gaps in registration and voting. We leverage this data by:

1. Determining what proportion of the eligible electorate for each demographic group (using ACS 2019 1-year CVAP data) are registered to vote (using L2 data);
2. Calculating what proportion of the eligible electorate for each demographic group (using ACS 2019 1-year CVAP data) actually voted in 2020 (using L2 validated vote data).

2-STEP APPROACH TO OPTIMIZING VOTER PARTICIPATION

To minimize California's voter participation gaps and ensure more representation of California's diverse electorate at the polls, the state and county elections officials must take steps to increase the number of voter registrations (gold box) and the number of ballots returned (green box) from eligible voters. To do that, we need a better understanding of registration rates among eligible voters, which we discuss below.



SECTION 3: REGISTRATION OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE

OVERVIEW OF CALIFORNIA VOTERS

Since the implementation of the 1993 National Voter Registration Act,⁶ also known as the **Motor Voter law**, voter registration rates in California have gradually increased as a proportion of the CVAP. Figure 1 summarizes this increase, with the largest spike in registration from 2016 to 2020, an increase of 9.9 percentage points. From 2000 to 2020, voter registration rates increased by 14.7 percentage points, but there is still room for improvement. As of 2020, 12.1% of eligible California voters was not registered to vote.

Figure 2 shows voter registration by age. 65+ Californians have the highest registration rates, which is in line with national registration and turnout rates for this age group. **18-29 year olds have the lowest registration rate**, underscoring the need to for the state to increase outreach and encourage political engagement among younger Californians.

REGISTRATION OVER TIME

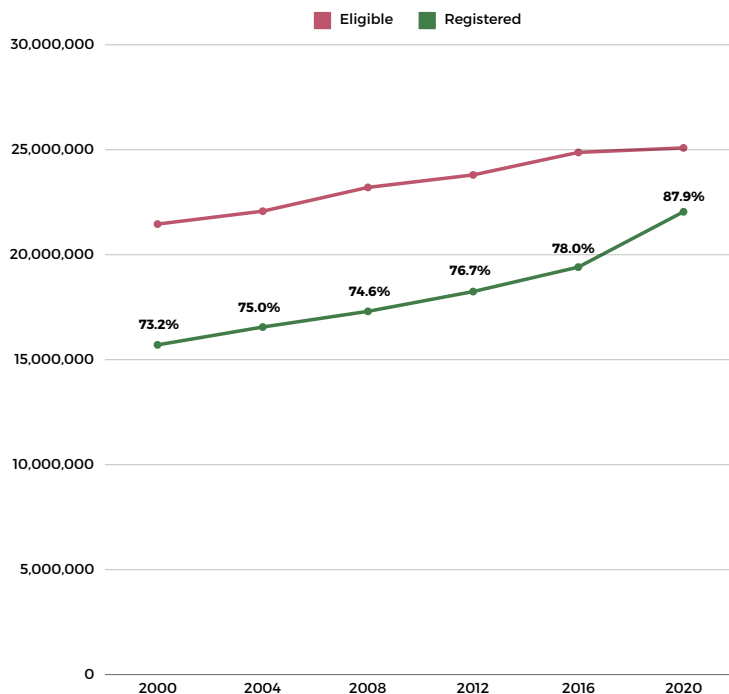


FIGURE 1

PERCENT OF REGISTERED CVAP FOR EACH AGE GROUP

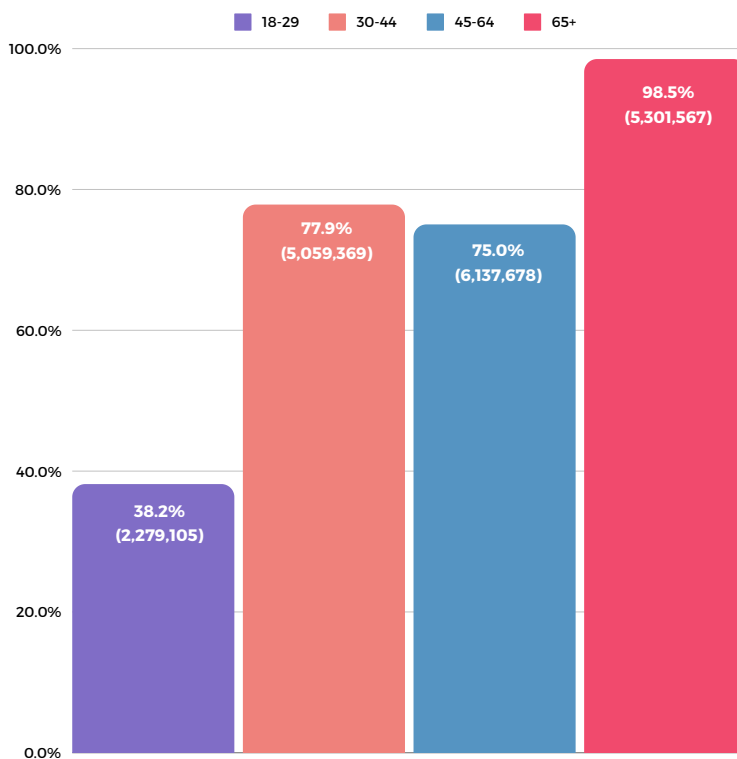


FIGURE 2

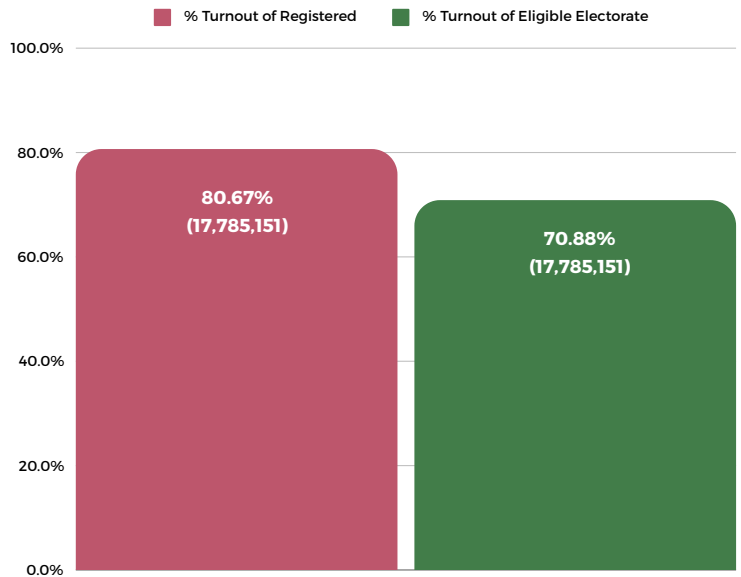
6: California Motor Voter
 FIGURE 1: 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, 2020 SoS Data
 FIGURE 2: (L2 / 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates CVAP) X 100

SECTION 4: TURNOUT & TARGETED 10 COUNTIES

OVERVIEW OF 2020 CA VOTER TURNOUT

Focusing on voter turnout, **Figure 3** makes clear why it is important to consider eligible voter engagement, rather than just turnout among the registered. Registered voter turnout was relatively high, at just under 81%. However, in term of California’s eligible voters, **only ~71% of those eligible cast a ballot**. That means that **nearly one-third of California’s eligible voters did not vote in 2020**, demonstrating the need for more intentional efforts to increase voter turnout in California.

2020 STATEWIDE VOTER TURNOUT



California
FIGURE 3

GENDER MAKEUP OF 2020 STATEWIDE VOTER TURNOUT

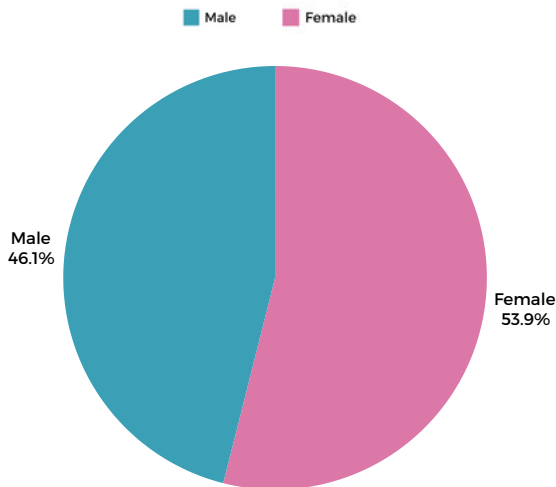


FIGURE 4

Figure 4 considers how gender affects political engagement. Women make up a larger share of voters (50.9% women vs. 49.1% men eligible to vote).

