



MARICOPA COUNTY

Elections Department



WAIT-TIME REDUCTION PLAN

August Primary Election 2020

Due to challenges presented by COVID-19, the department is changing from a precinct model to a “vote anywhere” Vote Center model. One of the primary drivers for this decision is that many of the voting locations that Maricopa County has used in prior elections will not be viable voting options when considering safety protocols (e.g., large enough for physical distancing) needed to keep locations as safe as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, many of our traditional locations have declined to serve as a voting location, not responded to our requests, serve high-risk populations, or are not large enough to implement physical distancing safety protocols. Despite these challenges and the changes we’re making to the model, the Department remains committed to limiting wait-time to be under 30 minutes on average for our voters.

Our first step in planning to reduce wait-times was to use historical information to forecast turnout. However, voter turnout is only one factor that can cause long lines on Election Day. Other contributing factors include training, contingency plans, time of day voting patterns, check-in speeds, length of the ballot, and access to early voting options. The Election Day, Emergency Voting, and Early Voting plans outline our considerations for forecasting turnout and managing these factors to reduce wait-times and lines at voting locations. Using both the turnout forecast and lessons learned, we are developing plans to reduce wait-times. Below are some factors and potential bottlenecks that may cause wait-times during the August 2020 Primary Election and activities Maricopa County is implementing to mitigate them.

Check-in Process

The Department will deploy the use of SiteBooks to check-in voters at all voting locations. The SiteBook is a voter check-in system, with similar functionality to an electronic poll book referenced in state statute. They were first introduced in the November 2017 jurisdictional elections. Prior to 2016, Poll Workers used manual check-in rosters, which slowed down check-in times. The SiteBook provides faster check-in speeds because it allows for more than two voters to check-in simultaneously at a polling location and connects directly with the Recorder’s voter registration system, providing an enhanced and streamlined voter experience. Check-in speeds from recent elections (e.g., 2018 General Election and March 2020 Presidential Preference Election) average between 90 - 120 seconds per voter. The SiteBook check-in terminals guide voters through a series of screens. Voters answer questions, in their choice of English or Spanish, to establish identity, eligibility, and the correct ballot. With a barcode scan of an ID or by entering the voter’s name, voters check-in and prove their identity with a Poll Worker. For the ID requirement, a voter can provide one of the acceptable forms of photo identification, two forms on non-photo identification, or a permissible combination of one photo and one non-photo identifications.

Vote Centers and Check-in Stations

The County will open between 75 and 100 vote anywhere Vote Center locations on Election Day. The Vote Centers are regionally dispersed and many will also be open during the 27 day early voting period. We plan to open them in the following phases:

- July 8, 2020 – 5 Vote Centers (27-day Vote Centers)
- July 22, 2020 – 55 Vote Centers (14 – day Vote Centers)
- July 29, 2020 – 15 to 20 Vote Centers (7 – Day Vote Centers)



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- August 4, 2020 – Between 5 to 20 Election Day Vote Centers

For the 2020 August Primary Election, we plan to increase the number of check-in stations per location by 3-times (on average) the amount used during the 2018 Primary Election. In 2018, we provided each voting location with three SiteBook check-in stations. We will equip each voting locations with 9 -15 SiteBooks totaling more than 900 check-in stations across the county.

Time Needed to Vote a Ballot

The length of the ballot or a limited number of voting booths can create wait-times at a voting location. We have evaluated the time it takes to vote a ballot and established sufficient capacity in our voting locations to reduce bottlenecks. For the August Primary Election, we have over 5,000 different ballot styles to accommodate different voting precincts, splits, and jurisdictions. The majority of ballots will have between 12 – 18 contests.

On average, we estimate that it will take voters between 3 – 6 minutes to vote the August Primary ballot. Based on this time estimate and the amount of time we have calculated it takes to check-in, we can determine how many voting booths we need to eliminate bottle necks in our polling locations. We've established the following guidelines for implementing physical distancing while also providing sufficient check-in stations and voting booths to accommodate voters and minimize wait-times.

