

Election Administration Plan

Supplement to 2020 EAP: Contingency Plan for

Infectious Disease and Pandemics

Nevada County Elections

Last Updated: August 28, 2020



Letter from Registrar Gregory J. Diaz

Throughout the course of history, leaders have found it hard, and some have even been reluctant, to protect personal rights and liberties during national emergencies. The duty to balance administrative needs with the rights of people is an ongoing tension within governmental agencies, one further complicated by the politics of the day, misinformation, and fear.

In this unprecedented moment in time, the Nevada County Elections Office is committed to providing excellent service to our citizens—safely and with integrity. This includes but is not limited to protecting the right to vote. We do not view the need to protect public health and voter rights as mutually exclusive matters—in fact, we fail in our duty if we treat them as such. Safety and the preservation of rights are as essential to maintaining a healthy democracy as the act of voting itself.

This document sets out the basic framework for which Nevada County Elections will structure its plan to carry out the November 3, 2020 General Election **safely**. At this early date, this supplement to our Election Administration Plan does not include some particular details because the road ahead of us is largely unknown. Instead, this document is intended to provide voters with a high-level view of the kinds of changes they may expect.

We also are aware that our response to the COVID-19 health crisis, should it interfere in any way with elections processes in November, cannot be decided without also considering the real possibility of prolonged power outages due to Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) events. Our plan takes this possibility into account but is not explicitly mentioned here. We welcome any suggestions from the public about the intersection of COVID-19 and PSPS events.

Between now and the November General Election, I and my staff have no doubt that circumstances will evolve rapidly. We are expert at what we do and are optimistic that we will be able to serve the voters of Nevada County efficiently and safely. But we also acknowledge that COVID-19 presents new territory for us. We will approach the coming weeks and months with an appropriate mixture of confidence and humility.

We understand that, in times of uncertainty, our citizens are under a considerable amount of stress. We will do everything we can to make sure that you are well informed of any changes that may take place. We will draw upon every resource to ensure that voting is safe and secure. As always, we will provide you with everything you need to exercise your right to vote.

Sincerely,

Gregory J. Diaz

Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters, Nevada County

Contents

Letter from Registrar Gregory J. Diaz.....	2
Goals.....	4
Vote-By-Mail Ballots.....	5
USPS, RAVBM, BallotTrax, and Drop Boxes.....	5
Protecting Election Workers and Voters.....	7
In Person Services.....	7
Vote Center Availability.....	7
Voting on Election Day.....	9
Vote Center Check In.....	10
Voting Equipment.....	11
Conditional Voter Registration (Same Day Registration).....	11
Will Call Replacement Ballots.....	11
Candidate Services.....	11
Proponents of Ballot Measures.....	12
Observers, Researchers, and Media.....	12
Other Processes.....	12
Glossary of Terms.....	13

Goals

Ensure that all eligible voters have every opportunity to vote.

Employ an evidence-based approach to keep all employees within our service safe from known harm.

Maintain a balance between the need to protect people during a known health emergency with voting rights. Be transparent about what that balance entails.

Collaborate with county public health officials, as well as other relevant state and local authorities, on recommendations for conducting all elections activities, including but not limited to in person voter transactions, candidate services, services for proponents of measures, back-of-office elections tasks (e.g., phone bank, ballot processing), and warehouse operations.

Provide voters with clear direction on safe and efficient ways to receive and cast their ballots. Work in collaboration with outside stakeholder groups, including local media, on public communication and education.

Provide voters with advance notice of any changes to voting locations, drop box locations, or any other elections processes. Minimize the occurrence of any last-minute changes.

Provide elections observers, candidates, and proponents of measures with clear direction for accessing services provided by Nevada County Elections.

To the fullest extent possible, provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to all elections staff—everyone from full time County employees to volunteers.

To the fullest extent possible, reduce the need for voters to touch surfaces. Provide the products necessary to curb the spread of infection and require regular sanitation of all surfaces.

If physical distancing cannot be safely practiced, provide alternative processes for providing in person services, including but not limited to offering in person appointments, reducing the number of persons permitted in enclosed spaces, and curbside voter services.

Determine the minimum number of staff persons needed to carry out basic election functions, especially at vote centers.

Determine the maximum number of people permitted inside of enclosed spaces where voting is taking place, based on the space in question, number of essential workers needed, and other considerations.

Provide for processes that minimize line wait times. To the extent possible, voters ought not stand in line for more than 45 minutes.

