

GETTING OUT THE ASIAN AMERICAN VOTE

*Achieving Double Digit Increases in Turnout
During the 2006 and 2008 Elections*



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Getting Out the Asian American Vote was produced by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC). The report's author is Eugene Lee, with assistance provided by Tanzila Ahmed.

The report is based on work conducted by APALC and the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) to increase turnout among Asian American and Pacific Islander voters. APALC focused its voter mobilization work in Los Angeles County, and OCAPICA focused its work in Orange County; APALC provided OCAPICA with support for voter list preparation, and guidance on campaign tactics and execution. Several dedicated staff were instrumental in carrying out these efforts. APALC staff members include Marchela Iahdjian, Daniel Kikuo Ichinose, Diana Jou, Eugene Lee, and Dana Nakano. OCAPICA staff members include Tanzila Ahmed, Van Le, Asma Men, and Duc Nguyen.

APALC and OCAPICA's work was supported by grants from The James Irvine Foundation. Under the auspices of the California Votes Initiative, The James Irvine Foundation supported the work of nine organizations, including APALC and OCAPICA, to conduct nonpartisan efforts to personally contact and mobilize voters to go to the polls during the 2006 and 2008 elections. More information about the California Votes Initiative can be found online at www.irvine.org. The opinions expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The James Irvine Foundation.

Several of the findings presented in this report are based on the work of an evaluation team that assisted The James Irvine Foundation in assessing the effectiveness of the nine organizations' outreach efforts. This evaluation team included Professor Donald Green at Yale University, Professor Melissa Michelson at California State University, East Bay, and Professor Lisa García Bedolla at the University of California, Berkeley. APALC and OCAPICA thank the evaluation team for the assistance, insight, and analysis they provided during the course of APALC and OCAPICA's voter mobilization work, and also for their feedback on this report.

APALC and OCAPICA also thank their community partnering organizations. APALC worked with eight partners in Los Angeles County: Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment; Filipino American Service Group, Inc.; Khmer Girls in Action; Korean American Coalition; Korean Resource Center; Organization of Chinese Americans; Search to Involve Pilipino Americans; and South Asian Network. OCAPICA worked with six partners in Orange County: Asian American Senior Citizen Service Center; Council of American Islamic Relations; Islander Vote; Korean American Coalition; Orange County Korean American Health Information and Education Center; and Orange County Korean-U.S. Citizens League.

APALC and OCAPICA also acknowledge and are grateful for the partnership and support of their colleagues at the National Association of Latino and Elected Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund who provided invaluable start-up advice and developed the phone banking software used by APALC and OCAPICA in their voter mobilization efforts.

APALC and OCAPICA thank several individuals who provided useful suggestions for how to improve this report, including Maria Garcia, Mari Ryono, and Janelle Wong.

Finally, APALC and OCAPICA thank the hundreds of volunteers who provided their time and energy, and collectively made over a hundred thousand phone calls to voters.

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The Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (APALC) was founded in 1983 and is the largest organization in the country focused on providing multilingual, culturally sensitive legal services, education, and civil rights support to Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). APALC works on a range of issues affecting AAPIs and immigrants, including workers rights, consumer rights, immigration, citizenship, domestic violence, hate crimes, health care, language access, and voting rights. APALC is affiliated with the Asian American Justice Center in Washington, D.C.

www.apalc.org

The Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) is dedicated to enhancing the health, and social and economic well-being of Asians and Pacific Islanders in Orange County, California. Established in 1997, OCAPICA works to improve and expand the community's opportunities through service, education, advocacy, organizing, and research. These community-driven activities seek to empower Asians and Pacific Islanders to define and control their lives and the future of their community.

www.ocapica.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although turnout rates among Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) voters still lag that of the general population, this gap can be addressed through voter mobilization tactics designed to establish personal contact with voters and provide them with information and encouragement to vote.

These tactics can help boost turnout rates among “low-propensity” AAPI voters, generally defined as individuals who vote infrequently even though they are registered to vote. Notably, these tactics can push turnout rates among such voters to approach or even surpass turnout rates among general population voters.

During the 2006 and 2008 elections, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) and the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) conducted campaigns to “mobilize” tens of thousands of AAPI voters to go to the polls. Using bilingual phone calls and culturally competent volunteers to contact voters, these campaigns resulted in impressive increases in voter turnout, including double digit increases in some instances.

These results represent the first definitive evidence that AAPI voters do in fact respond to conventional campaign tactics such as personal phone calls. Political parties, candidates, and issue campaigns can no longer justify leaving AAPI voters out of their strategic campaign planning by citing uncertainty over how AAPI voters will respond to mobilization efforts.

