

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF
VOTERS

2008 BUSINESS PLAN

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	Page 1
Section I – Agency Overview.....	Page 2
Vision Statement	
Mission Statement	
Core Services that Achieve County Mission and Strategic Objectives	
Section II - Operational Plan.....	Page 4
A. Environment	
Clients	
Challenges	
Resources	
B. Action Plan	
Strategic Goals	
Strategies to Accomplish Goals	
Key Performance Measures & Reporting	
Section III - Appendices	
Appendix – Organization Chart.....	Page 14
Appendix – Significant Accomplishments (Top Ten).....	Page 15
Appendix – Other Critical Demographics/Service Expectations.....	Page 16

Executive Summary

The Registrar of Voters Department provides election services for the County of Orange that include the registration of voters, conducting elections in the county from the local district to Federal levels, and maintaining and supplying election historical data. The majority of the Department's functions are defined and mandated by both State and Federal law and County Ordinance. We currently have the fifth largest number of registered voters in the United States.

The Registrar of Voters provides overall direction and management of the department working closely with the four units in the department.

Administrative Services: Provides human resources, purchasing and budget support as well as various other services.

Candidate and Voter Services: Handles candidate filing, campaign contribution filing and voter registration processing. Also has a role in ballot creation, sample ballot creation and alternative voting operations such as absentee and early voting.

Election Services: Conducts poll worker recruitment, polling place recruitment and training. Poll worker recruitment programs include the County Poll Worker Program, bilingual recruitment and the nationally recognized Student Poll Worker Program. Provides communications and media relations functions for the department. Conducts and participates in outreach events. Provides translation services in Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Information and Technology: Our Information and Technology unit provides general IT support as well as warehouse functions, data entry, and files (which handles voter registration and petition processing). Conducts precinct and polling place mapping function.

The Registrar of Voters Department is dedicated to providing professional and customer service oriented election services. We take pride in the fact that our methods of delivering election services have become the standard for counties throughout the United States. We take our mission of ensuring the integrity of elections in a uniform, consistent and accessible manner seriously.

In the past year the Department enhanced its services to keep in line with our vision of striving for excellence in everything we do while exceeding the expectations of our clients. Specifically we met our goal to be responsive to the needs of Orange County citizens and elections participants by enhancing our vote-by-mail system. We succeeded by acquiring a new ballot stuffing system that doubles the capacity in which we can prepare vote-by-mail ballots to voters.

Additionally, we redesigned our mobile outreach trailer both internally and externally. The focus is to draw attention to the need for people to vote. Inside the trailer people are educated on the hardships many have had to endure to enjoy their right to vote.

Section I – Vision, Mission and Core Services

Vision Statement:

Our vision is the impetus for everything we do. Our vision is to consistently exceed the expectations of Orange County citizens, government, community organizations and the news media in every aspect of our operations. We strive for excellence in overall election management services and in our role as custodians of registered voter records.

Mission:

“To ensure the integrity of elections in a uniform, consistent, accessible, and cost effective manner.”

Core Services:

The Department’s core services are (1) Maintain registered voters list for County of Orange, (2) Provide election services, such as providing ballots and polling places staffed with volunteers, (3) Provide historical voter and elections information to media, political parties, elected officials and other interested individuals or groups.

- (1) Maintain registered voters list for County of Orange.

The County of Orange is the fifth largest voting jurisdiction in the United States with over 1.5 million registered voters. Thousands of registration forms are processed yearly. In addition to processing new voter registrations the Department must remove people that have died, failed to vote or moved.

Citizens have the right to register and vote. They expect and deserve their registrations be processed in a timely manner. Their name must be in the voter roster when they arrive at the poll site.

Political organizations expect us to provide an accurate voter registration database. Much of a campaign budget goes to direct communication in the form of mail and phone calls with the registered voters. An inaccurate and or out of date database will cost them precious dollars. The media uses the database to measure our County against other Registrar of Voters in the region, state and country. Voter statistics help campaigns market themselves and the media measure the voting habits of the community.

