

Yolo County Elections Office Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) MINUTES

Date: Thursday, January 9, 2025

Time: 5:30–6:30 p.m.

Location: Virtual via Zoom

1. Welcome from Chair and Yolo County Elections Staff
2. Roll Call, Attendee Introductions and Announcements
 1. Roll Call
 - i. Kate Laddish, Chair (Yolo County IHSS Advisory Committee, Democracy Winters)
 - ii. Kristy Lee, Vice Chair/Secretary
 - iii. Shelton Yip (YCBOE Member, former educator)
 - iv. Karie Lew (Disability Rights California)
 - v. Peter Mendoza (California State Council on Developmental Disabilities)
 - vi. Judy Higginson (Yolo County League of Women Voters)
 - vii. Annette Lim (Yolo County Elections)
3. Proposed agenda was reviewed and approved.
4. September, October, and November 2024 meeting minutes were reviewed and approved with K. Lew edits to September minutes. A link to a document by Disability Rights California, “Recommendations for county elections officials: Increasing accessibility for D/deaf and hard-of-hearing voters” is attached. October and November minutes were approved without amendment.
5. Election Office Updates
 1. Two small elections are scheduled this year in Yolo County. One in late August for a water district, and one in November, having to do with four community service districts. These contests may not make it to the ballot if a candidate is unopposed or no one signs up to run. Elections staff will use the “down” time to going through new state laws to see what has changed and what needs to be updated.
 2. In response to questions during the last meeting about how many people used accessible technology:
 1. Forty-three people accessed the Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM) system to submit their ballots. Of those, 29 were accepted. The remainder ran into some sort of difficulty or did not sign the required oath of voter.
 2. A total of 55 people successfully utilized The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (OUCAVA) system to cast their ballots.
 3. Elections staff reported 1,147 voters utilized the TouchWriter ballot marking technology. It seems that young people/college students

who may not have a disability prefer to use the TouchWriter technology, even though the system is slower than marking a ballot by hand. Staff brought an extra TouchWriter and two extra printers to the UC Davis vote center to accommodate the demand. Elections staff will look at ways to help alleviate the crowds and wait times at the university. Meanwhile, staff reported a total of 7,885 people used a ballot marking pen to make selections on a paper ballot.

4. Official figures indicate a total of six people utilized curbside voting services, though Elections staff is certain that is an undercount. In the next round of Vote Center Worker training, staff will ensure workers understand how to capture that data.

5. The county processed a record number of Conditional Voter Registrations; more than 5,000. The county will look for ways prospective voters can be encouraged to register before the deadline, rather than the day of the election.

6. No word on whether particular efforts were made to improve accessibility for D/deaf or hard-of-hearing voters, per Disability Rights California's recommendations. This is a follow-up item for a meeting in the near future.

6. Goals, Projects, Workplan [cleaned up version to be attached. Kate, i don't think I received a clean copy. Tell me if I'm wrong 😊.]

1. Members agreed Disability Voting Rights Week (second week of September) had been a big success in the past and should be part of the 2025 workplan.

2. Voter Education Workshops: Only required during major election years. Perhaps 2025 would be a good time to produce some educational videos. Perhaps in partnership with UC Davis. Peter suggested that we include information about the local League of Women Voters, along with more general information on how to vote.

3. Karie proposed adding an item to the workplan about continuing to discuss and advocate to improve access for meet the D/deaf and hard-of-hearing community. One recommendation from DRC about meeting the needs of this community was to provide videos with ASL interpretation and captioning.

4. Accessibility of Voting Documents and Materials: CA Department of Rehabilitation Services does a training on document accessibility. Peter offered to reach out to see whether they'd be willing to do some education for our group or for the Elections Office. On a related note, Peter wondered if we could identify the Yolo County Disability Officer. That individual might already have useful contacts with the department and probably should be part of VAAC discussions.

5. Board of Supervisors Presentation: A good way to keep VAAC on board's radar and make requests. Annette offered to find out whether it would be feasible to have the VAAC and the Language Accessibility

Advisory Committee (LAAC), and possibly the Elections Office, present to the board at the same time.

6. Kristy offered to take on updating the VAAC page of the Elections website. Agendas, minutes, and other documents will be made accessible prior to uploading. Annette offered to facilitate Kristy's access to the site. The site host may be able to convert documents to PDF in order to make accessibility functions easier to integrate.

7. The deadline is 2027 for the next update of the Election Administration Plan (EAP). That workplan item will take higher priority in the future.

7. Legislative Update & Discussion

1. Kate attended U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson's recent town hall in Winters. She asked that he, as a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, ensure a telehealth element included in a continuing resolution, actually be taken up by the committee. He went further than that, including success on telehealth in his year-end newsletter.

2. Kate detailed personnel changes in the offices of several local electeds.

3. Kate participated in a webinar by the California Foundation for Independent Living Centers on the wheelchair right to repair bill passed in 2024. Other participants included bill author Sen. Bill Dodd and a representative from the wheelchair manufacturers' group, among others.

8. Future Agenda Items and Meeting Date

1. Any additional information from the Elections Office about work done during the November election to support the D/deaf and hard-of-hearing community.

2. Any items on which members agreed to work.

3. Next meeting date: Feb. 13, 2025.

10. Adjournment

Upcoming VAAC Meeting Dates (tentative), County Holidays, and Election Milestones

<u>VAAC Meetings:</u> <i>Monthly on second Thursdays</i>	<u>Upcoming County Holidays:</u> A full list of 2025 holidays is available on the Yolo ACE website.	<u>Upcoming Elections and Election Milestones:</u> See Yolo County Elections website and the California Secretary of State's website for information on upcoming elections.
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