AGE MAKEUP OF 2020 STATEWIDE VOTER TURNOUT

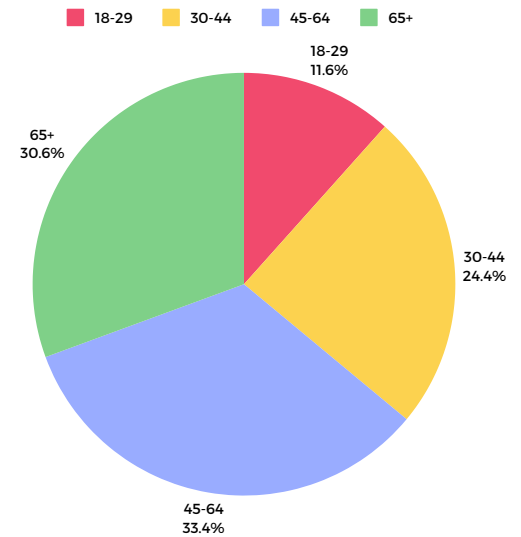


FIGURE 5

Figure 5 demonstrates that 45-64 year olds were the largest share of voters and 18-29 year olds were the smallest. These figures show big differences in voter participation among certain groups that will require additional investments to increase their civic engagement.

FIGURE 3: 2023 CA SoS Registrations: "Turnout Registered" & "Turnout Eligible"
FIGURE 4, 5: L2

SECTION 4: TURNOUT & TARGETED 10 COUNTIES

OVERVIEW OF 2020 CA VOTER TURNOUT, CONTINUED

Despite record-breaking turnout for the 2020 general election, voter participation gaps persist - especially for non-White voters in California. The California Secretary of State voter participation report states around 81% of registered voters cast a ballot in November 2020. However, a closer look at voter trends in California reveals disparities between ethnoracial groups. Estimates for Latino, Asian, and Black voter turnout in California range widely across various data sources.

- L2's estimates for **non-White registered voter turnout** in 2020 range between **76.2 - 82.8%** and 85.7% for White registered voters.
- The U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, which is self-reported, shows higher turnout estimates for those registered to vote, ranging from **90.5 - 94.9% for non-White registered voters** and 95.4% for White, non-Hispanic registered voters.

Regardless of the variation, a trend remains clear showing White voters cast ballots at higher rates than non-White voters. A PPIC study from September 2020 expands on this pattern:

- **Overrepresentation of White voters:** US Census estimates show that Whites are 41% of the state's adult population; however, PPIC surveys find that they comprise 55% of the state's likely voters
- **Latinos fall behind:** Latinos are 35% of California's adult population, yet account for only 21% of those most likely to vote.
- **Black voters also trail:** 54% of African Americans are likely to vote, compared to 65% of non-Hispanic whites.

These disparities are greater in regions where non-White voters make up a larger proportion of the population. Unfortunately, the state registration data does not include ethnoracial information for most California voters. That means that, when this information is provided, it has been imputed by the data vendor. That creates many errors and under reports of non-White voters, particularly Black voters. Without accurate registration data, voter turnout by ethnorace is based on estimates, which also include a great deal of error.

All of the 10 counties we identified have significant non-white voter populations, who we know require culturally competent voter outreach and education in order to be mobilized effectively (*for further detail, see pp 17-19 in this report*).

For more information on how different data sources estimate registration and voting by ethnorace, please see pp. 31-34 in the data appendix.

SECTION 4: TURNOUT STATEWIDE & TARGETED COUNTIES

TABLE 1: REPORTED VOTING, BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN, FOR CALIFORNIA: NOVEMBER 2020

| Race and Hispanic-Origin | Voted | | | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------|
| | Total voted (in thousands) | % Voted (of Total Population) | Margin of error | % Voted (of Citizen, Voting-Age Population) | Margin of error |
| White non-Hispanic alone | 8,711 | 72.1% | ±1.7 | 74.6% | ±1.7 |
| Black alone | 1,173 | 60.3% | ±4.4 | 64.0% | ±4.4 |
| Asian alone | 2,370 | 46.7% | ±2.8 | 59.9% | ±3.2 |
| Hispanic (of any race) | 4,539 | 40.7% | ±2.0 | 54.6% | ±2.4 |

TABLE 1

ETHNORACIAL MAKEUP OF STATEWIDE ELIGIBLE VOTER POPULATION FOR SELECT GROUPS (2020 CPS)

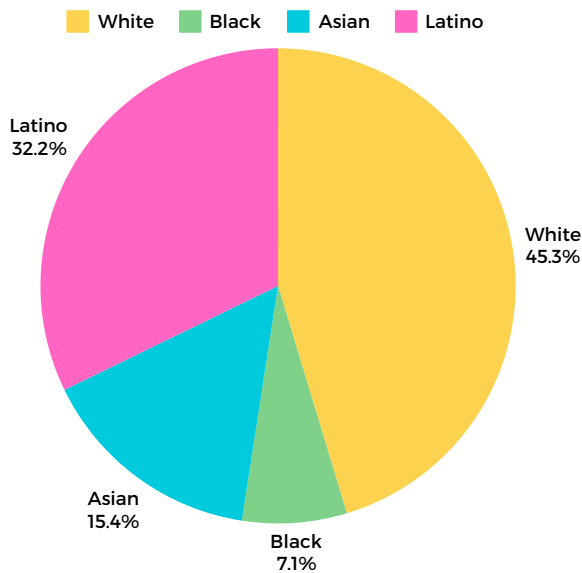


FIGURE 6

ETHNORACIAL MAKEUP OF 2020 STATEWIDE VOTER TURNOUT FOR SELECT GROUPS (2020 CPS)

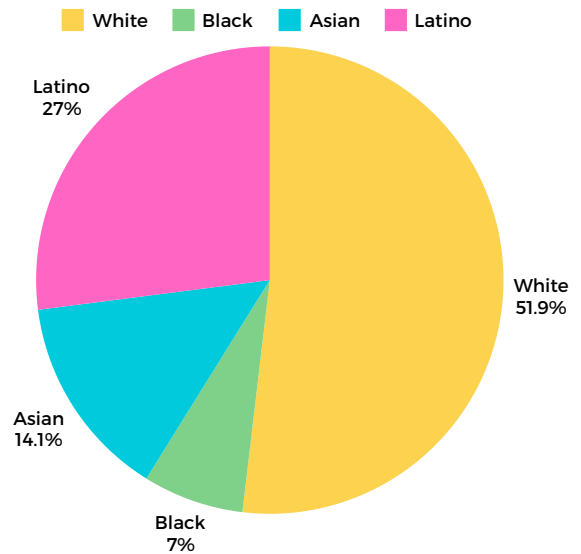


FIGURE 7

NB: Please note, the pie charts above do not include estimates for voters who identify as more than one race, Native or Indigenous peoples, or Other.

Sources:
Table 1, Figures 6-7: [Census Current Population Survey 2020 Voting Supplement Table 4b](#)

SECTION 4: TURNOUT STATEWIDE & TARGETED COUNTIES

2020 TURNOUT: LOWEST BY COUNTY

Table 2 summarizes the **10 California counties with the lowest voter turnout in the 2020 Presidential Election, based on the number of registered voters and their eligible voting population size.** As an example, of the 10 counties, Los Angeles has the highest percentage of registered voters (91%) based on their eligible voter population, yet had one of the lowest turnout rates in California in 2020 (74%). Overall, as a proportion of their total registered voters, Imperial County had the lowest turnout (67%).

The “Non-Voters” column captures those who are eligible to vote and not registered to vote, and as a result did not vote in the 2020 Presidential Election. Overall, **as of 2020, across the 10 counties, there were 3.6 million Californians that needed to be registered and/or encouraged to vote.** These counties require the most outreach and efforts to increase voter registration and participation.

TABLE 2: OVERVIEW 10 COUNTY VOTER PARTICIPATION

| County | 2020 Presidential Turnout % of Registered | | Eligible, Non-Voters |
|----------------|---|-----|----------------------|
| Los Angeles | 4,338,191 | 74% | 2,051,162 |
| San Bernardino | 852,636 | 77% | 547,014 |
| Fresno | 370,068 | 74% | 239,140 |
| Kern | 309,143 | 72% | 227,173 |
| San Joaquin | 292,818 | 79% | 186,695 |
| Stanislaus | 217,517 | 77% | 131,256 |
| Tulare | 148,677 | 74% | 125,346 |
| Merced | 92,424 | 78% | 60,521 |
| Imperial | 57,366 | 67% | 47,524 |
| Kings | 44,442 | 73% | 49,698 |
| TOTAL | 8,945,888 | | 3,665,529 |

TABLE 2



The counties with the lowest turnout are in the Central Valley and Southern California. **Figure 8** highlights the regions where voter participation is the lowest compared to the rest of the state, and where additional resources and mobilization are most needed.

Importantly, these counties’ eligible voting populations **include significant numbers of young and non-white voters**, who require **targeted and culturally competent outreach** to ensure their civic participation. An overview of voter participation within these 10 counties by age is provided below on the following pages.

Note: Counties highlighted in blue are part of the 10 counties identified with low turnout rates and high eligible voting populations.