- (2) Provide mechanisms in which registered voters can vote.

Voters across the country, including Orange County, need and demand options for voting. The Department provides early voting, vote-by-mail voting and polling place voting for its registered voters.

Early voting is conducted for 10 days at 10 locations throughout the county. The Registrar of Voters has claimed many firsts in providing the early voting option to its customers including the use of a mobile unit and a permanent site at John Wayne Airport. Thousands of Orange County voters choose this option every

countywide election. Unlike nearly all California counties that no longer have a certified electronic voting system, Orange County can still provide the early voting option.

Thirty percent of Orange County's registered voters are Permanent vote-by-mail voters. Another eight percent request one-time vote-by-mail ballots. They demand their ballots early in the process so that they have time to vote them and return them. They also expect that their hundreds of thousands of ballots are scanned, tallied and the results reported immediately after the polls close on Election Day.

The remainder of Orange County voters, approximately 600,000 voters, vote at the polls. Polling place voters expect to easily find their polling place. They need to get the correct ballot. They expect to be in and out of the polling place quickly. A voter should barely notice their interaction with the Registrar of Voters on Election Day.

(3) Provide historical elections information to media, political parties, elected officials and other interested individuals or groups.

As stated before, the media, political parties, campaigns and elected officials have a vested interest in the information held at the Registrar of Voters office. Each demands that the Department be open and accessible providing information in a timely and accurate manner.

The Department's stakeholders need current and historical data on the party registration and voter history of the County in order to do their job. Politics is a numbers driven process. It is all about how many people the candidate or party has registered and how many of them they can get to the polls and vote. The media needs the significant numbers that truly make a difference to their story.

Section II – Operational Plan

A. Environment

Clients: The Registrar of Voters provides services to four very diverse groups. They are Orange County citizens, election/campaign organizations, government organizations and the news media. Typically, involving all of our client groups is required to effectively meet any goal.

Of the county's approximately 3,000,000 citizens, 2,000,000 are eligible voters. Currently, about 1,500,000 are registered to vote. Thousands of voter registration cards are processed yearly. There are various processes the Department must undertake to ensure that the database is accurate and up to date.

Approximately one-third of the 1.5 million registered voters in Orange County chose the vote-by-mail (formerly absentee voting) option over early voting and voting in their polling place. The percentage of voters voting by mail has steadily increased over the last few years and for some contests they are the primary method of voting. The Department has placed much attention on the vote-by-mail process to ensure this growing segment is processed efficiently and will continue to do so.

Even as the Department has seen an increase in the percentage of vote-by-mail voters, the number of polling place voters is increasing. The Registrar of Voters has paid a great amount of attention to polling place voting. In addition to the impact larger numbers of polling place voters has on operations are the laws and regulations placed on elections officials by both the State and Federal government.

Our clients have a desire for a speedy tally process and a need to know the results as soon as possible. Depending on the un-official results on Election Day campaigns may have to continue to pay staff and attorneys until the process is complete. Any delay in the vote-by-mail ballot tally process, which can take days after Election Day, can cost them money. They also have a need for the Department to be as open as is legally possible with information they maintain. The Registrar of Voters works diligently to provide open, honest and timely information to its clients.

Challenges:

At the beginning of the 2007 – 2008 Fiscal Year the County's voting system underwent a "Top-to-Bottom" review conducted by the Secretary of State of California. The result was the decertification of all the electronic voting systems in the State. Although the system used by Orange County was the only one to be recertified for use in the state, recertification came with conditions. New regulations placed a burden on the Department both on the front end and back end of future elections. The February 2008 Presidential Primary Election proved to be successful despite the extensive regulations.

In the face of the decertification and recertification is the fact that three statewide elections are scheduled for 2008 (February Presidential Primary, June Statewide Primary, November General Election).