Provide the leadership necessary to maintain high levels of voter confidence in election results.

Vote-By-Mail Ballots

On May 8, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-64-20 (EO 64), which requires all California counties to send every registered voter a ballot by mail. As a Voter's Choice Act (VCA) county, EO 64 does not change Nevada County's current vote-by-mail process. EO 64 has since been codified by the passage of Assembly Bill 860.

The VCA requires participating election officials to send all registered voters in a jurisdiction a ballot by mail and to offer all voters the opportunity to vote in person at a vote center. Nevada County Elections has been a VCA county since 2018 and will continue to send all registered voters a ballot in the mail as required by law.

USPS, RAVBM, BallotTrax, and Drop Boxes

As in past elections, voted vote-by-mail ballots can be returned via a secure drop box location or in the mail via the United States Postal Service (USPS).

The USPS strongly recommends that voters request a ballot no later than 15 days before Election Day. The USPS further recommends that voters mail in their ballots at least 7 days before Election Day. We remain confident in our partnership with the USPS and strongly encourage voters who cast a ballot by mail to follow the USPS guidelines. To account for any possible delays for ballot return, Assembly Bill 860 allows election officials to accept a mailed ballot that is postmarked on or before Election Day up until November 20, 2020.

There may be disruptions to international mail service, which affects residents serving in the military and others covered by the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). Nevada County Elections is continuing to reach out to all UOCAVA voters to alert them of possible changes to international mail service and provide options, which includes Remote Accessible Vote-By-Mail (RAVBM).

The State of California is encouraging all counties to expand the use of RAVBM. Our office strongly encourages all voters, including but not limited to UOCAVA voters and voters with disabilities, to contact us if they want to learn more about accessing RAVBM. Those requesting RAVBM will receive instructions on how to receive and return a ballot securely.

Voters who wish to know whether their ballots were received may call the Elections Office. Voters may also sign up for BallotTrax, which is a service that voters can use to get updates on the status of their mailed ballot. Voters may sign up for BallotTrax by visiting <https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/>.

Voters may drop off their voted ballot at any drop box location in California. There is a drop box at every vote center location and locations throughout the county. Many county drop boxes are located at grocery stores, which are expected to remain open during a public health emergency. Citizens concerned with the timeliness of USPS service are strongly encouraged to use an official vote-by-mail drop box.

Updated Drop Box Locations

All drop boxes are available starting on October 5, 2020 during the business hours shown below. All drop boxes will close on November 3, 2020 at 8 p.m.

Drop Box Location	Address	Hours
Eric W. Rood Administrative Center	950 Maidu Avenue Nevada City, CA 95959	24 hours, 7 days a week
Truckee Town Hall	10183 Truckee Airport Rd Truckee, CA 96161	24 hours, 7 days a week
* Grocery Outlet	11213 Donner Pass Road Truckee, CA 95161	7 a.m. – 10 p.m., 7 days a week
Save Mart	11399 Deerfield Dr Truckee, CA 96161	6 a.m. – 12 a.m., 7 days a week
BriarPatch Food Co-op	290 Sierra College Drive Grass Valley, CA 95945	7 a.m. – 10 p.m., 7 days a week
Chicago Park Store	19077 Colfax Highway Grass Valley, CA 95945	7 a.m. – 7 p.m., 7 days a week Open until 8 p.m. on Election Night
Gold Miners Inn Lobby	121 Bank Street Grass Valley, CA 95945	24 hours, 7 days a week
Grocery Outlet	616 Sutton Way Grass Valley, CA 95945	7 a.m. – 9 p.m., 7 days a week
* Hills Flat Lumber	380 Railroad Ave. Grass Valley, CA 95945	Mon – Fri 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sat – Sun 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Save Mart	12054 Nevada City Hwy Grass Valley, CA 9594	6 a.m. – 12 a.m., 7 days a week
SPD Market	129 W McKnight Way Grass Valley, Ca 95949	7 a.m. – 9 p.m., 7 days a week
* Sweetland Garden Mercantile	29435 Hwy 49 North San Juan, CA 95960	Mon – Fri 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. Sat 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. (Closed Sun)
Holiday Market (Penn Valley)	11324 Pleasant Valley Rd Penn Valley, CA 95946	7 a.m. – 10 p.m., 7 days a week
* Holiday Market (Lake of the Pines)	21656 Higgins Road Auburn, CA 95602	6 a.m. – 11 p.m., 7 days a week

* New drop box location

Protecting Election Workers and Voters

On June 3, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-67-20 (EO 67), relating to elections. In addition to reiterating the all mail requirement, EO 67 provides the basic groundwork for establishing voting locations for the November 3, 2020 General Election. EO 67 has since been codified by Assembly Bill 860 and Senate Bill 423. Additionally, the Secretary of State has issued guidelines for counties conducting in person voting at vote centers and polling places; see memorandum CCROV 20154.