TABLE 1: 2023 CA SoS Registrations

SECTION 4: TURNOUT STATEWIDE & TARGETED COUNTIES

2020: TURNOUT & AGE

The share of **eligible voters**⁷ who are 18-29 ranges from 22% in Los Angeles to 28% Merced and Kings County, as a proportion of the total CVAP.

The share of **registered voters**⁸ who are 18-29 range from ~13% in Los Angeles to ~16% in Merced County, as a proportion of registered voters.

Figures 9 and 10 highlight turnout by age for the **2020 Presidential Election**, where 18-44 year olds had the lowest turnout rates relative to their registration totals. 45+ year olds had the highest turnout rates as a proportion of the total registered voters. These findings indicate a clear disparity in civic engagement between young and older voters, signaling the need for more targeted efforts to mobilize voters who are 18-44 years old.

2020 TURNOUT OF REGISTERED BY 10 COUNTIES & AGE (1 OF 2)

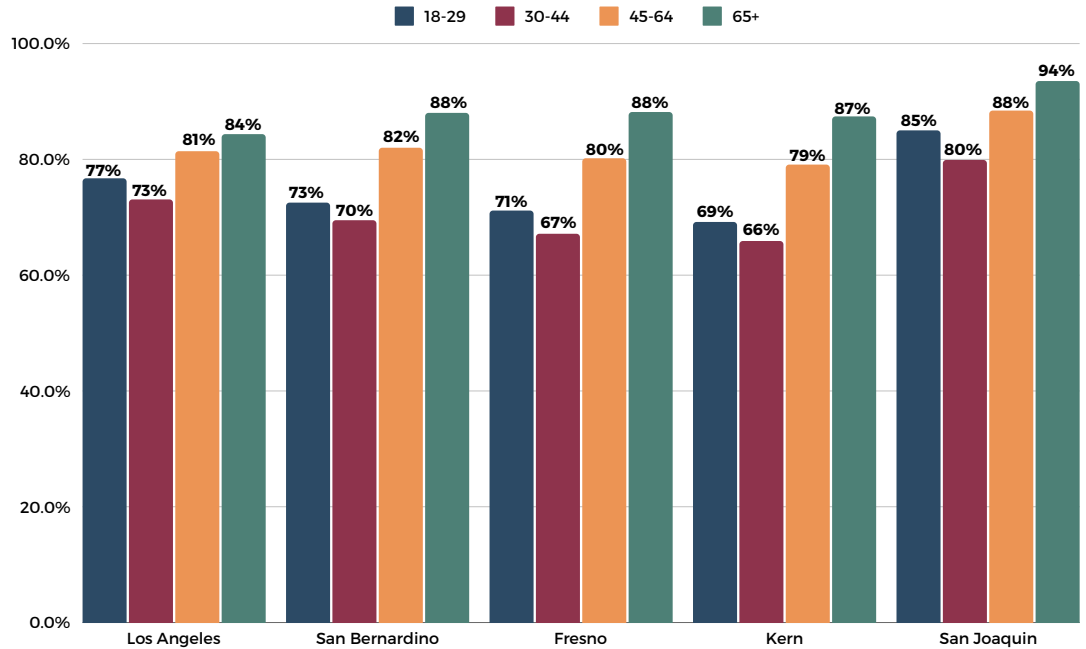


FIGURE 9

2020 TURNOUT OF REGISTERED BY 10 COUNTIES & AGE (2 OF 2)

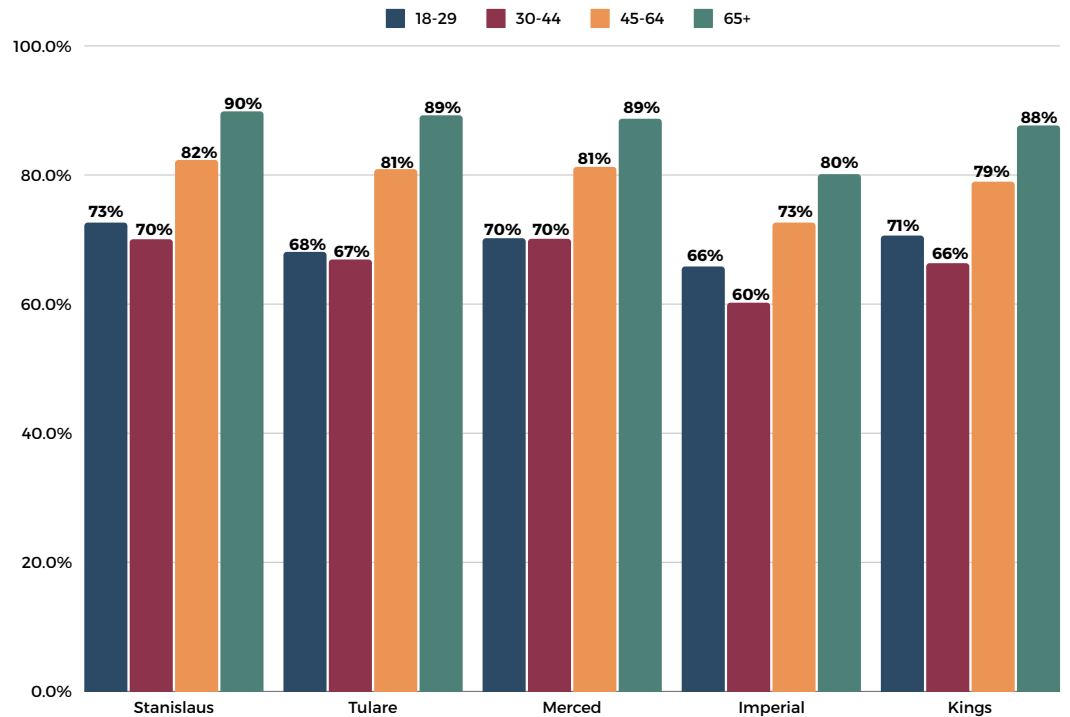


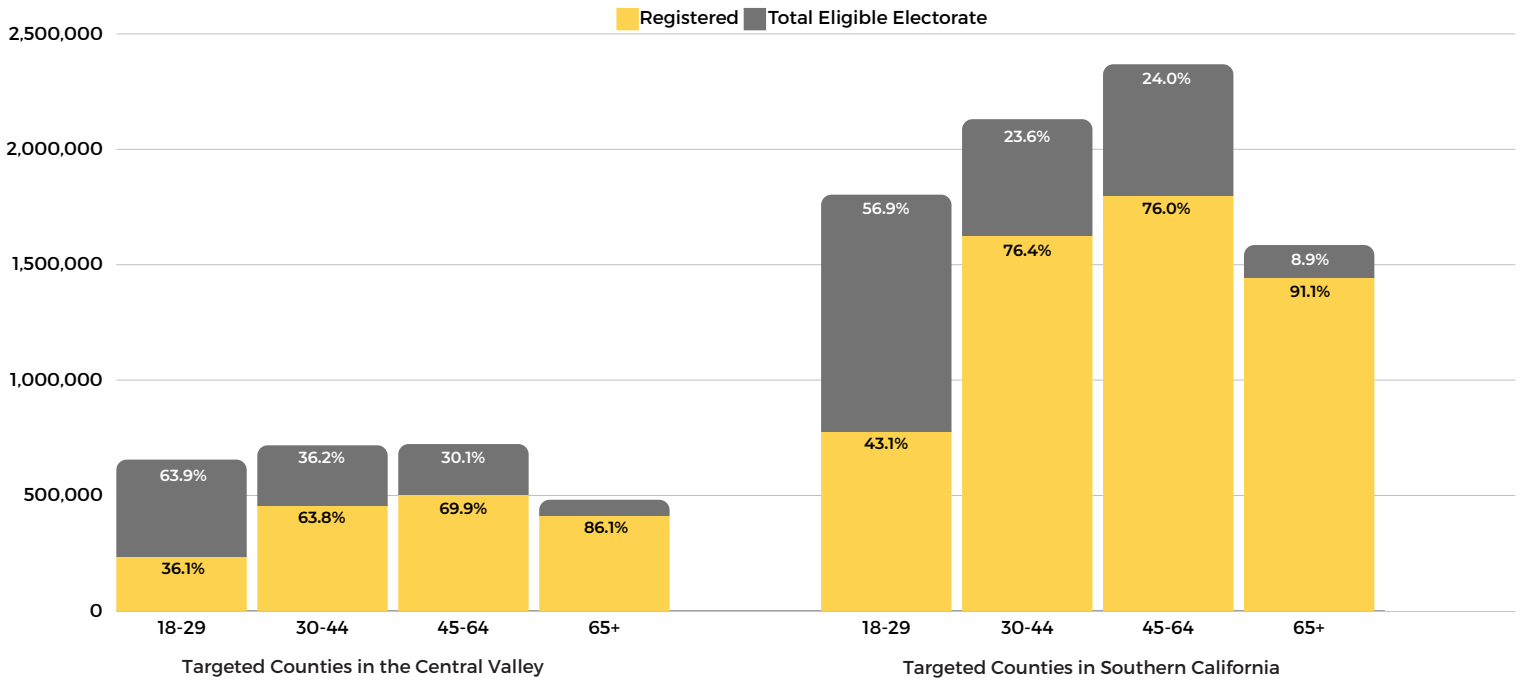
FIGURE 10

7: 2019 ACS 1-Year Estimates
8: L2
FIGURES 9 & 10: L2

SECTION 4: TURNOUT STATEWIDE & TARGETED COUNTIES

2020 VOTER REGISTRATION AS A SHARE OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE (TARGETED COUNTIES, GROUPED BY REGION)