An additional challenge for the County is the cost of conducting three elections involving the entire county in a single calendar year. Although some costs are recovered from the state and jurisdictions that consolidate their elections significant costs can be expected for the County.

Poll Worker recruitment is always a challenge. The most difficult election in 2008 to recruit for will be the June Statewide Primary Election. This election will be conducted as people begin to go on summer vacation. Additionally, the 1,000 plus students we can usually count on for an election will be reduced with this election scheduled for the end of their school year and/or beginning of their summer break.

The stress and strain of conducting multiple state elections countywide in a single calendar year can be extensive for Department employees. Fatigue is surely a probability as planning for the elections, certifying them and doing petition certifications runs concurrently .

Space is at a premium in the Department's building which is shared with another County agency. Every square inch inside the office space has been consumed. A portable unit has been installed outside the building to provide space for our public phone bank. Poll worker and Election Day Coordinator training that used to take place within the Department is being moved to an outside location due to space issues

The number and type of elections being held in the calendar year of 2008 provides some unique opportunities for the Department as well. The high profile elections and the reputation of Orange County voters turning out can offer positive media exposure to the Department highlighting the outstanding services the County is providing.

Being the largest county in the state using the only completely certified electronic voting system may seem daunting, but it is actually an opportunity to show that the Department can adapt to new regulations in a way that does not affect voters in any noticeable way.

Additionally, the Department has created its own opportunities to enhance services to the public including the development of a new party consolidated sample ballot introduced for the February Presidential Primary Election. The media covered the well received sample ballot that reduced costs to the county and reduced logistical challenges for the Department that used to handle hundreds more variations of sample ballots.

Resources: The Registrar of Voters is a General Fund department. There is partial state reimbursement for the mandates of voter registration, absentee voting and permanent absentee voter file maintenance under SB 90. The primary revenue source for the Department is reimbursed by cities, school

districts and special districts for conducting their elections. The remainder of the Department's revenue is generated from candidates, campaigns, individuals and the news media for a variety of products and services.

The revenue of the Department varies greatly over a two-year cycle. In the even numbered years, the Primary Election is held in June (4th quarter). Revenue from the Primary Election will be received in November (2nd quarter of the following fiscal year). The general election is held in November (2nd quarter) with revenue being received in February (3rd quarter). Understanding this important two-year revenue cycle is critical to responsible budgeting and administrative planning for the Department.

Since the inception of the bifurcated primary elections in 2008, there is potential for a small amount of revenue generated by local contests consolidating with the Presidential Primary in February. Any such revenue from the February primary would be received by June of 2008.

B. Action Plan

GOAL # 1: The Registrar of Voters intends to utilize and maximize the voter registration and poll worker data we work with on a daily basis to improve efficiencies.

The Department maintains a database of over 1.5 million registered voters. The database also contains thousands of records of people formerly registered with the County. There are approximately 10,000 people that have worked and continue to volunteer on Election Day tracked in the database.

The Department desires to make the database more dynamic. We need to explore any and all options for inputting, gathering and reporting data for both internal and external customers.

It is a complicated task to create, build and maintain a database that meets our needs of today while being flexible enough to meet future needs. Thousands of registration forms must be loaded monthly while thousands of volunteers are entered into the system. Accuracy of our data entry as well as the dependability and ease of use of the database are essential to meeting the needs of voters. Hundreds of reports with different requirements from different areas of the system must be readily available for our internal customers and our external customers such as the political parties and media.

Strategies to meet Goal #1:

- Look at data deficiencies.

Initially we will call out the scope of what is needed with the database from competing interests in the Department. For example, we must look at upcoming changes in database requirements from the State and Federal government. We can also look at the sheer number of volunteers the County deals with from election to election and how their information is gathered and tracked to determine what needs may exist.

- Use the information in a different way.

Possibilities exist for using the data we collect in new ways that give voters more for their money. For example, might we better serve our registered voters and volunteers if we treated their registrations like an account? This might be much like the County's new AccessOC online customer service tracking in which we can determine who is working on a question for a constituent, what was the outcome and how long did it take to respond.