For example:

- In their campaigns for the June 2008 primary election, APALC’s phone calls increased turnout by 17 percentage points, and OCAPICA’s phone calls increased turnout by 11 percentage points – far in excess of the typical 3 to 4 point increase attributable to get-out-the-vote phone banks. In both cases, the turnout rate of low-propensity voters contacted by APALC and OCAPICA volunteers actually surpassed that of general population voters.
- In its campaign for the November 2008 general election, APALC’s phone calls increased turnout by nearly 6 percentage points. This is a remarkable increase given the inclination among many AAPI voters to vote even without any prodding to do so; 65% of low-propensity AAPI voters voted in the November 2008 election even though they were not targeted with phone calls or mailers.

At the same time, the results of APALC and OCAPICA’s campaigns confirm findings from other campaigns that indirect campaign tactics such as direct mail are not as effective in increasing turnout.

APALC and OCAPICA’s campaigns also highlight several best practices that should be followed when conducting outreach to AAPI and other ethnic minority voters. These best practices include:

- *File-Cleaning*: Use a data services vendor to conduct “file-cleaning” of the voter target list to remove voters who cannot be contacted. Also known as “data hygiene,” this process results in more efficient use of volunteers’ time.
- *Follow-Up Phone Calls*: Make follow-up calls to voters who indicate they plan to vote in the upcoming election. Consisting of short reminders to vote, these calls provide a tremendous boost to turnout rates.

- *Volunteer Recruitment, Compensation, Training and Supervision:* Recruit volunteers who can commit to multiple outreach shifts, and structure compensation to reward returning volunteers. Provide in-depth training to volunteers prior to the commencement of outreach work, and ensure close supervision of their work. These tactics improve the quality of calls and can make even inexperienced volunteers effective.
- *Bilingual and Culturally Competent Volunteers:* Use volunteers who are proficient or fluent in an Asian language; also match volunteers with voters of the same ethnicity. Because several AAPI ethnic groups have high rates of limited English proficiency, the ability to deliver in-language messages is critical to get-out-the-vote efforts targeting AAPIs. Additionally, using volunteers to call voters of the same ethnicity promotes a volunteer base that understands cultural nuances – this can affect something as simple, but also as important, as whether the voter stays on the phone or hangs up right away.

Additionally, APALC and OCAPICA’s campaigns resulted in key lessons learned that inform the following practical suggestions for how to plan and execute voter mobilization campaigns. These include:

- *Matching Voter Targeting to Electoral Context:* Determining which voters to target should be done to match the context of the election. Campaigns focusing on low-propensity voters should consider that a voter who would be considered a middle-propensity voter in a high turnout election can appropriately be considered a low-propensity voter in a low turnout election.
- *Optimization of Voter Contact Goals:* The number of voter contacts achieved by a campaign can be maximized by looking at the anticipated contact rate for each round of call attempts, and selecting the number of call attempts to be made, and the number of voters to be targeted, that will produce the most number of voter contacts. Because contact rates can vary by round, different numbers of call attempt rounds and voters to be targeted may result in different numbers of voter contacts overall, even though the number of volunteers required and the number of call attempts made are the same.
- *Timing of Outreach to Voters Likely to Vote by Mail:* The timing of outreach to voters more likely to vote by mail (based on their status as permanent vote-by-mail voters or their past history of voting by mail) should take into account when they are likely to receive their vote-by-mail materials from the local Registrar of Voters, and should provide sufficient time for non-permanent vote-by-mail voters to request a vote-by-mail ballot from election officials. This is particularly important in smaller municipal elections where vote-by-mail turnout plays a critical role in determining election outcomes.
- *Calling Facilities and Phone Bank Software:* Volunteers should make calls from a centralized location, rather than from their homes or office, to facilitate supervision. The use of phone banking software to pull up voter records and input call results, instead of voter lists printed on paper, can reduce time spent on data entry and ensure uniformity and quality in how volunteers record call results.

The results presented in this report underlie a key point: Because the AAPI electorate is growing at a pace surpassing that of the electorate as a whole, and because there is a developing community infrastructure to mobilize and increase participation among AAPI voters, AAPIs are poised to change the political landscape in Southern California and in other areas of the country.

INTRODUCTION

In 2006, two nonprofit organizations embarked on a new project intended to increase voting participation among Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in Southern California. The Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) and the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) created nonpartisan mobilization programs designed to contact and encourage AAPI registered voters to vote in upcoming elections. APALC focused its work in Los Angeles County, and OCAPICA focused its work in Orange County; APALC provided OCAPICA with data support and campaign guidance.

The goal of this new program was twofold. First, APALC and OCAPICA sought to promote political participation among AAPI communities as a means of increasing the responsiveness of elected representatives to the needs of AAPI communities.

Second, APALC and OCAPICA wanted to contribute to a growing body of knowledge about what types of mobilization techniques are most effective in boosting voter turnout among ethnic communities, and to develop a set of best practices that could be drawn upon by other organizations seeking to mobilize AAPI and other ethnic communities.

