

# MARIN COUNTY ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT Election Advisory Committee

## BIENNIAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2015 and 2016



# Election Advisory Committee

2015-2016

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The Registrar of Voters thanks the Election Advisory Committee for its dedication to improving the election process in Marin County. Through its recommendations and feedback, the Election Advisory Committee has enhanced the election process for the benefit of all voters in Marin County. Find more information online at [www.marinvotes.org](http://www.marinvotes.org), or email [lroberts@marincounty.org](mailto:lroberts@marincounty.org).

## Biennial Activity Report

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## BIENNIAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2015-2016

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# COMMITTEE



## **Purpose**

The Election Advisory Committee was established in 2006 by the Registrar of Voters and acts as a link between the Registrar and the voting public. The committee provides feedback and advice on issues that affect voters, and learns about election processes and laws that impact the procedures of the Elections Department.

The committee is interested in helping ensure that every eligible resident of Marin County has the opportunity to vote, and that all valid ballots are counted accurately and securely.

## **Meetings and Membership**

Membership includes up to twenty community members that belong to different political parties, and have diverse backgrounds in business, politics, academics, labor, law, government and non-profit organizations. They bring different points of view about issues, and share an interest in transparent, fair, and honest elections.

Committee Members 2015-2016: Greg Brockbank, Cathleen Dorinson, Veda Florez, Barbara Gaman, Bonnie Glaser, Marcia Hagen, Ora Hatheway, Morgan Kelley, Mark Kyle, Anne Layzer, Jeanne Leoncini, Peter Mendoza, Tom Montgomery, Damian Morgan, Sean Peisert, Bob Richard, Maddy Ruvolo, Steve Silberstein, Cat Woods.

The Committee typically meets eight times during the year. The annual meeting schedule, meeting minutes and activity reports are posted online under the Advisory Committee link at [www.marinvotes.org](http://www.marinvotes.org). The public is welcome to attend meetings.

## **Subcommittee**

The Voting System Subcommittee met in both 2015 and 2016 to discuss issues pertaining to a new voting system. The Subcommittee includes four members from the Election Advisory Committee, and four members from the Elections Department. Meeting minutes are posted online at [www.marinvotes.org](http://www.marinvotes.org).

# HIGHLIGHTS



## **Goal**

Continued engagement with the voting public by building integrity and voter confidence, and providing outreach and education.

The Committee focuses on four areas:

- Election Integrity and Voter Confidence
- Voter Outreach
- Voter Education
- Departmental Ongoing

## **Meeting Highlights —2015 and 2016**

### **Election Integrity and Voter Confidence**

- Developed a list of required/desired features in a new voting system
- Reviewed pros/cons of changing from polling place counting of ballots to central counting of ballots, and discussed feedback from other counties
- Voting System Subcommittee met to: 1) review status of current voting system; 2) refine the list of required/desired features; 3) review changes at the national level; 4) discuss central counting of ballots; 5) discuss the vote center model
- Reviewed questions about counting vote-by-mail and provisional ballots
- Guest speaker talked about local mail only elections and central counting
- Discussed voting system security and transparency of process

### **Voter Outreach**

- Committee discussed and recommended paying return postage for vote-by-mail ballots, which was approved by the Board of Supervisors in December of 2015 and implemented in June of 2016
- Reviewed outreach efforts that included:
  - Presentations at Voces de Marin and Marin Communications Forum
  - National Voter Registration Day week-long events with 10 partner organizations
  - English/Spanish food pantry flyer program reached over 3,000 community members at Pt. Reyes Station, Marin City, Novato, Canal Alliance, and Ritter Center
  - Presentations at Tomales High, Novato High, Terra Linda High and Hill Education Center reached 232 students—see comments below
- Review detailed outreach activities starting on page 8.