- Come up with different technical ways to improve on what we do now.

Once the Department has come up with all of the needs that exist internally and externally we will decide on how we can make technical improvements.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Determination of what the Registrar of Voters customer needs are related to the voter registration and volunteer database.
WHAT: Were surveys completed of internal and external customers regarding additional needs from the voter registration and volunteer database?
WHY: Improve efficiencies of use of the information.

FY 06 - 07	FY 07 - 08	FY 07 - 08	FY 08 - 09	How are we doing?
Results	Plan	Anticipated Results	Plan	
An initial internal review of the database regarding the tracking of poll worker data was done.	The database vendor made many of the changes requested.	Begin the process of reviewing needs of database from all internal and external customers' perspectives.	Request proposal for voter registration and poll worker database using new survey data from internal and external customers.	The Department will identify a project manager to gather information from the Department's internal and external customers in the last quarter of FY 07 -08.

GOAL #2: In an effort to provide outstanding cost-effective election services to the County of Orange the Registrar of Voters will consolidate communications into one unifying message.

Currently the various recruitment programs are handled separately. This results in having to communicate multiple times with the same population to get your various messages across. It has proved to be an inefficient approach.

Poll worker recruitment consists of various programs that necessitate a unified marketing strategy. The need for poll workers, that includes County and student poll workers, will be consolidated in a package that also offers opportunities for participation in a new corporate poll worker program and poll site recruitment.

The County of Orange is the fifth largest voting jurisdiction in the United States. There is a need of approximately 6,000 poll workers and 1,200 polling locations that must be recruited for each countywide election. The high numbers the Department is dealing with coupled with the demands on the time of its diverse population require a sophisticated and unified approach to recruiting volunteers.

Strategies to meet Goal #2:

- Create unified marketing brochure.

The current marketing program consists of separate flyers for each of its programs. Although the flyers created have progressively been upgraded over time, they lack a unified theme and professional look appropriate for acquiring the volunteers and space needed to help the Department provide the high quality of service its citizens deserve.

The brochure will consist of individual sections advertising the need and benefits of the student poll worker program, corporate poll worker program and poll site recruitment.

Professionals in their respective fields completed the artwork, including graphic design and photography, while the messaging was developed internally.

- Disseminate marketing brochure to targeted audience.

The new brochure will be mailed to specifically targeted audiences introducing them to the opportunities in participating in the democratic process. The Department will also develop a program in which any employee in the department that receives a request for volunteer information can immediately have it mailed. Requests for information obtained through our website will also prompt an automatic delivery of the brochure.

In addition to mailing, the Department will target locations it deems to be most appropriate and effective in which to display the brochure. Locations may include government offices that have a high amount of public traffic, John Wayne Airport and more.

- Create and provide incentives for corporate participation.

The corporate polling place sponsorship program provides a unique opportunity for both the Department and civic-minded corporations. One benefit for both is the great potential for positive media attention. The Registrar of Voters is arguably the most visible department in the County and when partnered with corporations that have a presence in Orange County they become even more so. The County will benefit by filling its polling places with professional poll workers while the corporation gets attention for fulfilling its community service goals.

Events specifically designed to get attention for the Department and the corporation will be developed. The attention will generate positive attention for partners already on board, help us recruit new partners and provide us the opportunity to stress the need for volunteers in general.

A website specifically designed for the corporate sponsorship program will be developed providing yet another opportunity to advertise the corporation's community service.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: The number of registered voters listed as volunteers in Department's database.
WHAT: Increase in the volunteer database acquired through campaign.
WHY: Increases the available volunteers for any given election ensuring adequate service at polling places throughout the county.

