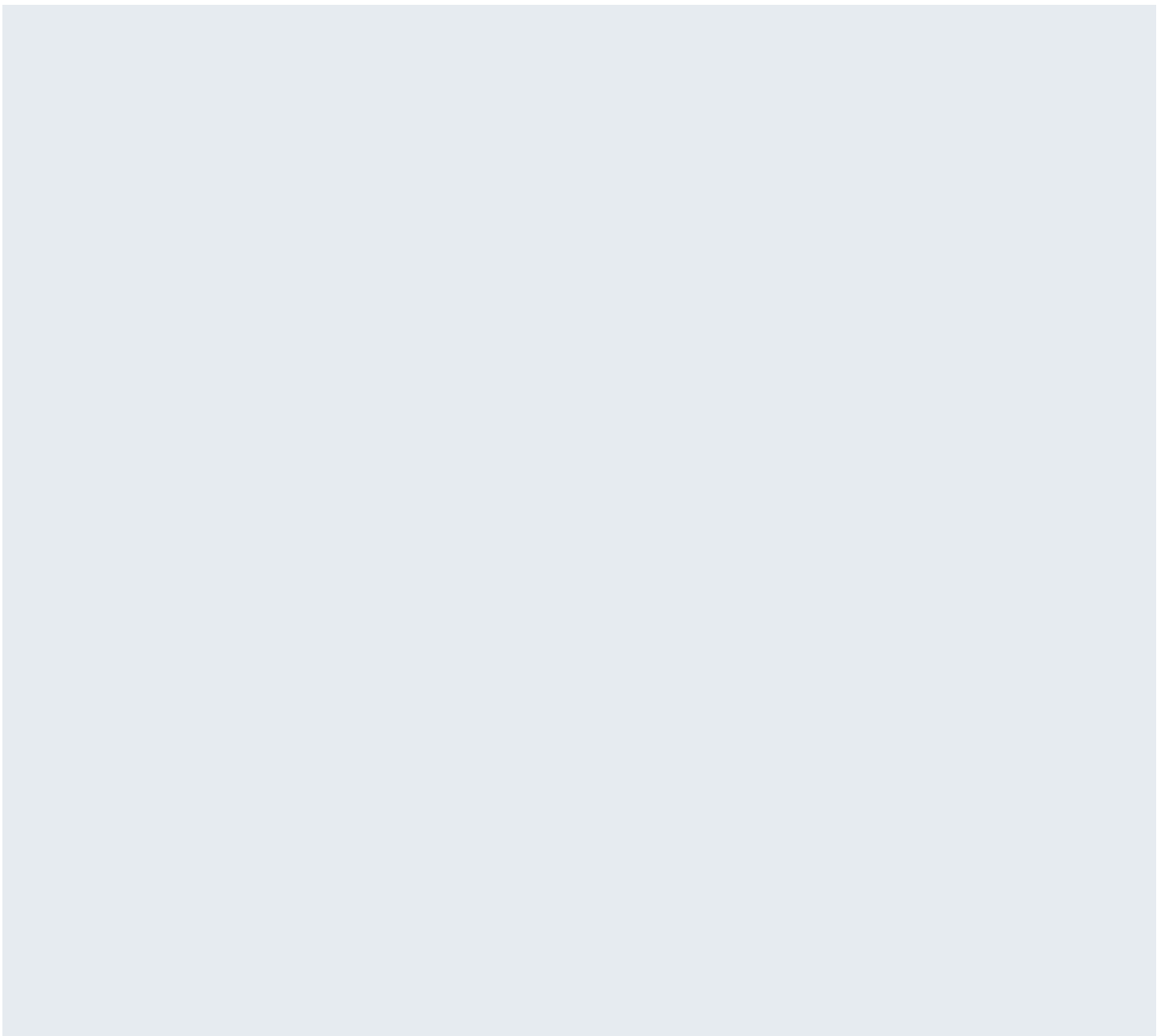




Public trust in the electoral process is critical to increasing voter participation and confidence in election outcomes. One way to bolster trust is by promoting transparency throughout the election process, while ensuring election operations run smoothly and efficiently. Voter education and outreach can increase understanding of how elections work and, as a result, build trust and confidence in the entire process.