FIGURE 11: REGIONAL REGISTRATION OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE BY AGE
NUMBER OF REGISTERED AND NON-REGISTERED, ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE



Key Takeaways by Age Group

Central Valley

- 36.1% of eligible 18-29 year olds were registered
 - 236K were registered
 - 418K that were eligible but not registered
- 63.8% of eligible 30-44 year olds were registered
 - 457K were registered
 - 259K were eligible but not registered
- 69.9% of 45-64 eligible voters were registered
 - 504K were registered
 - 217K were eligible but not registered
- 86.1% of 65+ eligible voters were registered
 - 414K were registered
 - 66K were eligible but not registered

Southern California

- 43.1% of eligible 18-29 year olds were registered
 - 777K were registered
 - 1.0M were eligible but not registered
- 76.4% of eligible 30-44 year olds were registered
 - 1.6M were registered
 - 502K were eligible but not registered
- 76.0% of 45-64 eligible voters were registered
 - 1.7M were registered
 - 569K were eligible but not registered
- 91.1% of 65+ eligible voters were registered to vote
 - 1.4M were registered
 - 141K were eligible but not registered

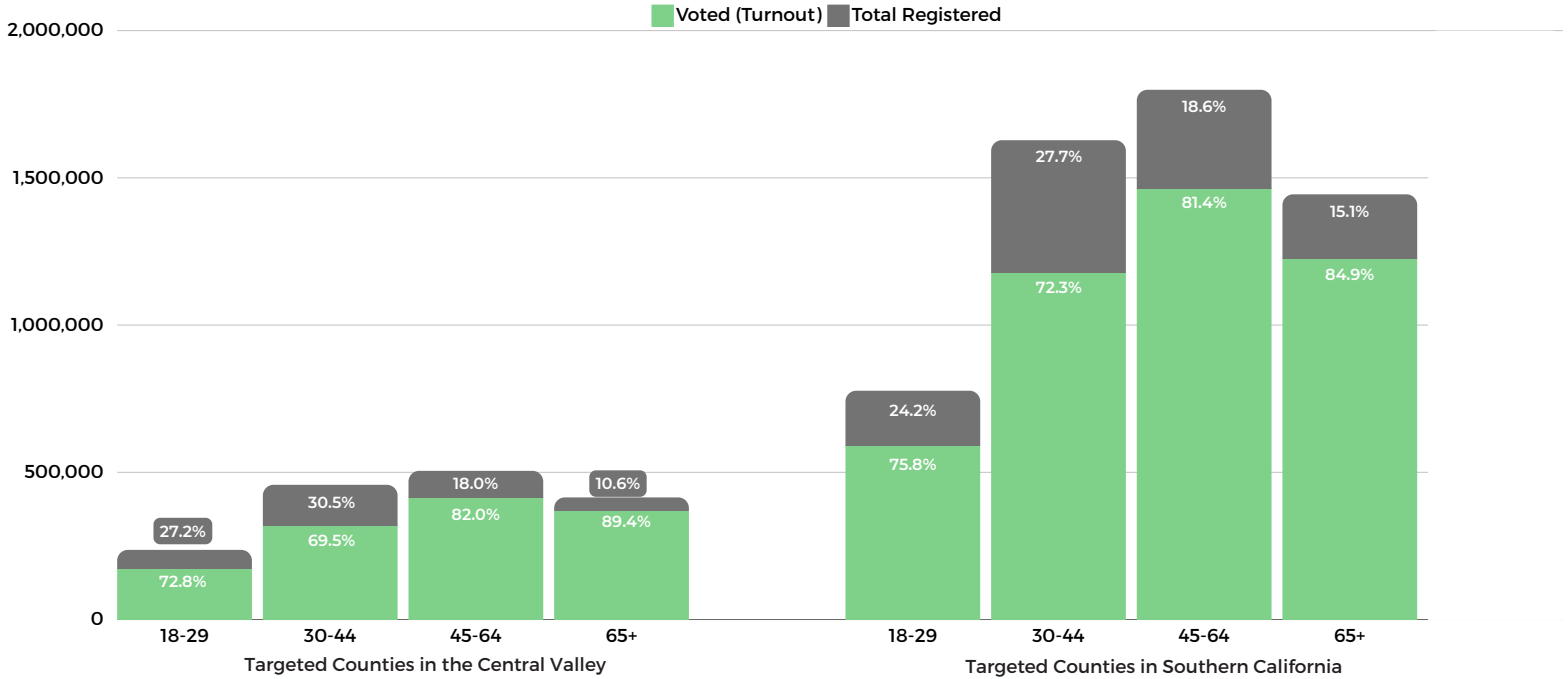
FIGURE 11: L2

*NB: CVAP Estimates are from Census American Community Survey data and multiple counties show missing data for Black eligible voters; 2020 voter registration and turnout estimates are from L2 data

SECTION 4: TURNOUT STATEWIDE & TARGETED COUNTIES

2020 GENERAL ELECTION VOTER TURNOUT AS A SHARE OF REGISTRATION (TARGETED COUNTIES, GROUPED BY REGION)

FIGURE 12: REGIONAL REGIONAL TURNOUT OF REGISTERED VOTERS BY AGE GROUP



Key Takeaways by Age Group

| Central Valley | Southern California |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72.8% of registered 18-29 year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 172K voted 64K were registered to vote but did not | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75.8% of registered 18-29 year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 589K voted 187K were registered to vote but did not |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 69.5% of registered 30-44 year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 317K voted 139K were registered to vote but did not | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 72.3% of registered 30-44 year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.7M voted 450K were registered to vote but did not |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 82.0% of registered 45-64 year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 414K voted 90K were registered to vote but did not | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 81.4% of registered 45-64 year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4M voted 334K were registered to vote but did not |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 89.4% of 65+ year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 370K voted 43K were registered to vote but did not | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 84.9% of registered 65+ year olds voted in 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2M voted 218K were registered to vote but did not |

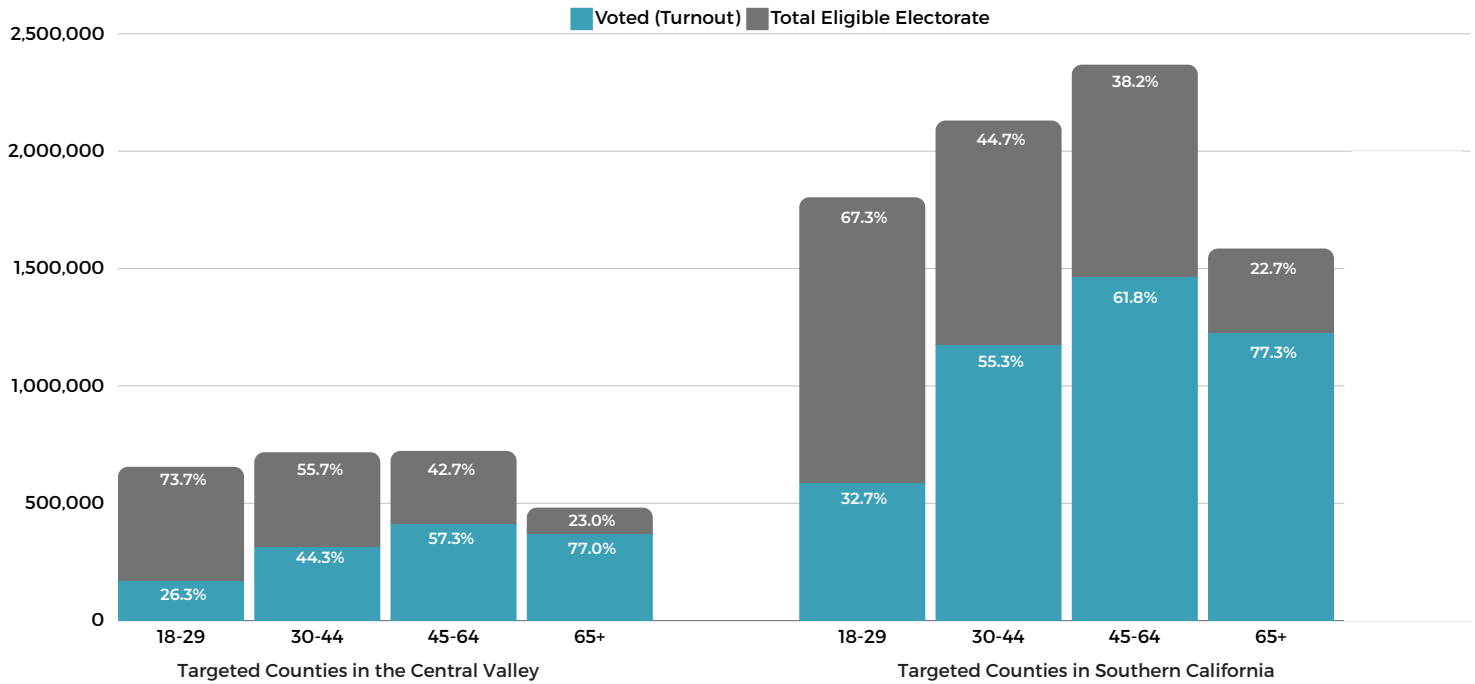
FIGURES 12: L2

*NB: CVAP Estimates are from Census American Community Survey data and multiple counties show missing data for Black eligible voters; 2020 voter registration and turnout estimates are from L2 data

