



LOS ANGELES COUNTY REGISTRAR-RECORDER/COUNTY CLERK

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Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

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REPORT ON TACKLING MISINFORMATION AND DISINFORMATION IN LOS ANGELES COUNTY – CRM# 012386

This report is following the certification of the November 2022 Gubernatorial General Election on the results of the public education initiative with recommendations on tackling misinformation and disinformation to residents in Los Angeles County.

Background

Misinformation, by definition, is the spreading of incorrect or misleading information; this differs from disinformation, which deliberately aims to be deceptive. Whether or not false information is disseminated with the intent to deceive and/or mislead, the consequences remain one of the single biggest threats to our society. Across the state and throughout the country, we have seen the serious and far-reaching damage it has produced to election officials, workers, and most critically the threat it poses to our democracy. It can mislead voters, alter perceptions, sway opinions, and potentially impact constituents from exercising their constitutional right to vote. Ultimately, this will lead to an erosion of trust in the electoral process and undermining the integrity of elections.

To combat and counter these negative effects, we have developed and implemented a strategic voter education and outreach program with four key objectives:

- Engage voters about their voting rights and options in their language of choice through paid advertising, community outreach, and local and ethnic news media
- Reinforce the Registrar Recorder/County-Clerk (RR/CC) as the trusted source for election information
- Design misinformation/disinformation counter messaging to clarify and/or educate the public on inaccurate information

- Encourage voter participation by directing the public to official RR/CC resources designed to motivate voters to participate in elections.

Messaging and Creative Development

Messaging and creative development are the foundation to the success of civic engagement and public information initiatives. The difference between a failed and successful advertising and outreach program hinges on how the target audience understands and responds to a message and creative asset. This rings even more true when trying to reach a diverse multicultural and multilingual audience, such as our voters in Los Angeles County. In our program, *Every Vote In*, messaging and creative assets were crafted and produced in English and 18 additional languages.

Message Development

The messages focused on three key themes. First, to encourage people to be voters and appeal to the voters' sense of altruism, civic responsibility, and pride. Second, preserving democracy is our duty and all voters have a responsibility to get their ballot in. Lastly, to enforce the RR/CC as the definitive and official source of elections and voting for the County, sending voters to accessible multi-lingual content (responsive websites, social media, video vignettes, etc.), and the *Make a Plan to Vote* tool to provide clear and concise information on the election. All messages were delicately balanced to ensure cultural sensitivity and inclusion across various cultures and education levels.

Creative Development

The RR/CC built upon its existing campaign branding and refreshed the visual identity and creative approach with an emphasis on accessibility, officiality and trust. Using the official RR/CC seal and incorporating a large ribbon with "Official Information" next to the seal increased authority across all asset types in a legible and accessible format (examples below).

Based on the messaging framework, we determined a more visually engaging approach through dynamic photography would be most effective. We found that captive imagery showing where voters live and the environments in which they thrive would pique more interest and engagement.

Video production leveraged two sets of video types. First, a series of documentary-style interview videos of real voters in the County – in six different languages – explaining why voting is important to them, their families, and why they planned to vote. The documentary-style videos were the core of our persuasion efforts across broadcast TV, digital, and social media. Secondly, a series of animated tutorial multilingual videos showcased the benefits of voting early and available voting tools or resources to voters. The animated videos served to instruct, educate, and raise awareness; and were commonly used within our community group outreach efforts.

We also produced a video explaining the official role of the Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk as the election administrator, giving voters another piece of official and trusted content to validate authenticity.

Example Assets

Use your power!
Make your plan to be a voter.
www.lavote.gov

Editable social media and newsletter graphic assets in multiple languages

Elige tu futuro sin esperar en línea.
¡Vota por correo!