The National Vote at Home Institute and The Carter Center are supporting election officials across the country as they work to prepare successful, high-confidence elections despite the challenges of the 2020 election. This how-to paper draws on best practices across the United States, offering simple steps election



Using these Tips Throughout the Election Process

Case Studies in Election Transparency

Election offices in the following counties, of varied size and resource levels, implement some of the best practices outlined above. These counties are examples of what transparency looks like in action and can be used as models for election officials planning to introduce similar practices in the coming weeks.

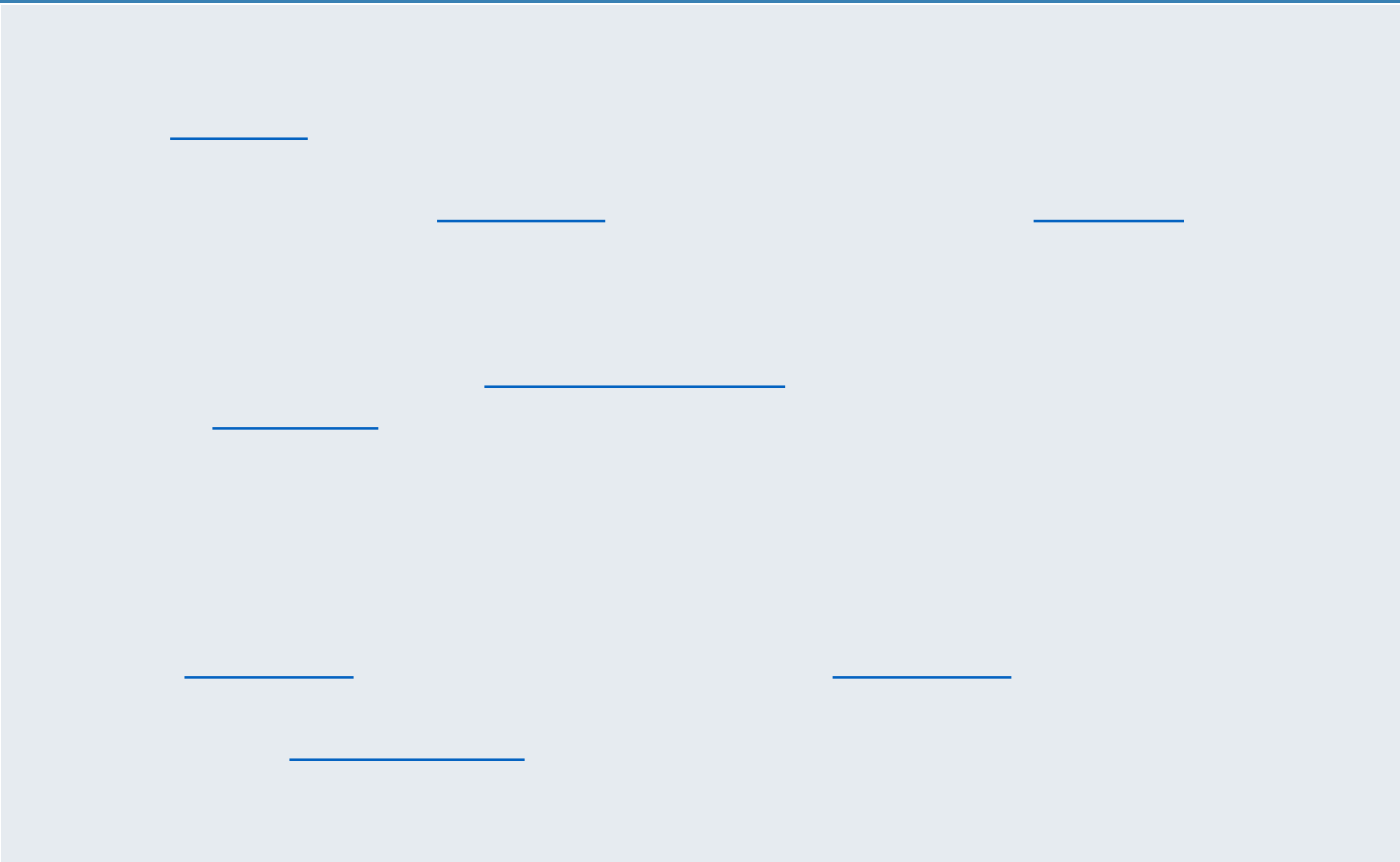
- **BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO**
- **WEBER COUNTY, UTAH**
- **PASCO COUNTY, FLORIDA**
- **ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