Nevada County voters may expect to experience some modifications related to COVID-19, which are described in the remainder of this document.

Our goal is to both protect the health and safety of voters and election workers and protect voting rights. Nevada County Elections will use all resources available to provide basic health protections to everyone serving our office. Our staff and leaders are working with County, State, and Federal officials on obtaining the necessary PPE, as well as prepare the equipment and training needed to conduct all elections activities safely. We will also work with County and State authorities on implementing a comprehensive public education plan so that voters and employees know what to expect and can take the necessary steps to keep themselves safe.

On the advice and recommendation of public health officials, all Nevada County Elections workers will be required to wear PPE, limit contact with surfaces, and maintain acceptable social distances. Those policies and procedures shall include those employees working in our call intake area, ballot room, signature verification area, ballot extraction and counting areas, and elections warehouse, in addition to the stipend workers that serve in our vote centers. All workers will receive a check list of materials that will be included in their supplies, including supplies that help curb the spread of infection.

Nevada County Elections will work collaboratively with public health officials on basic training to keep themselves and voters safe. This training will include safety procedures for workers that process in-person voters, collect vote-by-mail ballots from drop boxes, proper use of PPE, disinfecting voting equipment, and other necessary procedures.

In Person Services

Vote Center Availability

It is the expectation of the State of California that, during an emergency, election officials have contingency plans for conducting in person voting and other elections activities. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, Nevada County Elections shall offer in person services as required by law. We will work in collaboration with county public health officials and vote center owners on:

- Assessing the safety of vote centers,
- Determining the limits of vote centers in terms of their ability to maintain public health, and
- Developing vote center-specific plans, available for public inspection.

Depending on the circumstances, Nevada County Elections will inform voters as soon as possible whether our office will be forced to, in the interests of public health:

- Limit or modify in person service at vote centers,
- Move a vote center,
- Reduce the total number of vote centers due to availability of venue, staff, or PPE, or
- Take other action, as circumstances require.

The regular schedule of vote center openings is available on p. 7 of the 2020 EAP. EO 67 and SB 423 allow VCA counties to open vote centers no sooner than three days prior to the General Election. For the November 2020 election, the Rood Center will be available for in person voting starting 29 days prior to the election, as originally expected.

Nevada County Elections has determined that some of its vote centers made it difficult or impossible for voters or workers to practice social distancing. Nevada County Elections has replaced several vote centers throughout the county. Our office makes determinations on vote center locations based on the statutory guidelines articulated in California Elections Code 4005(a)(10)(B)(i)-(xv). Decisions are facilitated by the vote center siting tool created by the Center for Inclusive Democracy.¹ We welcome public input on any other vote center locations that raise health concerns.

¹ The vote center siting tool is publicly accessible and found at <https://cid.usc.edu/sitingtool>.

Updated Vote Center Locations

Our updated list of vote centers and availability appears in the table below. Vote center hours are from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. On Election Day (November 3), all vote centers are open from 7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

Vote Center	Address	Dates for In Person Voting
Rood Center	950 Maidu Avenue Nevada City, CA 95959	October 5-November 3
* Town of Truckee Public Works ²	10969 Stevens Lane Truckee, CA 96161	October 31-November 3
Gold Miners Inn, Ballroom	121 Bank Street Grass Valley, CA 95945	October 31-November 3
* Bear River High School, Gymnasium ³	11130 Magnolia Road Grass Valley, CA 95949	October 31-November 3
* Nevada County Fairgrounds, Main Event Hall ⁴	11228 McCourtney Road Grass Valley, CA 95949	October 31-November 3
* Sierra College, Gymnasium ⁵	250 Sierra College Drive Grass Valley, CA 95945	October 31-November 3
* Tahoe Truckee Unified School District, Gymnasium ⁶	11603 Donner Pass Road Truckee, CA 96161	October 31-November 3
North San Juan Community Center	29190 State Hwy. 49 North San Juan, CA 95960	November 3

* *New vote center location*

Voting on Election Day

Nevada County Elections will establish and widely publicize voters' in person options. If a pandemic threatens in person voting for any election, our office will highly encourage our voters to use US Mail or drop boxes to return their ballot. This does not mean, however, that voters will be precluded from voting in person.

The State of California requires all local election officials to provide in person services—particularly for those who wish to exercise the right to register and vote on the same day and after the registration deadline has passed (see section on Conditional Voter Registration, below). Nevada County voters should expect that:

² Replaces the vote center previously located at Truckee Town Hall.

³ Replaces the vote center previously located at Higgins Lions Community Center.

⁴ Replaces the vote center previously located at Penn Valley Fire Protection District, Station 43.

⁵ Replaces the vote center previously located at Best Western Conference Center.

⁶ Replaces the vote center previously located at The Cedar House Sport Hotel Ballroom.

- All vote centers will meet minimum social distancing guidelines.
- Some vote centers may have drive-thru balloting options.
- Curbside voting is available for voters who want to vote from their car.

For the November 3, 2020 General Election, Nevada County Elections strongly recommends the following types of actions:

- We strongly encourage all voters to cast their ballots by mail or by using a drop box location, for their own safety, our worker's safety, and the safety of the public. The Elections Office is always happy to answer any questions or concerns about the mail balloting process.
- If a voter must vote in person, we strongly encourage all in person voters to vote early. The earlier a voter votes, the less likely it is she or he will have to wait to vote.
- If engaged in an in-person transaction, please wear a cloth mask, face shield, or combination of both. For voters who are unable to wear masks, we strongly encourage you to please vote from home, ask us about RAVBM or, if in person services are needed, vote curbside. It is our policy and the policy of the State of California to never turn a voter away.
- We strongly encourage voters who are parents to leave small children supervised at home, to the extent that doing so is feasible. We understand that some parents may have no choice but to bring children with them to vote due to the limited availability of in person schooling and childcare options. In such case, we ask that children stay close and, if old enough, wear a mask.
- Please read all posted signage and markers indicating safe distances and public health rules.

Vote Center Check In

Voters should expect the following:

- To keep wait times manageable, we may limit the time spent marking a ballot to 10 minutes, with exceptions for certain voters requiring assistance (Ca. Elec. Code § 14224).
- To control the number of people in an enclosed space, we will have a numbering system and a waiting area for in person voters. The waiting area will have proper social distancing markers. Voters will be served when their number is called.
- We will require all vote center workers to wear PPE at all times, adhere to social distancing requirements, and regularly sanitize all surfaces. We will take worker temperatures, train workers on self-monitoring, and take other steps as recommended by public health officials. We will also provide sneeze guards to facilitate safe in person transactions.
- We will require all vote centers to have ample PPE available to voters who need it.
- We may limit the number of people allowed inside of a building at one time depending on factors like size of venue, number of vote center workers, and availability of PPE.
- In person voters will receive a ballot marking pen that they can keep.

Voting Equipment

Nevada County Elections will work with County and State officials to provide voters with the means necessary to avoid touching too many surfaces. However, voters will not be precluded from using any equipment necessary to cast a ballot should the voter require in person services.

Nevada County Elections will encourage the use of disposable gloves for voters who use the voting equipment. Vote center workers will ensure that used gloves are properly discarded.

Workers will be instructed to disinfect voting equipment after each use, using the guidelines offered by public health officials and the County's voting equipment vendor.

For voters who wish to use the audio feature, all headphones attached to ballot marking devices will have disposable ear coverings. Vote center workers will ensure that used coverings are properly discarded.

Check in clerks will provide ballot marking pens that voters can take home with them. The tops of these pens can also be used on voting equipment should the voter wish to use the Accessible Touch Writers.

Conditional Voter Registration (Same Day Registration)

Conditional Voter Registration (CVR) allows voters who missed the regular deadline for voter registration to register and vote through Election Day. Under the law, the CVR period only applies to the 14 days leading up to and including Election Day. Ca. Elec. Code § 2170. As in other jurisdictions in California, CVRs and other types of provisionally cast ballots are the result of in person voter transactions.

Nevada County Elections will strongly encourage everyone to register ahead of time using online voter registration or calling to request a paper registration form. All voters will also be encouraged to check the status of their voter registration before the regular deadline.

For those voters who still require a CVR, Nevada County Elections may establish a process for voters to access CVR, which might include a system to set an in-person appointment or use of RAVBM, whichever is feasible. This does not preclude a voter from requesting a CVR at a vote center on a first come, first served basis.