### **Voter Education**

- Viewed new online video clip about voting by mail
- Reviewed pages in voter guide that were simplified using League of Women Voters best practices manual
- Assisted with drafting news releases

### **Departmental Ongoing**

- Reviewed poll worker outreach newsletters and poll worker recruiting efforts
- Reviewed new laws impacting elections

### ***Comments from high school students about class presentations:***

*“...you did convince me to exercise my right to vote when I do turn eighteen. You both also gave me really persuasive points to give to my parents so that they will vote as well.”*

*“...thank you for taking the time to come to our class and help us with the registration process. I appreciate the push as I would not have known where to start otherwise.... I agree that voting is not taken seriously enough and believe that speaking to high school students about it is helpful.”*

*“You opened my eyes to the fact that I am eighteen years old and how I have the responsibility to my country to let my voice be heard. Thanks to you I even was able to register to vote!”*

*“Thank you very much for coming out to our school to teach us about the importance of voting. I learned a lot about the different groups of people that have fought for many years to gain the right to vote.”*

*“I can’t believe women couldn’t vote back then! That’s crazy! In that case when I turn 18 I’ll be sure to take advantage of voting.”*

*“On behalf of my class we would really like to thank you for coming and educating us and helping us register ourselves.”*

# SNAPSHOT



## Election Review

To better understand election trends and issues, the Election Advisory Committee reviews reports about elections and statistics related to voter registration, voter turnout, and vote by mail.

## Highlights—2015 and 2016

Local District Elections—November 3, 2015

- **143,352** registered voters
- Turnout **49,653** (35%)
- **78.5%** Vote by Mail

Presidential Primary Election—June 7, 2016

- **152,039** registered voters
- Turnout **103,012** (68%)
- **70%** Vote by Mail

General Election—November 8, 2016

- **160,795** registered voters
- Turnout **143,041** (89%)
- **70%** Vote by Mail
- **Marin County had the highest turnout statewide.**

**TABLE 1: Presidential General Elections—Comparing 2008, 2012, 2016**

Election	Registered	Total Ballots Cast	Returned Vote-by-Mail Ballots	Military/Overseas Voters	Provisional Ballots	Turnout	Ranking in State Turnout
Nov-16	160,795	143,041	100,442	2,809	7,347	88.96%	Highest in State
Nov-12	155,025	135,438	88,109	1,911	6,491	87.37%	Highest in State
Nov-08	155,640	141,321	82,950	540	3,984	90.80%	2nd Highest