BOULDER COUNTY, COLORADO

Boulder County voter communication and media relations practices help set the tone before Election Day, managing expectations for ballot processing, counting, and results reporting. The clerk's office hosts a pre-election briefing outlining technical details of tabulation and reporting so reporters know what to expect, building trust and limiting misunderstandings and potential misinformation late on election night. Public facilities tours and community presentations also build trust in the process, allowing all Boulder residents to see the process for themselves and better understand how voting by mail works. The office conducts public testing of ballot equipment in advance of Election Day and [has clear media observer guidelines](#) for witnessing all election activities, although with capacity limits and additional safety requirements given COVID-19 precautions. Even if presentations may not be well-attended, especially as social-distancing guidelines force these events to be virtual, simply offering these access points to the public can help build trust and confidence in the integrity of the process.

Simple videos [of ballot facilities](#), [ballot security measures](#), and [signature guidelines](#) help shine a light on the process and make the local election process more accessible to voters. The county also offers detailed information and graphics on its website and social media and uses [Ballot Track](#) to send notifications by text, phone, or email regarding the status of voters' ballots. In addition, in advance of Election Day, the clerk's office leverages communication tools to maintain accurate voter lists and remind voters to update addresses and voter registration.

After Election Day, Boulder invites the public and media to observe its risk-limiting audit (RLA) and other post-election certification activities. The clerk's office plans to set up several camera angles for remote viewing of the process this year. The RLA helps ensure accuracy of election results, and according to [press release](#) in advance of the June 2020 primary, "provides the public with evidence that election outcomes reflect the votes cast by voters on their ballots."



ORANGE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

The Orange County Registrar of Voters employs extensive voter education and media relations efforts on Election Day through engaging digital and social content, virtual voting system demonstrations, community outreach, and virtual speaking engagements and events discussing changes to voting and other election processes. The Vote Center Lab, opened in July 2020, is a fully functional, permanent replica of an in-person voting center used to publicly test processes and procedures, train election staff, and provide general voter education and tours. The registrar sends a weekly newsletter to voters, and the website includes [ballot tracking](#), [clear instructions for voting by mail](#), and [detailed information](#) about every step and possible pain point in the process. Media features clear, [bright infographics](#) and [videos](#) providing information to voters about [vote by mail](#), locations of vote centers and ballot dropboxes, and other voting tips. Messaging emphasizes choices, convenience, as well as health and safety precautions given COVID-19.

The office regularly issues press releases, video content, and social media content for media partners, highlighting accessibility options, ways to request and return an absentee ballot, and other election information updates. In addition, Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley frequently appears on local and national media as an expert, providing an accessible public face for the office. Contacts for media inquiries are clearly listed on the website, along with press kits and backgrounders on operations and processes.

As outlined in the county's [COVID-19 Election Response Report](#), Orange County is planning many changes to ensure health and safety throughout the voting process, while ensuring transparency and public observation. On Election Day, it will livestream different parts of canvassing and tabulation, and plans are in place to livestream other processes and purchase additional cameras. Large-screen monitors will allow for in-person, physically distanced public observation. The post-election risk-limiting audit will also be livestreamed, and changes will be implemented to allow for physical distancing, including room set-up adjustments and additional monitors so members of the public can safely observe the audit.

About Us



National Vote at Home Institute (NVAHI) is dedicated to making sure every American can vote in secure, safe, accessible, and equitable elections by expanding vote-at-home systems in all 50 states. NVAHI works with election officials in optimizing their administration processes and governing laws for both mail ballot and in-person voting methods. NVAHI works to remove legislative and administrative barriers to vote-at-home systems and educate the public on the benefits of voting at home while still preserving the ability to vote in person for those who may want or need it.

THE
CARTER CENTER



The Carter Center is a not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization that has helped to improve life for people in over 80 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide.