



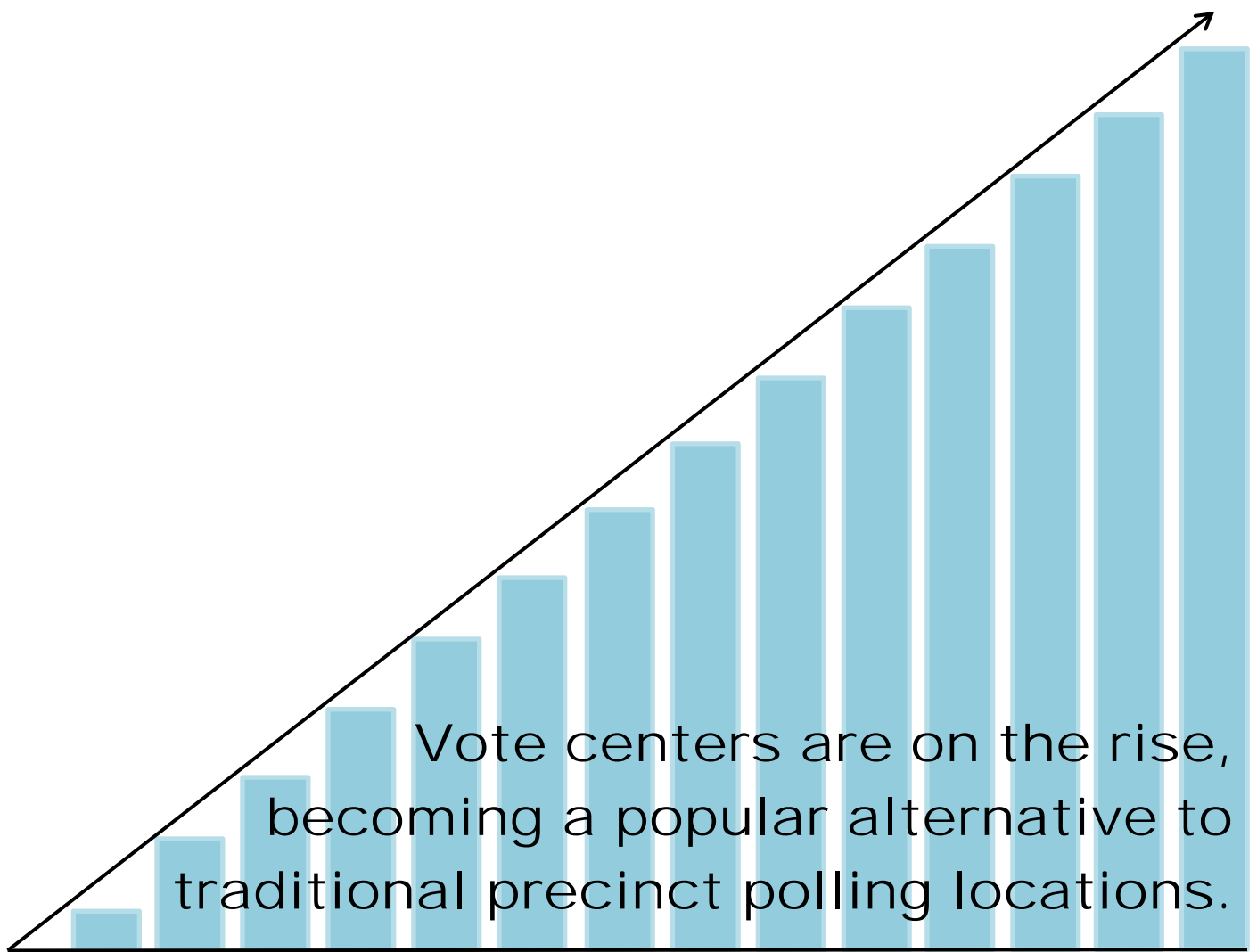
VOTE CENTERS

[BRINGING EFFICIENCY TO THE POLLS]

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Vote centers are on the rise, becoming a popular alternative to traditional precinct polling locations.

Vote Centers are still a relatively new trend taking over jurisdictions across the country. This white paper will look at what defines a vote center, past-present and future trends, and how one jurisdiction is choosing to get their vote center fix.

VOTE CENTERS

[BRINGING EFFICIENCY TO THE POLLS]

What defines a Vote Center?

Essentially, a *vote center* or a *ballot center* permits any voter within a whole jurisdiction to cast their vote, regardless of their residential address. To allow this alternative, vote centers often require an e-poll book which enables the voter to check-in directly to the Voter Registration database with real-time access. Additionally, this eliminates the possibility of a voter submitting multiple ballots in one election.

The vote center model has multiple advantages:

Voter Accessibility – Voters can choose a location that works best for them; near work, home or school, literally anywhere in their jurisdiction.

Reduction of Temporary Staff – by allowing vote centers fewer locations are necessary; saving jurisdictions money which would normally be utilized on temporary staff and training.

Administrative Efficiencies – Needing fewer staff permits election officials to hire less, allowing them to focus on hiring and training the best quality of poll workers. Teaching less staff can be a huge benefit to any jurisdiction, where a rounder quality of training and education in state election laws and procedures can be given to poll workers. In turn, this also helps the voter have a higher quality voting experience.