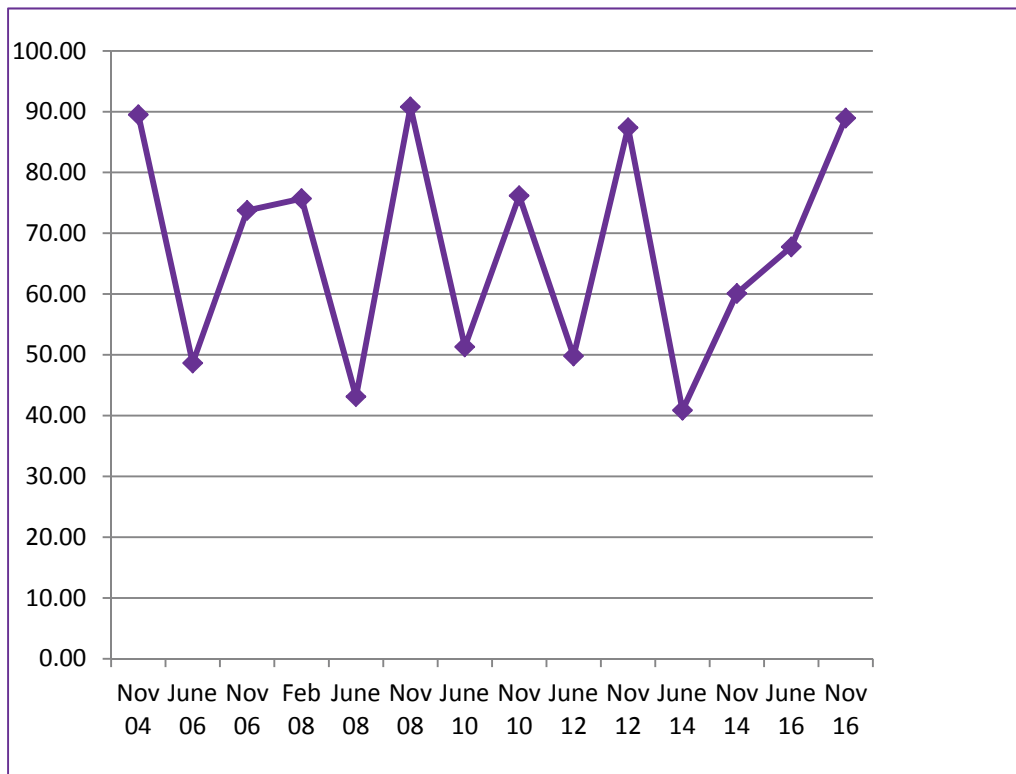
## Trends

### Comparing Voter Turnout

Chart 1 shows Marin County voter turnout in statewide elections beginning with the 2004 presidential general election. The highest turnout occurred in presidential election years—November 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016. The lowest turnout occurred in three non-presidential primary elections—June 2006, 2008, and 2014. Table 2 provides additional detail.

**CHART 1: Statewide Elections—Comparing Turnout since November 2004**

### Percent Turnout



### Elections

**TABLE 2: Turnout in Statewide Elections since November 2004**

Elections Nov 2004-June 2010			Elections Nov 2010-Nov 2016		
		Percent Turnout			Percent Turnout
<b>Nov 04</b>	Presidential General	89.50%	<b>Nov 10</b>	Gubernatorial General	76.17%
<b>Jun 06</b>	Gubernatorial Primary	48.64%	<b>Jun 12</b>	Presidential Primary	49.81%
<b>Nov 06</b>	Gubernatorial General	73.75%	<b>Nov 12</b>	Presidential General	87.37%
<b>Feb 08</b>	Presidential Primary	75.70%	<b>Jun 14</b>	Gubernatorial Primary	40.87%
<b>Jun 08</b>	Statewide Primary	43.11%	<b>Nov 14</b>	Gubernatorial General	60.10%
<b>Nov 08</b>	Presidential General	90.80%	<b>Jun 16</b>	Presidential Primary	67.76%
<b>Jun 10</b>	Gubernatorial Primary	51.31%	<b>Nov 16</b>	Presidential General	88.96%

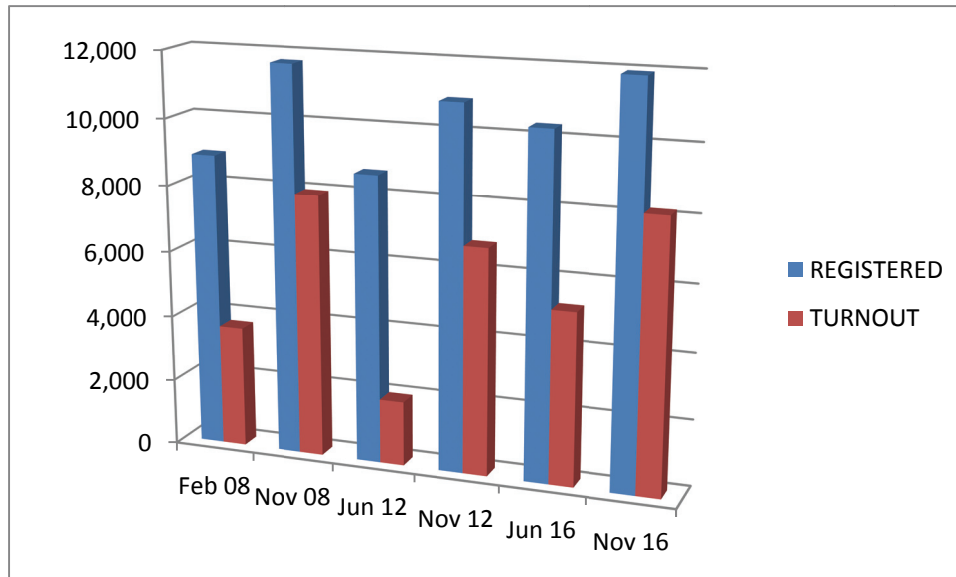


## Youth Registration and Turnout

Chart 2 compares registration and turnout for Marin County youth ages 18-24 in presidential primary and general elections beginning in 2008. The blue column shows number of youth voters registered, and the red column shows turnout in presidential primary and general elections 2008--2016. Table 3 provides additional detail.