FY 06 - 07	FY 07 - 08	FY 07 - 08	FY 08 - 09	How are we doing?
Results	Plan	Anticipated Results	Plan	
Numbers have not been previously measured from flyers in circulation. Database currently stands at 15,900 potential volunteers.	Design brochure and website. Disseminate the brochure and launch the website.	The brochures will be disseminated to initial targeted audience, offered to all that request information from Registrar of Voters including from website. Pilot program run for Corporate programs.	Increase the number of potential volunteers in the poll worker database.	The Department recruited a sufficient number of volunteers for the February Presidential Primary Election, however recruiting will be more difficult for the June Statewide Primary Election in June and off year elections.

Goal #3: To enhance the voting experience in the polling place by providing voting options, such as Vote-by-Mail, to voters.

As the population of Orange County grows the number of registered voters grows. With over 1.5 million voters registered and approximately 1,000 voters assigned to each polling place the potential for lines is great.

Increasing the percentage of vote-by-mail voters is not meant to replace poll site voting on Election Day. The goal is to advertise the option to those voters that may find voting by mail more convenient for their lifestyle and to enhance the voting experience for polling place voters by reducing the time they may wait in line to vote.

Modifications to the County's voting system, specifically the Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) printers required by State law, have increased the time voters spend in the voting booth. This problem is further exacerbated when there are long ballots in a particular precinct or county as a whole. This phenomenon was experienced in a couple of areas in the county in the General Election of November 2006.

Approximately 30% of Orange County's registered voters are permanent vote-by-mail voters while another 8% ask for an absentee ballot for a single election. The Department will initially target the 8% one-time vote-by-mail requesters to becoming permanent vote-by-mail voters. Success in this area would decrease poll site voters by 100 per site. That equates to 100 voters not waiting in line to vote. With the average voter taking 5 – 7 minutes to vote their ballot we will save between 500 – 700 minutes for the remaining voters in the polling place.

Vote-by-mail ballots received prior to Election Day are scanned and readied for tally immediately upon the closure of the polls. Therefore, in addition to reducing lines at the polls, a higher number of vote-by-mail voters will increase the percentage of votes tallied and reported at 8:05 p.m. on Election Day. The more information we can provide to our stakeholders on the front end of the certification process the better.

Strategies to meet Goal #3:

- Advertise, by direct mail, the permanent vote-by-mail option to registered voters that have requested vote-by-mail ballots for a single election.

A direct mail piece will be developed specifically for the approximately 120,000 registered voters that have requested a one-time vote-by-mail ballot in the most recently held elections. As voters that have experienced the benefit of voting by mail they are most likely to become permanent vote-by-mail voters.

- Provide vote-by-mail option on prominent section of website.

A link to the vote-by-mail application is provided for on the front page of the Department’s website. It is most popular with campaigns that use the application for their constituency. We track the number of voters using this application, but not going through a party. This should prove effective as the Registrar of Voters website is among the most visited in the County and rises to the top as Election Day draws near.

- Engage media regarding the benefits of vote-by-mail for the voter and the County.

Vote-by-mail voting is gaining media attention across the state as the percentage of vote-by-mail voters increases. In fact, inquiries were made to the Department regarding vote-by-mail statistics as this Business Plan was being drafted and prior to the February Primary Election.

The nature of voting-by-mail changes the way in which parties and candidates advertise to their constituency and the media has an interest in their particular strategies. The Registrar of Voters can take advantage of media interest to advertise their desire to increase the number of Orange County voters voting by mail.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Number of permanent vote-by-mail voters.
WHAT: The percent of voters choosing to vote-by-mail versus vote at a poll site.
WHY: Decreases the number of voters going to the poll sites thereby reducing lines and voters’ time spent at the polls.

