



Los Angeles County champions a collaborative approach to increasing voter participation and access

CHALLENGE

Los Angeles County had an antiquated voting system and voter experience that could no longer sustain the demands of a complex electorate requiring flexibility, accessibility, and options for all voters.

In 2009, Los Angeles County's Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk (RR/CC) launched the Voting Systems Assessment Project (later rebranded as Voting Solutions for All People or VSAP) to modernize the County's aging voting system and create a voting experience that met the needs of its growing multicultural electorate. The previously used, InkaVote Plus system had reached the end of its life cycle. Many of the system's components relied on technology and hardware from the 1960s that were no longer supported, and it simply lacked the flexibility to adapt to new regulations in an increasingly diverse electorate.

The RR/CC team realized that when it came to revamping an antiquated elections system, a complete inventory of the needs and behaviors of voters would be necessary to figure out how to increase participation across the board. Identifying key impediments to voting was the first step in the process. After many months of research, a key insight was reached: existing voting systems and technologies had been designed primarily to suit the needs of elections administrators, and not voters. To revolutionize their election system with the end-user in mind, the RR/CC set out with the bold ambition of creating something entirely new from the ground up.

Voting Solutions for All People (VSAP), a publicly owned and publicly designed voting system, was born.

AT A GLANCE

With nearly 6 million registered voters, Los Angeles County is by far the largest, and most complex local voting jurisdiction in the United States. Its diverse population and sheer size — 88 municipalities spread across more than 4,750 square miles — make it an especially challenging place to administer elections.

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SOLUTION

RR/CC teams with AT&T to realize its vision.

AT&T was brought in to help operationalize VSAP and assisted the RR/CC in various aspects of program management. This included the design, strategy, and implementation of a comprehensive cybersecurity program, continuous monitoring of network operations, and general process improvement and documentation. AT&T also helped establish a risk-based approach to develop a security strategy so that RR/CC could ensure compliance with federal, state, and local election regulations, and policies for securing critical infrastructure. In partnership with the RR/CC, AT&T helped develop, operate, and maintain the VSAP program, a publicly owned and designed voting system that digitally transformed the traditional voting model into one that offers flexibility for greater participation and access-

ibility for the community while maintaining the security and integrity of each vote cast. Voters can select when and where to cast a ballot and do so in 19 different languages.

SOMETHING UNIQUE

RR/CC intends to make its technology and expertise available for counties throughout the United States. While other counties may not want to replicate the entire Los Angeles experience, they are invited to evaluate the solution and replicate the components that work for them. Similarly, Los Angeles is looking for opportunities to leverage its SOC for other elections across the county.

Elections in Los Angeles County are an extraordinary logistical feat, requiring the coordination of over 10,000 people including both county employees and volunteers. The secure deployment of assets must reach hundreds of Vote Centers across thousands of square miles in a very short period of time.

The technical components of the VSAP program's elections operations can be summarized into the following high-level categories:

Election Contact Center and Field Support Technician (FST) Services

- Management of the Technical Support Call Center and FST planning and execution for multiple elections over the past 3 years.

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- The Technical Support Call Center and FST operations provide virtual and onsite technical support to ensure connectivity and operability at the Vote Centers for VSAP voting equipment and network infrastructure.

Vote Center Network Support (NOC)

- The Election Network is deployed with an associated Network Operations Center (NOC). Each election requires a secure network deployment, monitoring, and subsequent triage for up to 1,000 vote centers around Los Angeles County.

Election Cybersecurity Operations Center (SOC)

- The Election Cybersecurity Operations Center (E-CSOC) provides 24/7 continuous monitoring, incident response, and threat hunting using proprietary AT&T technology, combining advanced threat intelligence and cyber expertise to quickly identify, isolate, and remediate potential security incidents before they become a challenge or negatively impact election operations.
- Implementation of this world-class E-CSOC that has won numerous security awards and received accolades from partners such as MS-ISAC, the FBI, and Department of Homeland Security.

OUTCOMES

Outcome 1

Voters are no longer limited to a single voting location on a single day. The voting period expanded from 13 hours on a single day to a minimum of 8 hours across 11 days.

Outcome 2

Precinct polling places were replaced with Voting Centers where any voter could go to any location to cast their ballot.

Outcome 3

Now voters can independently and privately cast their ballot on a Ballot Marking Device with modern touchscreen technology with the security of a physical paper ballot of official record.

Outcome 4

Electronic Pollbooks allow election workers to update voter registration records in real-time and eligible non-registered voters the chance to register and cast a ballot on the same day.

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LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson 1

Securing a voting system demands a programmatic approach that focuses on people, processes, and technology.

Lesson 2

Successful adoption of a new system requires listening to the concerns of all constituents and being responsive and flexible.

Lesson 3

Resistance to change can be overcome with a strong communication strategy that includes educating, building trust, and involving a diverse set of community stakeholder groups.

Lesson 4

Create systems that continually gather feedback to make design and innovation an iterative and ongoing process.

WHO SHOULD CONSIDER

Counties seeking to improve voter experience or increase participation in the voting process and organizations that support programs who want to reach their population with a flexible and inclusive solution.



CHAMPION

Registrar-
Recorder/County Clerk



FINANCING

General Fund/Existing
Funds



LEARN MORE

VSAP – LAC Voter-
Centered Approach
(lavote.gov)