SECTION 4: TURNOUT STATEWIDE & TARGETED COUNTIES

2020 GENERAL ELECTION VOTER TURNOUT AS A SHARE OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE (TARGETED COUNTIES, GROUPED BY REGION)

FIGURE 13: REGIONAL TURNOUT OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORATE BY AGE GROUP



Key Takeaways by Age Group

| Central Valley | Southern California |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 26.3% of eligible 18-29 year olds voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 172K voted 483K were eligible but were not registered and did not vote | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 32.7% of eligible 18-29 year olds voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 589K voted 1.2 million were eligible but were not registered and did not vote |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44.3% of eligible 30-44 year olds voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 317K voted 399K were eligible but were not registered and did not vote | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 55.3% of eligible 30-44 year olds voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 million voted 953K were eligible but were not registered and did not vote |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 57.3% of eligible 45-64 voters voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 414K voted 308K were eligible but were not registered and did not vote | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 61.8% of eligible 45-64 voters voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.4 million voted 904K were eligible but were not registered and did not vote |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77% of eligible 65+ voters voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 370K voted 110K were eligible but were not registered and did not vote | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 77.3% of eligible 65+ voters voted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1.2 million voted 359K were eligible but were not registered and did not vote |

FIGURE 13: L2

*NB: CVAP Estimates are from Census American Community Survey data and multiple counties show missing data for Black eligible voters; 2020 voter registration and turnout estimates are from L2 data

SECTION 5: HOW TO ACTIVATE NON-WHITE VOTERS

BACKGROUND

EXISTING ACADEMIC RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE APPROACHES:

- Reviewed over 300 experiments and 20 additional studies
- Conducted a meta-analysis of these studies, spanning 20 years of research

CONSIDERATIONS & FRAMEWORK:

- Non-white voters are not a monolith
- Power and trust are key parts of the equation; individuals have to feel that they have the power and capacity to engage



HOW TO DESIGN A SUCCESSFUL VOTER ENGAGEMENT PLAN FOR NON-WHITE VOTERS

1

BUILDING TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS ARE NECESSARY BEFORE MOVING PEOPLE TO ACTION

Organizers should:

- be similar to the target voter (i.e. from the same neighborhood, similar background, etc.)
- engage in deep, active listening
- meet target voters where they are, talking about the issues they care about in a way that is sensitive to the local history and context

2

CULTURALLY COMPETENT POLITICAL (RE)EDUCATION IS REQUIRED

People need to be taught:

- why politics, particularly at the local and state levels, is relevant to their lives
- that people like them have the power to make positive change
- what government does (especially at the local level) and that people “like them” can win

3

FEEDBACK/ACCOUNTABILITY LOOPS ARE KEY

Canvasser feedback from the field should:

- be collected systematically and used to refine/adjust the script(s), the substantive focus of the effort (i.e., policy areas), and the targeting approach
- create opportunities for additional engagement

SECTION 5: HOW TO ACTIVATE VOTERS OF COLOR

ANALYZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DIFFERENT APPROACHES ON NON-WHITE VOTERS

A meta-analysis of RCTs designed to mobilize voters of color found that **Door-to-door canvassing is the most effective approach** for mobilizing low propensity non-white voters (see figure 14).⁹ It works best when it is carried out by **local canvassers** from **trusted organizations** who meet voters where they are.

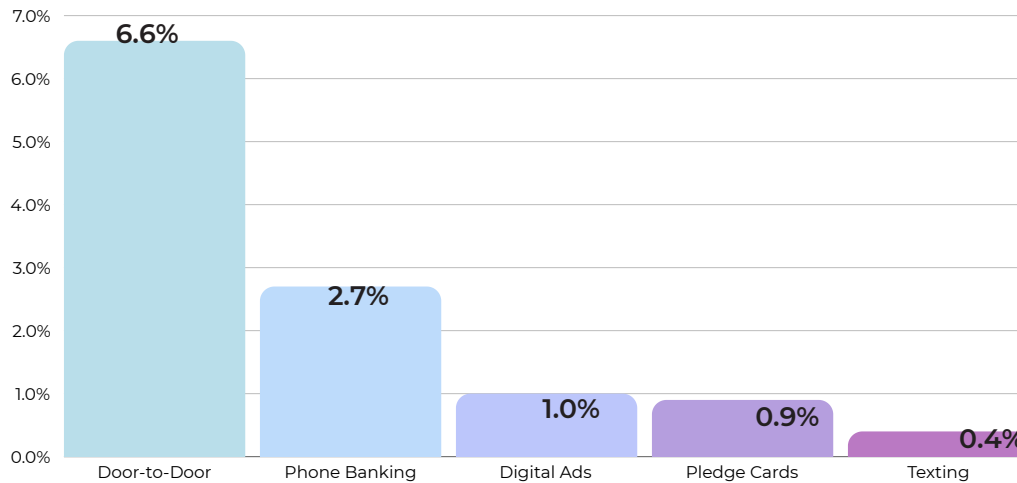


FIGURE 14

Research shows, independent of other factors like **cost and time**, that door-to-door canvassing is the most effective tool for mobilizing low propensity, non-white voters. It allows for organizers to have longer and more meaningful conversations, which allows entrenched behavior to be modified. It assumes that canvassing is implemented by trusted Community Based Organizations (CBOs) who use local canvassers who have similar backgrounds to target voters and who speak in the target voters' preferred language. As an example, the low propensity voters of color mobilized through the California Votes Initiative using door-to-door contact or live phone banks from June 2006 to June 2008 were twenty-three percentage points more likely to vote in November 2008, even without direct mobilization during that election.¹⁰ Thus, although the initial cost of moving a non-habitual voter may be higher using an in-person approach, the subsequent benefit needs to be an important part of the calculus. The key is to find how to make in-person interactions more efficient.

Door-to-door canvassing is then followed by phone banking as the next most effective tool for mobilizing voters of color. This method works best when combined with strong canvasser feedback loops to continually improve the scripts and outreach strategies.

Digital Ads and texting are best for mass deployment of specific messaging. These methods are best used as reminders for recently contacted targets and/or habitual voters.

All of these methods can have a positive effect on turnout. Their impact is best when used in coordination and depends highly on the targeted segments of population. For those who want to increase civic participation, **a mix of these methods** will have maximum effectiveness in local communities.

9: Lisa García Bedolla, "Activating Voters of Color: Power, Place, and Participation," (Washington, DC: Civic Participation Action Fund, 2020).

10: Lisa García Bedolla, and Melissa Michelson, *Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the Electorate through Get-Out-the-Vote Campaigns*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

SECTION 5: HOW TO ACTIVATE VOTERS OF COLOR

SUMMARY: STRATEGIES TO PURSUE

Each CBO will have its own set of tools, targets, and capacity. Each CBO should develop localized strategies that incorporate these 5 elements in a way that best fits their specific time and cost constraints:

1 USE LOCAL CANVASSERS FROM A TRUSTED LOCAL ORGANIZATION

- This will lead to a more successful effort
- Build local capacity
- Tap their social networks

2 USE SOCIAL NETWORKS TO RECRUIT CANVASSERS AND ACCESS VOTERS

- Creative and effective ways to contact voters are needed
- Canvassers who are local community members can utilize pre-existing social networks to reach target voters

3 MEET VOTERS WHERE THEY ARE

- Align goals with the needs of the target voters
- Understand the community and its needs
- Have non-transactional conversations and deep listening
- Plan for a long-term investment, engagement, and a data collection process
- Train canvassers to be your eyes and ears
- Focus on continuous improvement during your campaign

4 (RE)EDUCATE VOTERS

- Education is the key to transformative change
- We need to shift voters' sense of power, trust, and place
- Stories of success, particularly those led by similarly-situated people, can be very effective parts of a voter (re)education program

5 CONTINUE TO (RE)EDUCATE AND ENGAGE VOTERS BETWEEN ELECTORAL CYCLES

- Showing them the results, which will lessen voter cynicism, ensures electoral accountability and that voters will be engaged during the next election
- Don't start from zero; continue to build on the momentum from earlier efforts in order to reach scale and enhance impact
- Use the appropriate tools for the job



SECTION 6: VOTER OUTREACH BUDGETS

OUTREACH FOR COUNTIES WITH LOW TURNOUT

The Voter's Choice Act (VCA) requires participating counties to establish an Election Administration Plan (EAP) utilizing public input.¹¹ This plan must outline how the county will create education, outreach, and transparency for voters, and must be translated into languages covered under state and federal law for each specific county. As of April 2024, of the 10 counties with the lowest turnout in the 2020 Presidential Election, 5 are VCA counties:

- Los Angeles
- Fresno
- Stanislaus
- Merced
- Kings

Table 3 includes a summary of voter outreach costs that the 5 VCA counties planned to spend for the primary and general elections. **Table 4** summarizes 2022 spending for the non-VCA counties.

Figure 20 provides a snapshot of King County's EAP. The snapshot shows how the county allocated its spending for voter outreach for the 2022 primary and general elections.

VCA VOTER OUTREACH

| Counties | # of Registered Voters (2022) | Budgeted on Outreach | Budgeted per voter | VCA County? |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Los Angeles | 5,601,835 | \$2,700,000 (FY 22-23) | \$0.48 | YES |
| Fresno | 500,076 | \$500,000 (est. 2024) | \$1.00 | YES |
| Kings | 61,535 | \$47,250 (est. 2024) | \$0.77 | YES |
| Merced | 124,659 | \$111,700 (est. 2024) | \$0.90 | YES |
| Stanislaus | 282,393 | \$151,102 (est. 2024) | \$0.54 | YES |

TABLE 3

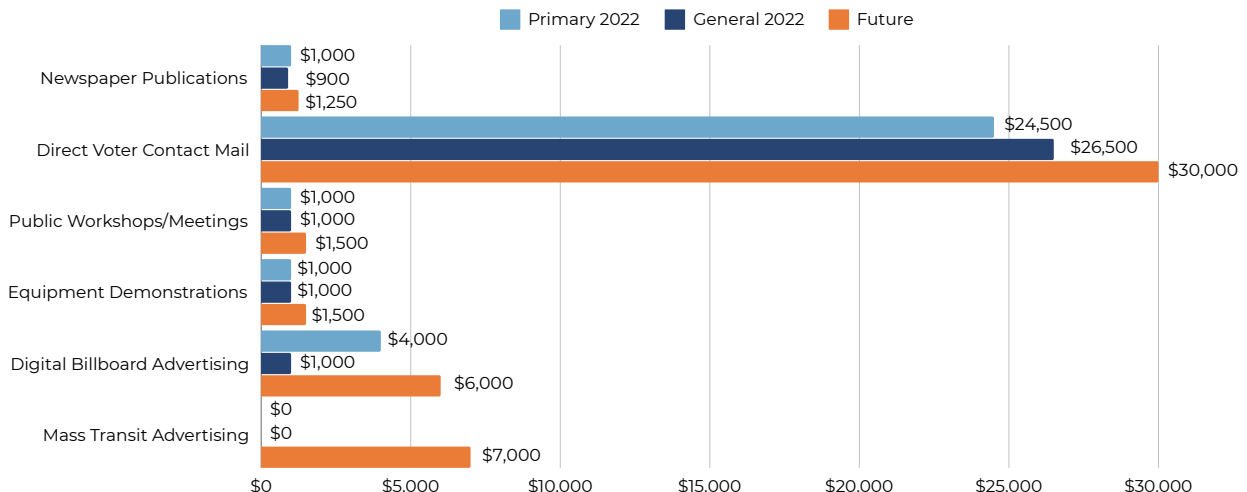
NON-VCA VOTER OUTREACH

| Counties | # of Registered Voters (2022) | Budgeted on Outreach | Budgeted per voter | VCA County? |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Tulare | 208,863 | \$11,000 | \$0.48 | NO |
| San Bernardino | 1,138,818 | \$600,000 | \$1.00 | NO |
| San Joaquin | 388,635 | \$260,000 | \$0.67 | NO |
| Kern | 435,872 | No estimate provided | N/A | NO |
| Imperial | 86,942 | No estimate provided | N/A | NO |

NB: Kern and Imperial Counties have not reported budget information relating to voter outreach.

TABLE 4

KINGS COUNTY 2022 ELECTION ADMINISTRATION PLAN (EAP)



NB: This county is considering budgeting TV and Radio PSAs in the future, but has yet to confirm an amount

FIGURE 15

11: Secretary of State VCA County, SoS 2022 Voter Participation
FIGURE 15: Kings County EAP

SECTION 7: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

FUNDING

Appropriate new funding for registration and voter outreach

We recommend that the state appropriate additional funding for these critically-needed efforts, focused on registering eligible voters and turning out infrequent voters. The first aligns with the SoS and Department Education's ongoing work to educate new entrants to our voting process. We see this as a long-term necessary investment in our democracy that should be added at the state budgeting process. Accountability would take place under the normal budget review process, with publicly-stated goals and accountability against those goals. To support turnout, the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC) could receive funding and establish goals for regional bodies to distribute grants on the local level. Accountability again would take place via a public process locally, regionally, and ultimately back to the OCPSC.

Funding formula

In our research, we found that there is little funding going to voter outreach and it varies greatly by county. Where we have found spending for outreach, it has ranged between \$0.01 per registered voter to \$1.00. The lack of investment helps explain low voter participation during presidential elections and abysmal results during midterm elections. If California wants full civic participation, it needs to provide the resources necessary to ensure all eligible voters participate.

Increased canvassing efforts will be key to integrating voters into the political process and have to be part of the solution. By all accounts, this is an expensive proposition, but one where we have seen good results. The cost will vary for each CBO given that each uses a mix of volunteers and paid staff and the cost of outreach varies by geography, voter density, and other contextual factors.

While voters are not products, the private industry approach to acquiring a targeted individual is nonetheless instructive. In general, marketers use an ATR model (Awareness, Trial, Repurchase) to get consumers to try and continue to use their product.¹²

Awareness: Typically, it costs marketers an average of \$0.58 to \$2.32 to get a consumer to click on their ad, depending on the Google network, with a median of \$0.87 per click.¹³ This is similar to what it would cost to get a voter to engage via digital means. Another example is a cost-per-signature approach. In 2022, the cost per signature in California was \$16.18. This is not accounting for cost increases since then. Acquiring a signature for a ballot initiative is somewhat analogous to what it takes to register someone to vote, so we are using it as another point of information. While neither is a perfect measure, they allow us to begin to estimate the costs. Averaging the signature cost and median click cost gives us an estimated cost of **\$8.58** per voter registration ($\$16.28 + \$0.87/2 = \$8.58$).¹⁴

¹² ATR Model

¹³ Advertising Cost

¹⁴ Cost per signature

SECTION 7: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

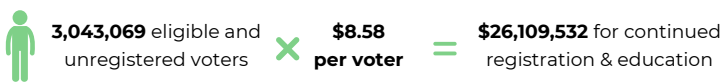
FUNDING (CONTINUED)

Trial: is what it takes to get someone to try the product. Marketers estimate this costs \$18.68 to \$59.18 per consumer, with a median cost of \$20.25. We are using these costs as a proxy for what it takes to get voters out to vote.

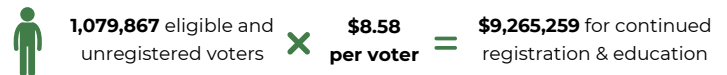
We found disparities across the state in registration and voter participation by region, gender, and ethnorace. California leads the country in its electoral reform efforts. Those changes are critically important, but are not enough. Closing these participation gaps will require the ongoing state investment needed to reach unregistered eligible voters, including the newly eligible, and move the infrequent registered voters to vote.

We estimate a cost of \$8.58 per voter to make unregistered voters aware of the voting process. Statewide, there are ~3M unregistered voters, bringing the total cost to register Californians to ~\$26M. We estimate a cost of \$20.25 per voter to get registered voters who did not cast a ballot in 2022 to cast a ballot now and in the future. Getting low-propensity voters to change their behavior may be more expensive because it will likely take in-person contact to get them to become a regular voter. While not perfect, as the cost for canvassing may be higher, the \$20.25 figure provides a metric to start discussions about what it will take to ensure California's democracy is as participatory and healthy as possible.

Eligible Unregistered Voters, Statewide (2020)



Eligible Unregistered Voters, 10 Counties (2020)



Registered Non-Voters, Statewide (2020)



Registered Non-Voters, 10 Counties (2020)



Total funding

Moving to a full participatory democracy will take ongoing state investment. Here we have identified two segments that will help close California's participation gaps. We recommend that the state make available **\$112,421,046** annually for such purposes to register and engage voters statewide. Were the state to focus on the target 10 counties, we recommend the state appropriate **\$54,273,031** annually for such purposes. That would address the needs of roughly half of the state's unregistered, unengaged eligible voters.