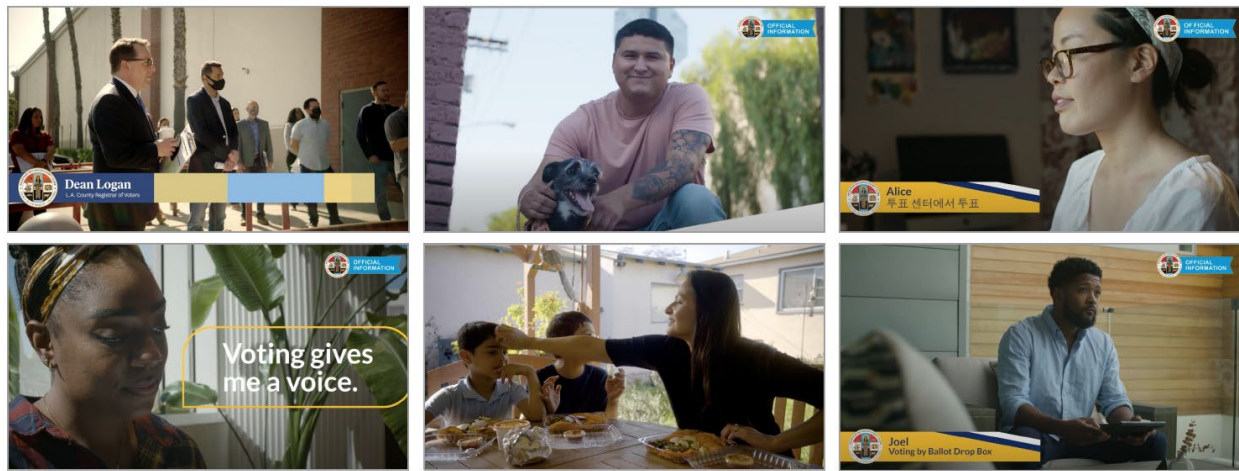
VOTE TO SUPPORT YOUR FAMILY AND NEIGHBORHOOD.
Vote Centers are now open. Don't wait, vote today! Return your ballot at any Drop Box or Vote Center by November 6.
www.PLANLAVOTE.GOV

投票支持您的家庭和社區

Print and Digital Out of Home ads in multiple languages.

One pager in multiple languages on how to use the Poll Pass – allowing voters to make ballot selections on their mobile device.

Video Production Samples



Advertising Approach and Results

The RR/CC partnered with paid media to maximize outreach efforts and provide strategic targeted messages and advertisements to low and medium-propensity voters in their preferred language, with three key objectives:

- Achieve a persuasive ad frequency to encourage residents to vote
- Target culturally relevant creative across target geographies, in authentic and accessible mediums
- Reach and persuade voters to turn out in the midterm General Election

Offline Advertising

The core offline vehicles included in the campaign consisted of broadcast TV, broadcast radio, and local print advertisements in up to six different languages. Broadcast played a significant role in the campaign as it remains one of the best communications vehicles to send messages to large audiences across multiple languages within the market.

A total of **284 broadcast TV ads aired across 12 TV outlets in the weeks leading up to and through Election Day**. These spots generated **over 10 million impressions across audiences who speak English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean**. The outlets and number of total spots aired per network are outlined below. These networks were specifically selected to reach a diverse audience of African American, Latinx, Korean, and Chinese voters with in-languages messaging.

TELEVISION **(284 Total Spots)**

English = 92

- KABC = 29
- KNBC = 13
- KCBS = 9
- KCAL = 12
- KTLA = 18
- KTTV = 11

Spanish = 61

- KMEX = 35
- KVEA = 8
- KRCA = 18

Chinese = 93

- ETTV = 70
- PHOENIX = 23

Korean = 38

- KBS = 38

In concert with the TV advertisements, a **total of 921 broadcast radio spots** played across 16 radio stations, in four languages, to provide a surround-sound approach and reach voters at home, at work, and in transit.

More than 9.5 million impressions were earned across all radio outlets. The specific stations and number of total spots aired per network are outlined below.