- *1,800 square footage – 2,499 square footage: 9 SiteBooks / 20 Voting Booths*
- *2,500 – 3,500 square feet: 12 SiteBooks / 30 Voting Booths*
- *Over 3,500 square feet: 15 SiteBooks / 40 Voting Booths*

Provisional Ballots

The Department will work to reduce the number of voters required to vote a provisional ballot in two ways:

1. We will hire a voter registration clerk for each polling location to assist voters with address and name changes on the SiteBooks. These are common situations that cause provisional ballots.
2. We will provide 75 - 100 Vote Centers equipped with ballot-on-demand technology and SiteBook check-in stations to serve as a vote anywhere locations. Vote Centers will be geographically dispersed throughout the county and will provide voters the option to vote at a location that is most convenient for them, which may be near their work, gym, favorite restaurant or while running errands.

Poll Worker Training

As described in the Election Day and Emergency Voting Plan - *Training Section* (Section 5, page 29), the Department will require all poll workers to attend training. We understand temporary Poll Workers live throughout the county and have other responsibilities, so we plan to offer online training and several locations in-person training options where inspectors, judges, and voter registration clerks (those responsible for check-in voters) can practice using our SiteBook check-in equipment. The in-person training sessions, some of them across the county, will ensure our poll workers are prepared. In addition, we will customize our training for the distinct duties of each poll worker and create training manuals that cover the nuances and equipment procedures of every election. We will post the manual on the Department's website by July 2020.



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Poll Worker Staffing Contingencies

We are hiring 30 additional poll workers that will undergo Inspector level training and work for 27 days at the Elections Department assisting with setup, training, and other critical roles to gain sufficient level experience that if needed we can redeploy these inspectors if a poll worker at a voting location is absent. If needed and after obtaining approval from the Hotline supervisor, an Inspector may also hire Poll Workers from the line of voters. We are also hiring an additional four poll workers per site for a total of ten poll workers. These additional four poll workers will allow for coverage during the two week early voting period and if we encounter absenteeism due to COVID-19. The election department could experience 30% - 40% absenteeism from poll workers and still be able to provide in-person voting options.

Equipment Support

Poll Workers, Trouble Shooters and Technical Trouble Shooters are trained on solutions to correct problems in the voting location. We have developed specific SiteBook procedures for checking in voters through an off-line mode if the virtual private network connection is lost. If a SiteBook terminal becomes inoperable, Technical Trouble Shooters will be quickly dispatched with a replacement.

Additionally, technical Trouble Shooters carry in their vehicles a back-up precinct tabulation machine, replacement printer cartridges, and other commonly used supplies in the event a location's equipment needs repair. Vote centers are equipped with two high-speed ballot-on-demand printers, creating a much-needed redundancy to prevent lines in the event one printer needs service or repair.

Wait-Time Remediation

For the August Primary Election, we are implementing a systematic process to monitor wait-time and respond accordingly. We have programmed our Site Books to calculate wait-times based on the amount of voters in line. The application is designed to calculate wait-time using a formula based on check-in speeds and inputs of how many people are in line. We are training our poll workers to count voters in line and report this information on the SiteBook every 15 minutes. The information flows to a workflow logging and dispatch system monitored by the Department's TroubleShooter hotline. This information is immediately updated on the Departments information command center. Through this new system, the Department will have access to real time information about voter wait-times.

If wait-times exceed 30 minutes, Inspectors or Trouble Shooters will work with Department staff to assess the cause of the issue or bottle neck. Depending on that assessment, additional resources can be deployed to add capacity to the location or provide technical assistance. Additionally, poll workers can advise voters of the closest vote center. In addition to this new technology, we are also hiring an extra poll worker for all voting locations on Election Day to assist with monitoring lines and reporting wait times.