**CHART 2: Registration and Turnout Ages 18-24  
Presidential Primary and General Elections 2008—2016**

### Registration



### Elections

**TABLE 3: Presidential Primary and General Elections Youth Registration/Turnout**

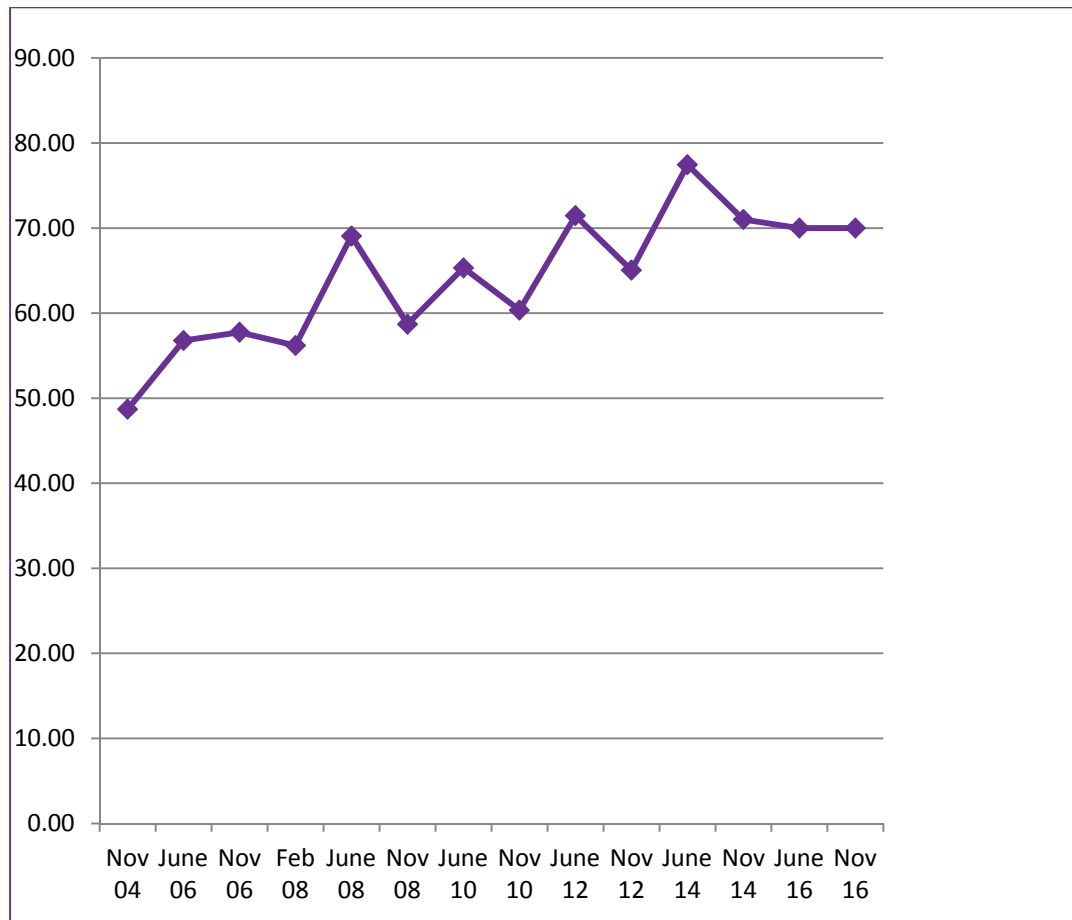
Presidential Elections Primary and General		Registered Ages 18-24	Turnout Ages 18-24	Percent Turnout
<b>Feb 08</b>	Primary	8,894	3,682	41.40%
<b>Nov 08</b>	General	11,719	7,938	67.74%
<b>Jun 12</b>	Primary	8,675	1,947	22.44%
<b>Nov 12</b>	General	10,913	6,825	62.54%
<b>Jun 16</b>	Primary	10,341	5,215	50.43%
<b>Nov 16</b>	General	11,931	8,177	68.54%

Vote by Mail

Chart 3 shows the trend in voting by mail since the 2004 presidential general election. Table 4 provides additional detail.

**CHART 3: Voting by Mail in Statewide Elections November 2004—November 2016**

**Percent Vote by Mail**



**Elections**

**TABLE 4: Voting by Mail in Statewide Elections starting in November 2004**

Elections Nov 2004-June 2010		Percent Vote by Mail	Elections Nov 2010-Nov 2016		Percent Vote by Mail
<b>Nov 04</b>	Presidential General	48.70%	<b>Nov 10</b>	Gubernatorial General	60.36%
<b>Jun 06</b>	Gubernatorial Primary	56.78%	<b>Jun 12</b>	Presidential Primary	71.46%
<b>Nov 06</b>	Gubernatorial General	57.75%	<b>Nov 12</b>	Presidential General	65.05%
<b>Feb 08</b>	Presidential Primary	56.19%	<b>Jun 14</b>	Gubernatorial Primary	77.45%
<b>Jun 08</b>	Statewide Primary	69.07%	<b>Nov 14</b>	Gubernatorial General	71.01%
<b>Nov 08</b>	Presidential General	58.70%	<b>Jun 16</b>	Presidential Primary	70.00%
<b>Jun 10</b>	Gubernatorial Primary	65.32%	<b>Nov 16</b>	Presidential General	70.00%

# OUTREACH



## **Elections Department Voter Outreach Program**

The goal of the voter outreach program is to reach future voters, help eligible voters better understand the process of registering and voting, and focus on engagement and voter registration opportunities in the Canal area of San Rafael, Marin City, Novato, and West Marin. Programs include voter education for Spanish speaking residents, youth 19-24 years of age, elderly, people with disabilities, high school students, homeless, and low-income residents.

The voter outreach program has grown significantly over the last two years to include more community partnerships and focused events for National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), thanks to efforts by Ms. Veda Florez, Elections Department Communication Outreach Consultant. The Elections Department has also increased its high school outreach efforts by collaborating with the Marin County Office of Education.

Voter outreach efforts touched on communities countywide. The following report outlines the activities accomplished in 2015 and 2016.

## **Various Outreach Efforts**

The Elections Department assisted elderly voters, voters with disabilities, and voters requesting basic information in languages other than English, and made voter registration cards readily accessible throughout the County. The Elections Department also accepted invitations to participate at forums and on panels.

- Prior to elections in 2015 and 2016, contacted 21 assisted living and elderly care facilities to provide information and offer voter registration services. Ten facilities invited staff members to provide on-site assistance.
- Provided free audio CDs of local measures and state propositions to 35 community organizations; posted a link to the audio on the Department's website
- Participated on a panel celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Presenter at Marin Forum/Voces de Marin engagement event
- Presenter at two meetings of Parent Voices community group
- The Department created a one-stop web link to information about accessibility
- Marin County League of Women Voters distributed over 3,000 voter registration cards to post offices, municipal offices, libraries, Department of Motor Vehicles, community centers, and elderly care facilities.
- For the 2015-16 election cycle, the Department sent over 500 letters and basic voting information in languages other than English to those who made the request on their voter registration form

## **High School Outreach**

This program consists of making presentations in government classes about registering to vote and voting. It reviews historical information about voting rights and answers frequently asked questions, such as: When is Election Day? What's on a ballot? How do I get information about the candidates and measures? Do I have to vote for everything on the ballot? Why do I have to register in order to vote? Where do I vote? What happens if I go away to college?