RADIO

(921 Total Spots)

Broadcast Radio Breakdown

English = 433

- KOST = 19
- KRTH = 32
- KFI = 37
- KTWV = 43
- KNX = 35
- KBLA = 243
- KDAY = 24

Spanish = 250

- KLVE = 63
- KSCA = 62
- KRCD = 62
- KBUE = 39
- KLAX = 24

Chinese = 102

- KAZN (54) +
KWRM (48)

Korean = 136

- KFOX (72) +
KMPC (64)

Print advertising is a trusted source of consuming news for voters whose preferred language is one other than English. We rounded the offline portion of our campaign with **27 prominent print ads placed in 13 different news outlets in six languages.**

| Outlets Included in Buy: | | Ads Breakdown: |
|--------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Al-Enteshar | 8. LA Focus | 27 print ads total: |
| 2. Asian Journal | 9. La Opinión | • 11 full page |
| 3. China Press | 10. Nguoi Viet | • 16 half page |
| 4. Excelsior | 11. San Fernando Sun | 6 languages |
| 5. Impulso | 12. Sing Tao Daily | • English |
| 6. Inglewood Today | 13. The Korea Daily | • Chinese |
| 7. Thai LA | | • Korean |
| | | • Spanish |
| | | • Thai |
| | | • Vietnamese |

Digital and Social Media

While broadcast TV and radio served as a broad traditional communications modality for reaching large audiences around the County, digital and social media were used for a more targeted approach, allowing the RR/CC to send messages and ads at a much higher volume and frequency with pinpoint precision in more languages. This comprised the largest portion of our budget and intended to optimize the number of users able to click and interact directly and immediately to make their plan to vote. The core elements of our digital plan included:

- **Online video and display:** videos and graphics placed on websites and apps where our target audience frequently visits – geofenced within Los Angeles County
- **Connected TV:** video ads playing on streaming network apps
- **Social media:** Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and YouTube
- **Streaming audio:** audio messages played on Pandora and iHeart Radio
- **Google Search:** direct links displayed at the top of Google Search results

The RR/CC based its key performance indicators on industry-standard persuasion benchmarks, including:

- A total number of impressions commensurate with the size of Los Angeles County
- An ad frequency that ensures information will be retained – in this program the goal was to be seen eight to ten times
- A video completion rate greater than 50%

Throughout the eight-week flight leading up to and through Election Day, our digital and social ads were seen or heard more than **16 million times with a frequency rate of 13.3%**. The campaign finished with a **video completion rate of 62.8%** - reaching above our 50% benchmark.

Ethnic and Earned Media

In addition to a robust advertising spend, it was important to devise and generate hyperlocal and ethnic media coverage, since in-language news media continues to serve as a reliable and trusted source for unbiased information to residents whose preferred language is one other than English. This was accomplished through proactive outreach and responsive action with local news outlets to pitch and pick up earned election coverage across print, radio, and television. Altogether, departmental representatives conducted just over 30 interviews with local and ethnic media in English, Spanish, and AAPI outlets, including, but not limited to CBS Los Angeles, NBC Los Angeles, KTLA, ABC Los Angeles, Spectrum News 1, Univision, Telemundo, Estrella TV, KPCC, KFI, KNX, KCRW, LA Times, SCNG, La Opinion, Epoch Times, and Asian Journal.

In addition to earned media partnership, the Department worked with trusted grassroots and community partners. Through advanced coordination and preparation, the RR/CC leveraged these relationships and collaborated with multiple community partners and participated in four press events to address the importance of voting, provide trusted information and resources, and a call to action to vote. These events had multiple local and ethnic news media in attendance ranging from Spanish and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) reporters and journalists.

Events included:

- **Naturalized and New Voter press event** - Coordinated with CHIRLA Los Angeles, community partners, and newly naturalized citizens. The event highlighted the work conducted to naturalize citizens and to amplify the importance of voting after becoming an American citizen.
- **Make a Plan to Vote press event (RR/CC event)**- This press event included community leaders from Latinx, AAPI, and Black communities including Angel Rivera, Central American Resource Center – Los Angeles; Raul Macias, Anahuak Youth Soccer League and Council of Mexican Federations in North America; Margaret McCauley, Deacon at St. John’s Episcopal Cathedral and longtime leader in the LA African-American community; Nancy Yap, President of the Center for Asian Americans United for Self-Empowerment.
- **Stay Woke and Vote by the Black Media Collective** - This virtual event was hosted by local radio celebrity and community leader Pat Prescott alongside Dominique DiPrima. The virtual event was broadcasted via Zoom and Facebook Live, allowing followers and members of the community to view and engage in the event and learn about informative voter registration opportunities, what was on the ballot, and the available voting options and opportunities.
- **Voting in the 2022 General Election** - This virtual event included the Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs Director at California State University, Los Angeles, Dr. Sonenshein, and the League of Women Voters in a roundtable conversation addressing common questions or mysteries about the voting process.

CBO Digital Toolkit

The CBO Digital Toolkit has become an essential element to the RR/CC campaign efforts. It speaks to the commitment to community engagement by providing resources and valuable outreach assets to both local community partners and stakeholders. Our continued focus is to provide our trusted messengers with the resources that they need most to help with their outreach efforts and distribution. The toolkit is a modern and simple website that contained key outreach materials, flyers, FAQs, and marketing materials in all 19 of the supported languages in the County. The toolkit also stored all of the creative content and assets included in the paid advertising component of the campaign – including customizable set social media graphics.

The toolkit received over 2,600 views and more than 400 unique users visiting the site with a total number of 155 downloads. In future campaigns, we will prioritize deepening our engagement with partners to learn what resources are most valuable to them and their needs to maximize our efforts in providing the most meaningful materials.

Make a Plan to Vote Online Tool

In this campaign, the Make a Plan to Vote (MAPTV) online tool (PLAN.LAVOTE.GOV) was re-instituted and used as the single call-to-action for all advertisements, outreach materials, and interviews so voters could easily and accessibly register to vote, check their registration, and make a personalized voting plan.

The easy-to-use MAPTV online tool allowed voters to indicate their needs and preferences when it came to making their plan to vote, and it provided voters to create a plan customized to their desired experience. To maximize accessibility, the tool was optimized for mobile users and was available in the six most spoken languages in Los Angeles County: English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Tagalog. As voters navigated the tool and shared their preferences for voting and future communications, they provided us with a wealth of data that allowed us to tailor follow-up communications via email or text message (SMS).

Throughout the campaign, over 108,000 users visit the planning tool and 45% completed making their plan. More than 43,000 emails and SMS were delivered to those voters who engaged with the tool and provided timely and relevant information that was necessary based on the election timeline. An average of 61.7% of emails sent were opened, which far exceeds the industry average of 19%. Furthermore, the click rate of 5.3% also surpassed the average benchmark of 2.4%.

Topline Results

The *Every Vote In* campaign and its topline results across digital, broadcast, and print mediums are :

Campaign flight: **October 3 - November 8, 2022**



16 Million Digital Ad Impressions



921 Radio Spots



15 Languages



284 Broadcast TV Spots



1.2 Million Print Impressions



10 Million TV Impressions

Conclusion

When false or misleading information is spread about the electoral process, it can create confusion, mistrust, and could even lead to fear or apathy amongst voters to take part in their constitutional right. It is important for election administrators to work closely with the public and stakeholders to promote transparency and to educate voters about their voting rights, voting options, and where they can find trusted information. Public information campaigns, such as *Every Vote In*, are an essential tool in the fight against misinformation, promoting a more informed and engaged electorate, and strengthening the integrity of our democracy.

We look forward to enhancing the blueprint that has been established in our voter education and outreach efforts and working with our community and county partners in upcoming election cycles.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 462-2716 or email: dlogan@rrcc.lacounty.gov or your staff may contact Jeramy Gray at (562) 462-2883 or email: jgray@rrcc.lacounty.gov.

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