Will Call Replacement Ballots

A voter may receive a replacement ballot by mail if the ballot is missing, damaged, or lost. Typically, the voter calls our office to let us know that a replacement ballot is needed.

Nevada County Elections will offer a "Will Call" replacement balloting system. Just as one would hold theatre tickets in the box office will call for pick up, Nevada County Elections will have processes in place for voters to either call in or use an online system to request a replacement and schedule a pick up. Will Call will be available at the Rood Center as well as vote centers as they open during the voting period. The intent for the Will Call system is to streamline ballot replacement processes and shorten wait times. A campaign to promote this new Will Call system is in development and will be publicized in the weeks before the first set of ballots are mailed out.

Candidate Services

Nevada County Elections offers candidate filing services online and by appointment, accessible at the following link: <https://www.mynevadacounty.com/2998/Candidate-Filing-Application-Calendar>. This

does not prevent a candidate from walking into the office to conduct filing activities. However, our office will prioritize appointments and will ask walk in candidates to wait until a staff member is available to assist.

Proponents of Ballot Measures

Nevada County Elections has released a process for submitting petitions by mail and by appointment in light of the COVID-19 crisis, found on our website:

https://www.mynevadacounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/33869/Press-Release_Initiative-Petitions-During-the-COVID-19-Crisis_FINAL.

Our office will continue to use this modified process of accepting petitions as public health requires.

Observers, Researchers, and Media

Nevada County Elections conducts its elections and voting processes transparently. A pandemic that causes our office to limit in person services will undoubtedly affect the ability of outside stakeholders to observe our processes.

We are working on creative ways to maintain the transparency of our operations so that observers may participate safely. Observers, researchers, and media can expect the following from Nevada County Elections:

- We may limit the number of observers, researchers, and media allowed in our office and/or warehouse at one time, depending on the size of the space and number of people present,
- We may limit the number of observers, researchers, and media permitted inside of a vote center at one time, depending on the size of the space and number of workers present,
- We strongly encourage research firms conducting exit polling to share their processes for maintaining an appropriate and safe distance from their research subjects,
- We strongly encourage all interviews about the elections and voting process to be conducted with the Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters or Assistant Clerk-Recorder/Registrar of Voters via phone or email, and
- We strongly encourage media to provide our office with advance notice of in person visits, in order to help control the flow of in person traffic in our office and/or warehouse.

Other Processes

Any other health issues and processes affecting elections but not explicitly mentioned here will be addressed as soon as possible by Nevada County Elections.

Glossary of Terms

- **Ballot marking device:** Voting equipment that allows voters to use a machine to mark a paper ballot. That machine prints out the voter's ballot, allowing the voter to verify his or her choices before casting that ballot.
- **Ca. Elec. Code:** California Election Code, the law governing elections and voting processes in the state.
- **CVR:** Conditional Voter Registration. A properly executed affidavit of registration that is delivered by the registrant to the county elections official during the 14 days immediately preceding an election or on election day and which may be deemed effective after the elections official processes the affidavit, determines the registrant's eligibility to register, and validates the registrant's information.
- **EAP:** Election Administration Plan. A plan mandated by the Voter's Choice Act that includes, among other things, location of vote centers and drop boxes in the County, the County's voter education and outreach plans, and the County's contingency plans. The original 2020 EAP can be found at (English) https://www.mynevadacounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/34021/2020-Election-Administration-Plan_FINAL-Rev-3-2-2020 (Spanish) https://www.mynevadacounty.com/DocumentCenter/View/34020/2020-Election-Administration-Plan_FINAL-Rev-3-2-2020_SP.
- **PPE:** Personal Protective Equipment. Equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses.
- **RAVBM:** Remote Accessible Vote-By-Mail. A system used to mark an electronic vote-by-mail ballot for a voter with disabilities or a military or overseas voter. The voter prints their ballot and sends it to the elections official. The elections official then duplicates the voter's choices on an official ballot for counting.
- **UOCAVA:** Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986. This federal law requires that states and territories provide registration and voting opportunities for military service members, their families, and citizens living abroad.
- **Vote centers:** A type of polling place that allows any voter within a county to cast a ballot in person, drop off a vote-by-mail ballot, and receive other elections services.
- **VCA:** The Voter's Choice Act of 2016. This California state law allows voters to decide when and how to cast their ballot by requiring election officials to mail every voter a ballot, expand in person early voting, and establish vote centers. More about the VCA, including a list of participating counties, can be found at the following link: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voters-choice-act/>