The Voter Registration Coordinator and the Polling Place/Poll Worker Coordinator will often accompany the Registrar of Voters to demonstrate online voter registration and talk about the student poll worker program. As a result of working with the Marin County Superintendent of Schools, this program has grown from outreach to one high school and approximately 20 students, to four high schools and over 200 students.

Presentations made in advance of the November 2016 election, included:

- Tomales High – three government classes, approximately 40 students
- Novato High – five government classes, approximately 150 students
- Terra Linda High – one government class, approximately 32 students
- Hill Education Center – 10 18-year old students

Because of teacher support, 80 students worked at the polls in 2016 compared to 21 students in the 2012 presidential cycle.

## **Community Partnerships & Events**

A new and important aspect of outreach is building relationships. Regular communication with communities creates a personal connection and promotes trust. Taking the Elections Department message to festivals and community events is another new effort to expand the scope of outreach and engage specific communities.

The following list shows community outreach efforts generated by the Department's Communication Outreach Consultant, including printed material left with the community, and shows partners that participated in National Voter Registration Day events (NVRD) held September 25 – October 1, 2016.

### **Asian Alliance – San Rafael**

- Regular visits to drop off voter registration cards and flyers
- Attended yearly picnic event the week before NVRD

### **Asian Festival – San Rafael**

Located at Homeward Bound in Novato, this well attended event drew the Asian Community in celebration of Asian leaders.

- Speaking engagement prior to the November election urging people to vote
- Provided Easy Voter Guides in Chinese and Vietnamese

### **Canal Alliance – San Rafael**

- English and Spanish flyers to be included with food bags (See Food Pantry Partnership below)

**Canal Independencia Event** – San Rafael (Canal Neighborhood)

Located in front of Mi Pueblo Grocery Store, this small festival took place during Hispanic Heritage Month, which coincided with NVRD. Over 50 people attended the festival.

- Voter registration and outreach for NVRD—10 people registered to vote

**Canal Welcome Center** – San Rafael

- Food Pantry Partnership flyers
- Voter registration information in English and Spanish

**Center for Independent Living** – San Rafael

- NVRD participant
- Presenter at Boards and Commissions Training

**College of Marin and Indian Valley College**

- Met with Social Justice Group, Drama Department Instructors, Lifelong Learners
- Drama Department participated in NVRD
- Presenter at Social Justice Event on voter participation
- Senior Community Lifelong Learning Center – NVRD participant

**Dia de los Muertos Festival** (October) – San Rafael (Canal Neighborhood)

- Tabled at the festival distributing bookmarks and voter information

**Dominican University** – San Rafael

- Appointments with Political Science Department and Women’s Studies
- NVRD participant

**I-Man and I-Woman Events—Marin City** (August)

These two events were sponsored by the Phoenix Project as a way to empower local youth.

- Discussed community engagement and registered two voters at the I-Woman event

**Latino Leaders Luncheon** – San Rafael

- Bi-monthly announcements on NVRD and upcoming election deadlines

**Latino Marin** - Novato

- Web link to the Marin County Elections Department
- Voter eligibility monthly meeting discussion
- NVRD participant

**Latino Radio, Rohnert Park**

- Spoke on air about the voting process and registering to vote.

**League of Women Voters of Marin County** – San Rafael

- NVRD Novato Farmers Market
- Dropped off voter information and pamphlets on voter eligibility at an all-Spanish-speaking training event sponsored by LWV and West Marin Community Services District
- Web link to the Secretary of State’s website

**Mainstreet Mom’s West Marin – Pt. Reyes Station**

- NVRD tabling at the Farmers Market in Pt. Reyes Station

**Marin City Community Service District – Marin City**

- Attended Sunday food bag giveaway events, distributed food bag inserts, and voter information (Unitarian Church)
- Registered voters and distributed information at the Phoenix Project Family Picnic—nine people registered to vote, including ex-felons