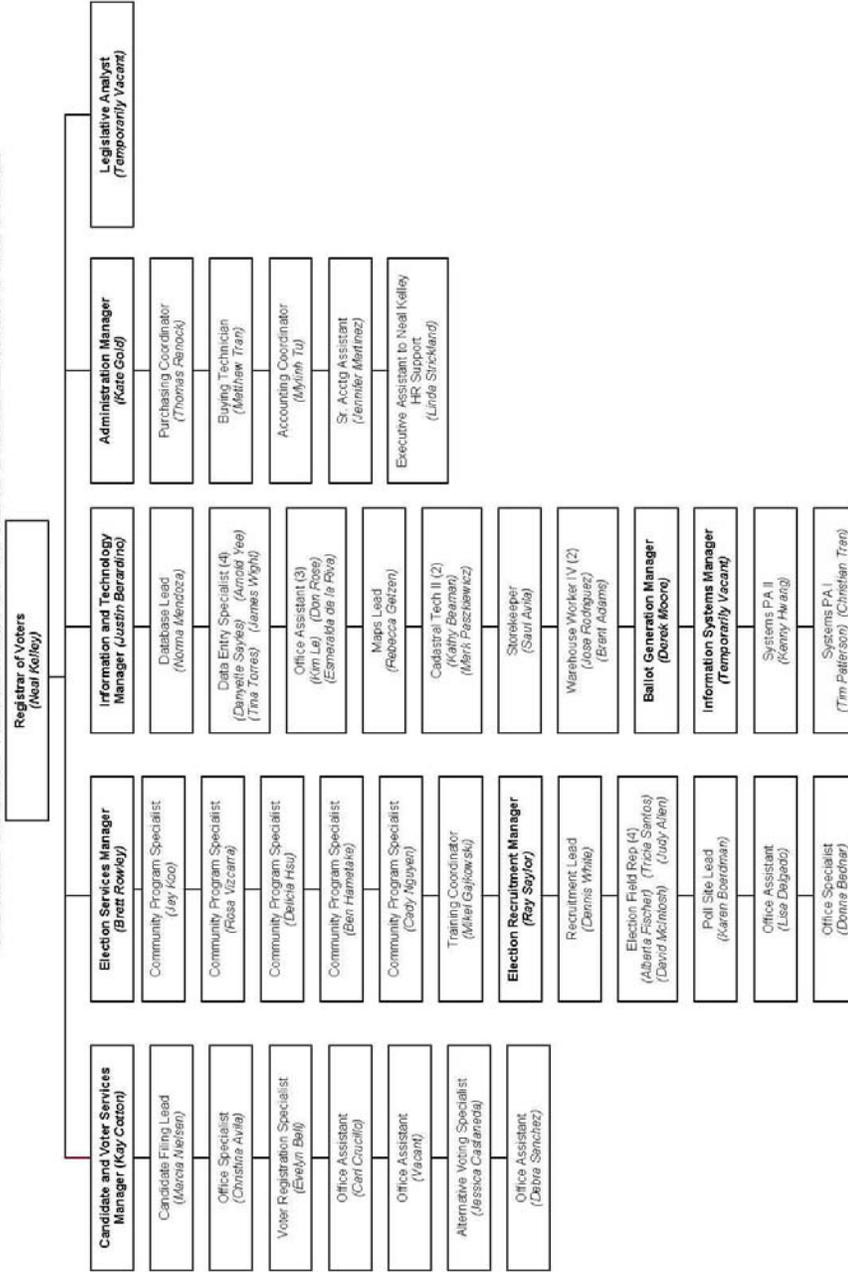
FY 06 - 07	FY 07 - 08	FY 07 - 08	FY 08 - 09	How are we doing?
Results	Plan	Anticipated Results	Plan	
30% of registered voters are permanent vote-by-mail.	Permanent vote-by-mail voters listed meet or exceeds 35% of total voter registration.	Permanent vote-by-mail voters listed meet or exceeds 35% of total voter registration.	Permanent vote-by-mail voters listed meet or exceed 40% of total voter registration.	The number of vote-by-mail voters is increasing slightly without a dedicated campaign. This fact bodes well for potential success in FY 07 – 08 and FY 08 – 09.