SECTION 7: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

DISTRIBUTION MECHANISM AND ACTIVITIES

Moving to a fully participatory democracy will take continued funding for ongoing and new activities. Here we identify the distribution mechanisms that will help the state manage these investments and close California's participation gaps.



The Secretary of State (SOS) and the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC) have the ability to intake, distribute, monitor, and oversee funds for counties and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs).

SOS and OCPSC carry out these responsibilities as part of their normal duties. They can serve as centralized hubs of official information and can use their statewide reach to negotiate more favorable cost arrangements with broadcast and media outlets.

Counties can continue to enhance their local outreach, working with CBOs. Meanwhile, CBOs would use their standing in the community to effectively communicate with targeted eligible voters about the importance of civic engagement.

Appendix

GLOSSARY

| Term | Definition |
|--------------------------------|---|
| CVAP or Eligible Electorate | Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) is the total population over 18 years old and who is a legal citizen in the United States. The CVAP captures the total number of eligible voters. |
| Registered | The total number of registered voters in a given county. The percentage associated with this value indicates the percentage of registered voters divided by the CVAP. |
| Turnout % of Registered Voters | This percentage captures the total voter turnout divided by the total number of registered voters. |
| Turnout % of CVAP | This percentage captures the total voter turnout divided by the total CVAP. |
| Eligible, Non-Voters | This captures the number of eligible voters who did not vote in the 2020 Presidential Election, regardless of their registration status. <i>Calculated by subtracting CVAP - Turnout</i> |

DATA APPENDIX

2020 VOTER PARTICIPATION STATISTICS FOR THE 10 SELECT COUNTIES

| County | 2020 CVAP | 2020 Voter Registration | 2020 Voter Turnout | | 2020 Registered, Non-Voters | |
|----------------|-------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Los Angeles | 6,389,353 | 5,813,167 | 4,338,191 | 74.6% | 1,474,976 | 25.4% |
| San Bernardino | 1,399,650 | 1,102,687 | 852,636 | 77.3% | 250,051 | 22.7% |
| Fresno | 609,208 | 496,482 | 370,068 | 74.5% | 126,414 | 25.5% |
| Kern | 536,316 | 425,839 | 309,143 | 72.6% | 116,696 | 27.4% |
| San Joaquin | 479,513 | 366,394 | 292,818 | 79.9% | 73,576 | 20.1% |
| Stanislaus | 348,773 | 279,644 | 217,517 | 77.8% | 62,127 | 22.2% |
| Tulare | 274,023 | 199,725 | 148,677 | 74.4% | 51,048 | 25.6% |
| Merced | 152,945 | 117,174 | 92,424 | 78.9% | 24,750 | 21.1% |
| Imperial | 104,890 | 84,676 | 57,366 | 67.7% | 27,310 | 32.3% |
| Kings | 94,140 | 60,100 | 44,442 | 73.9% | 15,658 | 26.1% |
| Total | 10,388,811 | 8,945,888 | 6,723,282 | 75.2% | 2,222,606 | 24.8% |

SOURCES: 2019 ACS 1-YEAR CITIZEN, VOTING-AGE POPULATION, CA SOS VOTER PARTICIPATION STATS BY COUNTY

DATA APPENDIX

2020 ELIGIBLE VOTER POPULATIONS OF THE 10 COUNTIES BY RACE/ETHNIC GROUP

| County | Asian | | | Black | | | Latino | | | White | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|-------|-------|----------------|------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|------------------|-------|-------|
| | Est. | % | MoE | Est. | % | MoE | Est. | % | MoE | Est. | % | MoE |
| Los Angeles | 955,683 | 15.0% | ±0.1% | 628,791 | 9.8% | ±0.1% | 2,525,880 | 39.5% | ±0.2% | 2,108,136 | 33.0% | ±0.2% |
| San Bernardino | 96,363 | 6.9% | ±0.3% | 132,807 | 9.5% | ±0.3% | 650,297 | 46.5% | ±0.4% | 479,642 | 34.3% | ±0.3% |
| Fresno | 63,113 | 10.4% | ±0.6% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 266,268 | 43.7% | ±0.6% | 231,189 | 37.9% | ±0.5% |
| Kern | 25,218 | 4.7% | ±0.5% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 230,443 | 43.0% | ±0.8% | 231,927 | 43.2% | ±0.7% |
| San Joaquin | 73,981 | 15.4% | ±0.6% | 40,394 | 8.4% | ±0.3% | 158,272 | 33.0% | ±0.7% | 187,593 | 39.1% | ±0.5% |
| Stanislaus | 20,497 | 5.9% | ±0.4% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 128,390 | 36.8% | ±0.8% | 176,591 | 50.6% | ±0.6% |
| Tulare | 11,104 | 4.1% | ±0.3% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 149,842 | 54.7% | ±0.9% | 102,542 | 37.4% | ±0.7% |
| Merced | 13,024 | 8.5% | ±0.9% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 71,653 | 46.8% | ±1.7% | 57,424 | 37.5% | ±1.3% |
| Imperial | 1,452 | 1.4% | ±0.3% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 83,073 | 79.2% | ±0.8% | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Kings | 3,758 | 4.0% | ±0.7% | N/A | N/A | N/A | 40,868 | 43.4% | ±1.5% | 38,162 | 40.5% | ±1.1% |
| Total | 1,264,193 | - | - | 801,992 | - | - | 4,304,986 | - | - | 3,613,206 | - | - |

SOURCES: 2019 ACS 1-YEAR CITIZEN, VOTING-AGE POPULATION

DATA APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

2020 VOTER PARTICIPATION STATISTICS FOR THE REMAINING 48 COUNTIES, SORTED BY NUMBER OF REGISTERED, NON-VOTERS

| County | 2020 CVAP | 2020 Voter Registration | 2020 Voter Turnout | | 2020 Registered, Non-Voters | |
|---------------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|
| San Diego | 2,328,508 | 1,950,545 | 1,627,753 | 83.45% | 322,792 | 16.55% |
| Orange | 2,099,774 | 1,772,700 | 1,546,570 | 87.24% | 226,130 | 12.76% |
| Riverside | 1,639,146 | 1,241,552 | 1,016,896 | 81.91% | 224,656 | 18.09% |
| Alameda | 1,112,472 | 966,809 | 785,215 | 81.22% | 181,594 | 18.78% |
| Santa Clara | 1,184,434 | 1,019,309 | 863,964 | 84.76% | 155,345 | 15.24% |
| Sacramento | 1,068,900 | 884,247 | 729,569 | 82.51% | 154,678 | 17.49% |
| Contra Costa | 775,500 | 703,021 | 591,143 | 84.09% | 111,878 | 15.91% |
| San Francisco | 662,741 | 521,771 | 449,866 | 86.22% | 71,905 | 13.78% |
| Ventura | 572,857 | 500,442 | 429,922 | 85.91% | 70,520 | 14.09% |
| San Mateo | 502,997 | 442,988 | 380,193 | 85.82% | 62,795 | 14.18% |
| Solano | 314,933 | 259,161 | 209,002 | 80.65% | 50,159 | 19.35% |
| Monterey | 236,671 | 206,917 | 165,976 | 80.21% | 40,941 | 19.79% |
| Santa Barbara | 281,506 | 235,198 | 203,506 | 86.53% | 31,692 | 13.47% |
| Placer | 293,465 | 270,599 | 239,315 | 88.44% | 31,284 | 11.56% |

DATA APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

2020 VOTER PARTICIPATION STATISTICS FOR THE REMAINING 48 COUNTIES, SORTED BY NUMBER OF REGISTERED, NON-VOTERS

| County | 2020 CVAP | 2020 Voter Registration | 2020 Voter Turnout | | 2020 Registered, Non-Voters | |
|------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Sonoma | 361,748 | 300,840 | 272,244 | 90.49% | 28,596 | 9.51% |
| Santa Cruz | 198,382 | 170,831 | 146,857 | 85.97% | 23,974 | 14.03% |
| Butte | 167,905 | 124,793 | 103,635 | 83.05% | 21,158 | 16.95% |
| San Luis Obispo | 222,201 | 183,746 | 162,615 | 88.50% | 21,131 | 11.50% |
| Yolo | 153,604 | 119,218 | 99,040 | 83.07% | 20,178 | 16.93% |
| El Dorado | 147,487 | 135,554 | 118,133 | 87.15% | 17,421 | 12.85% |
| Shasta | 138,373 | 111,243 | 94,084 | 84.58% | 17,159 | 15.42% |
| Marin | 186,536 | 175,192 | 158,103 | 90.25% | 17,089 | 9.75% |
| Humboldt | 106,177 | 85,183 | 69,932 | 82.10% | 15,251 | 17.90% |
| Napa | 96,519 | 84,845 | 73,269 | 86.36% | 11,576 | 13.64% |
| Mendocino | 63,220 | 53,697 | 44,135 | 82.19% | 9,562 | 17.81% |
| Sutter | 63,493 | 52,096 | 43,264 | 83.05% | 8,832 | 16.95% |
| Nevada | 79,852 | 74,299 | 65,800 | 88.56% | 8,499 | 11.44% |
| San Benito | 37,706 | 35,359 | 29,207 | 82.60% | 6,152 | 17.40% |