**Marin Community Clinics - Novato**

- Attended monthly Thursday morning food bag giveaway events
- Provided voter registration cards and information

**Novato Human Needs Center - Novato**

- Attended Tuesday food bag giveaway events
- Provided voter registration cards and information

**Novato Multicultural Commission/Festival – Novato**

- Provided voter information at Forum on Equity
- Dropped off eligibility information
- Several people registered to vote at a free outdoor event that promoted multiculturalism by bringing the community together

**REST Program – San Rafael**

- Dropped off flyers and voter registration forms for women at Health and Human Services, Canal Campus

**Ritter Center – San Rafael**

- Regular check-ins
- Provided flyers and voter registration information

**West Marin Community Service District – Pt. Reyes Station**

- Provided flyers for Food Pantry Partnership and voter information event

**YWCA of San Francisco & Marin – San Rafael**

- NVRD San Rafael Farmers Market
- Provided educational discussions and materials at their meetings

**Food Pantry Partnership**

This new food bag insert program proved to be very successful. Agencies and clients enjoyed receiving the information sheets, timelines, and bookmarks. Agency buy-in helped support and promote civic engagement.

The Food Bank of San Francisco and Marin distributed free food to a list of agencies in Marin. The Department’s message was provided to over 40 food delivery locations. The bag insert program was successfully integrated and each week people looked for a flyer.

## **Program Partners**

- Canal Alliance – 200 flyers (San Rafael)
- Canal Welcome Center – 100 flyers (San Rafael)
- Marin Community Clinics - 350 flyers (Novato)
- Novato Human Needs Center – 200 flyers
- Ritter Center – 100 flyers (San Rafael)
- Unitarian Church – 100 flyers (Marin City)
- West Marin Community Service District – 200 flyers

## **Inserts**

- Bookmarks and postcards
- Tri-fold Elections Department brochure
- Voter eligibility information
- Election timeline

## **National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) Events**

A new group of partners for NVRD joined the effort to reach more communities in 2016. National Voter Registration Day events were scheduled for September 25 – October 1. The Lifelong Learning Center at the Indian Valley Campus of College of Marin registered voters for one week prior to NVRD), and a civically engaged drama teacher at the College of Marin's Drama Department gave her students extra credit to register voters.

The Elections Department's press release went to local TV studios in San Francisco, and Chanel 7 KGO News brought their cameras to College of Marin and Dominican University; Univision Spanish Language Station also provided coverage. NVRD 2016 was the fourth year coordinating events in Marin County, and included tabling events and partnerships with these local organizations:

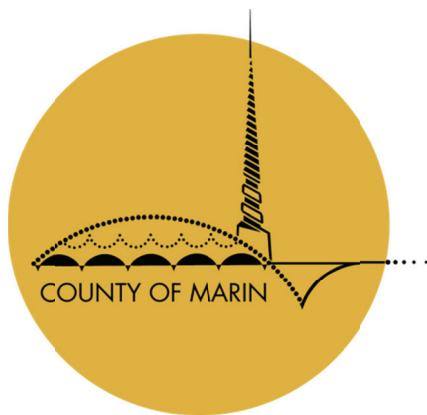
- Asian Alliance – San Rafael
- Center for Independent Living – San Rafael
- College of Marin and YWCA at College of Marin – Larkspur
- Dominican University – San Rafael
- Festival Independencia – San Rafael
- Latino Leaders – San Rafael
- Latino Marin – Novato Farmers Market
- League of Women Voters – Novato Farmers Market
- Lifelong Learning Center/Indian Valley College – Ignacio
- Marin Community Clinics – Novato
- Main Street Mom's West Marin – Pt. Reyes Station
- Ritter Center – San Rafael
- YWCA – San Rafael Farmers Market

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# MISSION STATEMENT

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The mission of the Elections Department is to provide a **responsive, transparent, and professional** approach to conducting elections that will **inspire trust and confidence** in our work, and to **promote the participation** of all eligible citizens in the election process.



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