Section III – Appendices:

- A. Organizational Chart**
- B. Significant Accomplishments**
- C. Critical Demographics/Service Expectations**

A. Organizational Chart

ORANGE COUNTY REGISTRAR OF VOTERS ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



B. Significant Accomplishments

- On February 6, 2007 we conducted the First District Vacancy Supervisorial Election. This election involved one-fifth of the counties electorate (approximately 300,000 registered voters). The close contest resulted in a recount and litigation that upon the Superior Court (?) ruling the judge complimented the Registrar of Voters office for conducting the election with the utmost accuracy and integrity.
- Implemented "Track and Trace" allowing voters to determine where their Vote-by-Mail ballot is as it makes its way through the postal system network.
- Increased capacity to stuff and mail vote-by-mail ballots.
- We have achieved new levels of community cooperation through our Voter Accessibility Committee. The cooperation of these community leaders has assisted us with how and where to place our new polling place equipment designed to assist disabled voters access polling places.
- Improved poll worker database allowing for more efficient volunteer support.
- With voting system vendor, underwent Top-to-Bottom review of voting system. Only electronic voting system that is re-certified for use in its entirety. Underwent many changes to procedures as well as reboot software to all 9,000 eSlate voting systems and Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail printers.
- Redesigned outreach trailer. The trailer received an upgraded look inside. The outreach trailer is now equipped with a monitor that displays an educational video about the Department. It also houses two touch-screen monitors that allow voters to test their elections knowledge. The outside of the trailer was wrapped with a new design encouraging people to "Use their voice" and vote.
- In the Department's ongoing effort to conduct elections with the utmost integrity, the Registrar of Voters increased security in the office. There are more cameras, an improved sign-in and out badge procedure and signage around the facility identifying certain areas and the laws that safeguard the elections process.
- A potential total of approximately \$3 million from a combination of state and federal funding sources that could be allocated to the County of Orange in 2007-2008 as reimbursement for a variety of expenses.

F. Critical Demographic/Service Expectations

By state mandate and County organization, the Registrar of Voters is the primary election service provider and sole voter registration custodian for the citizens of Orange County. Various federal, state and local statutes, acts, policies and procedures govern the Department's functions. These include many un-funded federal and state mandates.

Listed below are some of the functions involved in conducting major elections.

1. Receiving and processing approximately 250,000 registration transactions per year.
2. Filing nomination documents for approximately 350 candidates for each major election. Accepting/rejecting ballot designations. Providing guidance to all candidates regarding qualifications and acceptable campaign practices/campaign disclosure. Accepting/rejecting ballot arguments and rebuttals for County measures. Coordinating with 34 cities for election consolidation.
3. Typesetting and proofreading up to 450 Statements of Qualifications and providing for translations of same. Providing camera-ready copy in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean for sample ballot pamphlets and official ballots, including transliteration of names for character-based languages.
4. Recruiting over 7,000 precinct officers and over 1,750 polling places. Organizing delivery of voting equipment to polling sites and distribution of supplies and equipment to precinct Inspectors.
5. Coordinating printing and delivery of sample ballot pamphlets, official and Vote-by-Mail ballots during a 30-day time period. Preparation of mailing file and printing mailing addresses onto sample ballot pamphlets for approximately 1.3 million voters in a 19-day time frame. Mailing approximately 70,000 Spanish, Vietnamese, Korean and Chinese sample ballot pamphlets during the same time period.
6. Issuing Vote-by-Mail ballots to approximately 500,000 voters. All signatures on voted ballots are verified.
7. Programming all vote tallying software, testing and depositing programs with Secretary of State by several days prior to Election Day.
8. Monitoring all polling place operations for approximately 600,000 voters on Election Day and operating the vote tally center and 23 collection centers on election night.
9. Hand tallying votes in 1% of the precincts immediately after the election in order to verify accuracy of machine count. Conduct official canvass/audit of election operations and printing multi-volume statement of votes cast book.