DATA APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

2020 VOTER PARTICIPATION STATISTICS FOR THE REMAINING 48 COUNTIES, SORTED BY NUMBER OF REGISTERED, NON-VOTERS

| County | 2020 CVAP | 2020 Voter Registration | 2020 Voter Turnout | | 2020 Registered, Non-Voters | |
|-----------|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|
| Siskiyou | 34,368 | 29,240 | 23,796 | 81.38% | 5,444 | 18.62% |
| Tuolumne | 42,620 | 35,042 | 30,829 | 87.98% | 4,213 | 12.02% |
| Calaveras | 35,949 | 31,364 | 27,524 | 87.76% | 3,840 | 12.24% |
| Amador | 27,210 | 25,605 | 22,620 | 88.34% | 2,985 | 11.66% |
| Glenn | 19,242 | 14,279 | 11,455 | 80.22% | 2,824 | 19.78% |
| Plumas | 14,751 | 13,655 | 11,422 | 83.65% | 2,233 | 16.35% |
| Colusa | 12,388 | 9,807 | 8,050 | 82.08% | 1,757 | 17.92% |
| Mariposa | 14,893 | 11,918 | 10,410 | 87.35% | 1,508 | 12.65% |
| Inyo | 13,707 | 11,016 | 9,624 | 87.36% | 1,392 | 12.64% |
| Mono | 9,232 | 7,831 | 6,828 | 87.19% | 1,003 | 12.81% |
| Modoc | 7,293 | 5,338 | 4,403 | 82.48% | 935 | 17.52% |
| Sierra | 2,609 | 2,261 | 1,964 | 86.86% | 297 | 13.14% |
| Alpine | 924 | 869 | 749 | 86.19% | 120 | 13.81% |

SOURCES: 2019 ACS 1-YEAR CITIZEN, VOTING-AGE POPULATION, CA SOS VOTER PARTICIPATION STATS BY COUNTY

DATA APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

| Data | Source | Notes |
|---|---|--|
| <p>2020 Eligible Electorate Macro Level Statistics (Statewide and County-level totals)</p> | <p>CA SoS Voter Participation Stats by County: https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/sov/2020-general/sov/03-voter-participation-stats-by-county.pdf</p> <p>2019 ACS 1-Year Citizen, Voting-Age Population: https://data.census.gov/tables/ACSST1Y2019.S2901?q=S2901:%20Citizen,%20Voting-Age%20Population%20by%20Selected%20Characteristics&g=040XX00US06\$0500000</p> | <p>Why SoS?: CA Secretary of State voter participation statistics report the total number of voters within a political geography (in this case, counties in California). Since these are official statistics provided by the state government, we prioritize these numbers when analyzing state and county voter participation statistics or trends that do not necessitate looking at specific demographic features.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How we use it: It is important to note that this particular election was chosen given that at the time this research was conducted, the 2020 Presidential general election was the most recent general Presidential election available to analyze. In our study, we look at the total “Registered Voters” as a proportion of the eligible electorate in each of the 58 California counties. This data allowed us to identify the 10 counties that presented the greatest need for additional voter outreach resources. Additionally, when we were comparing only macro-level voter participation statistics (be it statewide or county totals), the CA SoS statistics for the 2020 general election were utilized for the eligible electorate, registration, and voter turnout statistics. <p>Why ACS?: The U.S. Census’ American Community Survey (ACS) reports annual population estimates for many political geographies and by various metrics. We were interested in looking at the eligible electorate for all 58 counties in California at a macro level while also being able to look at their breakdowns by various demographic features (age, ethnorace, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How we use it: Since ACS was the primary source for CVAP/eligible electorate estimates by demographics, we also relied on using ACS for the macro estimates when we wanted to determine the rates/proportions of these breakdowns. |

Data Appendix continues on the next page.

DATA APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

| Data | Source | Notes |
|---|--|--|
| <p>2020 Eligible Electorate by Ethnorace and Age</p> | <p>2019 ACS 1-Year Citizen, Voting-Age Population: https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST1Y2019.S2901?q=S2901:%20Citizen,%20Voting-Age%20Population%20by%20Selected%20Characteristics&g=040XX00US06\$0500000</p> | <p>Why ACS?: In order to determine where voter registration gaps exist among ethnoracial and age groups, we look at the 2019 ACS 1-Year Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) estimates. This data captures the number of people in a given county who are 18 years or older, and eligible to vote by selected characteristics as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau.</p> <p>How we use it: Taking the estimates provided for each county, we couple this data with L2 voter registration and voter turnout data in an effort to best calculate the percentage of registered voters based on their eligible electorate totals.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> We look at 2019 1-Year estimates to best analyze the demographics leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election year. ACS 2019 1-Year estimates were collected from January 1st 2019 through December 31st 2019.</p> |
| <p>2020 Voter Registration Macro Level Statistics (Statewide and County-level totals)</p> | <p>CA SoS Voter Participation Stats by County: https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/sov/2020-general/sov/03-voter-participation-stats-by-county.pdf</p> | <p>Why SoS?: The California Secretary of State (SoS) provides macro voter registration and participation statistics at the county level. We leverage this data by analyzing the county-level registration and election results for the 2020 General Presidential Election.</p> <p>How we use it: As mentioned before, in our study we look at the total “Registered Voters” in all of the 58 California counties as of the 2020 Presidential General Election. This data allowed us to determine the 10 counties with the greatest need for additional resources.</p> |

Data Appendix continues on the next page

DATA APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

| Data | Source | Notes |
|---|---|--|
| 2020 Registration by Ethnorace and Age | L2 Database (License required) | <p>Why L2?: L2 is a nationwide database that provides local and statewide registration and election result data. Registration breakdowns are provided by various demographic factors, including ethnorace, gender, and age.</p> <p>How we use it: We utilize this data to determine by ethnorace, gender, and age:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Of the eligible electorate, what percentage are registered to vote,2. Of those registered to vote, what percentage turned out to vote. <p>Note: L2 does not report information at the same granularity as the U.S. census for eligible voting populations. For this reason, our comparisons for registration and turnout as percentages of the eligible electorate utilize two different data sources, each with its own methodology, and thus may lead to potential differences in reporting for certain metrics when compared against other data publications.</p> |
| 2020 Voter Turnout Macro Level Statistics (Statewide and County-level totals) | CA SoS Voter Participation Stats by County: https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/sov/2020-general/sov/03-voter-participation-stats-by-county.pdf | <p>Why SoS?: The California Secretary of State (SoS) provides macro voter registration and participation statistics at the county level. We leverage this data, by analyzing the county-level registration and election results for the 2020 General Presidential Election.</p> <p>How we use it: In our study, we look at the “Total Voters” in all of the 58 California counties in the 2020 Presidential General Election and compare the 10 identified counties by region (Southern California and Central Valley).</p> |

Data Appendix continues on the next page

DATA APPENDIX (CONTINUED)

| Data | Source | Notes |
|---|---|--|
| <p>2020 Voter Turnout for the Presidential General Election by Ethnorace and Age</p> | <p>L2 Database (License required)</p> | <p>Why L2?: Voter turnout data for all 58 counties was not easily (publicly) accessible in a standardized format. As a result, we utilized our access to L2’s database to get statistics for each county’s voter turnout for the 2020 election by ethnicity and age so that we could have comparisons as accurate as available.</p> <p>Why not Census data?: Unfortunately, Census ACS does not report registration or voting by the demographic features we were interested (in this case, ethnorace, gender, and age). Additionally, while the Census Current Population Survey (CPS) does have some ethnic data for voter participation statistics, that data is self reported and not validated voter data, which L2 provides. In addition, CPS data was not available for all 58 counties, making it impossible to use it as a source for county-level numbers.</p> |
| <p>ACS 1-Year vs ACS 5-Year Estimate, what is the difference?</p> | <p>Census: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/estimates.html</p> | <p>Note: While Census ACS 5-Year estimates are preferred since they are most reliable, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, they were not available for the 58 counties at the time we began our research. As a result, we relied on the ACS 2019 1-Year estimates.</p> |

Data Calculations for Select Figures available upon request



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A special thank you to the Voter Education and Outreach Coalition Advisory Committee

Not all perspectives or recommendations in this report are necessarily endorsed by every single member of the Voter Education and Outreach Coalition Advisory Committee.