Cost Savings – because vote centers simplify the voting process the use of provisional ballots can also dramatically reduce. For example, the City and County of Denver, Colorado utilized 10,777 provisional ballots in November 2012, after the transition to the “Colorado Model” provisional ballots significantly reduced by 96.8% with only 340 provisional ballots in November 2016. At a rate of \$1.67 per provisional ballot, that is a savings of \$17,395 in provisional costs alone¹.

PAST. PRESENT.
FUTURE.

2018

State of California is authorized to start the use of vote centers after SB450 passed in 2016.

2016

State of Wyoming, Laramie and Teton Counties use vote centers for their Primary and General Elections³.

2015

Wyoming (SF52) authorizes the use of vote centers with use of e-poll books.

2013

Arkansas (HB1875) passes legislation allowing their jurisdictions to use voter centers.

2012

South Dakota (HB58) passes authorizing the use of vote centers; however a pilot in some jurisdictions was authorized previously.

2011

Arizona (HB233), Indiana (SB32), New Mexico (SB337), Tennessee (SB1268), Texas (HB2194), and Utah (HB130) pass legislations allowing all jurisdictions to use vote centers if warranted.

2010

North Dakota (HB1378), South Dakota (SB101), Tennessee (SB3687), and Texas (HB719) – Initiate pilot projects.

2008

The State of Iowa passes legislation allowing jurisdictions to use vote centers for city, school and special elections.

2006

The State of Indiana begins vote center pilot in five counties.

2004

Larimer County, Colorado (SB153) passes authorizing legislation.

2003

Larimer County, Colorado introduces the first vote center².

Election Day Only: Wyoming, South Dakota, Iowa.

Early Voting Only: District of Columbia, Nevada, Kansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, Illinois, Ohio, West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Maryland, and Massachusetts.

Early Voting & Election Day: Utah, Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Arkansas, North Dakota, and Indiana.

BALLOT CENTERS

[Maricopa County, Arizona & Their New Approach]

Voters in Maricopa County, Arizona won't ever have to worry about what precinct to vote at again. The County is deciding to shift their elections beginning in the Fall of 2017 and promote them as All-Mail Elections, or as the County refers 'All Ballot-By-Mail'.

Currently, 80% of the County's voters already utilize *ballot-by-mail also known as vote-by-mail*; in comparison to 68-70% of voters who are registered to vote in person. These contrasting numbers have the County embracing the fact that larger voter turnouts occur when ballot-by-mail is an option.

Additionally, the County faces replacing over 1,300 tabulators which are at the end of their life for 724 precincts; potentially costing the County 25-30 million dollars. However, Maricopa County also understands that there are other reasons to have an all-mail election. The County has approximately 4,000 ballot styles, with some precincts having several different ballots styles, this bottleneck can lead to unnecessary confusion at precincts. Additionally, the County was using an excessive amount of paper, as precincts must have preprinted ballots on hand; requiring them to absorb costs to print, store and destroy unused ballots.

Thinking Outside the "Box"

To satisfy this dilemma, the County has implemented a new system, which will give the County the capacity to print a unique individual ballot AND an affidavit

envelope in 30 seconds. Not only does this alternative save time, but it provides two significant benefits for the County:

1. Voters can attend any universal polling location and receive their unique custom printed ballot.
2. The County can reduce the use of two different processes to conduct an election to just one; instead of utilizing both precinct-based election and ballot-by-mail procedures, the County will only need to handle all their ballots as a ballot-by-mail election.

With the ballot and affidavit printing on-demand system onsite voting will be managed as follows:

1. A voter will visit any precinct of their choice.
2. Upon check-in, a deputy registrar will print the voter's ballot and affidavit envelope directly from the ballot-by-mail database.
3. Once the voter makes their selections, the ballot is inserted into the affidavit envelope and signed.

"This ballot center alternative will reduce costs, processes, and time without impacting the voter, and most importantly will increase the County's security."


Previously, the County's process had precinct ballots tabulated on-site and then re-tabulated in the County's tabulation room for quality assurance. The new process will allow the County to verify the voter's signature at their headquarters,

where the ballot and envelope are separated, and the voter's ballot will only need to be tabulated once. This new transition will allow the County to handle mailed in ballot-by-mail packets and precinct ballots the same; streamlining their entire tabulation process.



Caption: Workers at Maricopa County, Arizona set-up their ballot and affidavit printing on-demand system for their mock election.

“Our initiative to move forward with ballot-by-mail is comprehensive! With this solution, we now have the technology to make this happen - this is a safe and verifiable way to conduct our election, and we are taking care of eliminating a lot of waste; finding significant efficiencies to serve the voter and enhance the voter experience, and most importantly making sure to protect democracy by thinking outside the box to help our voters and our system”, says Adrian Fontes, Maricopa County Recorder⁴.

This ballot center alternative will reduce costs, processes, and time without impacting the voter, and most importantly will increase the County’s security with a shorter ballot chain of custody, by decreasing the margin of error. 

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