During the 2006 and 2008 elections, we completed seven campaigns targeting “low-propensity” AAPI voters, generally defined as individuals who are registered to vote, but have infrequent voting patterns. During the course of these campaigns, we collectively made bilingual phone calls to nearly 70,000 voters, and sent mailers to nearly 80,000 voters.

Both APALC and OCAPICA worked within a collaborative structure that helped achieve language capacity and supported efforts to recruit volunteers for their phone banks. APALC worked with eight AAPI organizations in Los Angeles County: Center for Asian Americans United for Self Empowerment; Filipino American Service Group, Inc.; Khmer Girls in Action; Korean American Coalition; Korean Resource Center; Organization of Chinese Americans; Search to Involve Pilipino Americans; and South Asian Network. Called the “Asian American Voter Project,” this collaborative targeted Los Angeles County voters from seven AAPI ethnic groups, including Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, South Asian, and Vietnamese Americans.

OCAPICA worked with six AAPI organizations in Orange County: Asian American Senior Citizen Service Center; Council of American Islamic Relations; Islander Vote; Korean American Coalition; Orange County Korean American Health Information and Education Center; and Orange County Korean-U.S. Citizens League. Called “Project Asian and Pacific Islander Vote,” this collaborative targeted Orange County voters from six AAPI ethnic groups, including Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Pacific Islander, South Asian, and Vietnamese Americans. OCAPICA also partnered with several community organizations and student groups to conduct general community education and awareness-building around voting; these efforts were conducted in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties.

We are pleased to bring you this report on our voter mobilization work, and we hope it will be a useful resource for those seeking to fund or engage in voter mobilization efforts.

REPORT GOALS AND OVERVIEW

While the AAPI electorate continues to grow in number, many AAPIs who are eligible to naturalize are not yet citizens, and many AAPI citizens are not registered to vote. Efforts to increase AAPI political participation must address these disparities. Such efforts must also address lower turnout rates among AAPI registered voters compared to general population voters.

This report seeks to inform efforts to increase voting rates among AAPI registered voters in three ways. The report:

1. Provides detailed information about our campaign tactics and how we executed them so that other organizations seeking to engage AAPI communities can adopt such tactics if they choose.
2. Shares the lessons learned from our efforts, including best practices to follow and failed tactics to avoid.
3. Provides evidence that clearly demonstrates the effectiveness of personal mobilization tactics in turning out AAPI voters, even those voters who vote infrequently.

This report provides community groups, unions, faith-based institutions and other organizations seeking to mobilize AAPI voters with a wealth of knowledge about techniques that have been proven to increase turnout. APALC and OCAPICA's efforts were successful in increasing turnout even among low-propensity voters.

This report also demonstrates a key point that elected officials, political parties and campaign consultants should take heed of – AAPI voters do in fact respond to voter turnout campaigns, and in some cases these campaigns can drive AAPIs to vote at rates exceeding that of the general population.

The first several sections of the report explain key premises informing our campaign strategy (Formulation of Campaign Strategy) and the “field experiment” approach we used as a means of evaluating our work (Description of Field Experiment Approach). This is followed by an in-depth description of the outreach methods we used and how we carried them out (Campaign Tactics, Preparation and Execution). The report then presents the results of our campaigns together with accompanying figures (Campaign Results), and provides a set of best practices generated by our work (Best Practices and Lessons Learned). Lastly, the report provides some concluding thoughts on the broader implications raised by the results presented here (Conclusion).

FORMULATION OF CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

APALC and OCAPICA based its strategy for mobilizing voters on three premises:

1. AAPI voters face a variety of barriers in casting ballots. To ensure that voters we mobilize can actually cast their ballots, our strategy should focus on proactively helping voters overcome these barriers.
2. Personal contact plays an important role in determining whether voter mobilization efforts are effective in increasing voter turnout. To maximize effectiveness, our strategy should incorporate efforts to personally contact and provide encouragement to AAPI voters.
3. Because mainstream political campaigns continue to ignore AAPI voters, and in particular low-propensity AAPI voters, many AAPI voters do not receive any personal encouragement to vote from party-based mobilization efforts. Accordingly, our strategy should focus on AAPI voters who are typically ignored by political campaigns due to their infrequent voting patterns.

These premises are explained in further detail below.

1. Our campaign should address barriers faced by AAPI voters

While the AAPI electorate in Southern California has been increasing both in total number of voters and also as a proportion of the overall electorate, AAPI registered voters continue to vote at lower rates than the general population.¹ Rather than accept commonly held (mis)perceptions that AAPIs are more interested in homeland politics than American political issues, or politically apathetic in general, our voter engagement approach assumed that barriers to voting were a more significant factor in AAPI voters not voting.

These barriers include:

- AAPI voters who speak limited English not having access to materials and information in Asian or Pacific Islander languages.
- AAPI voters lacking information about candidate races and ballot measures that is readable and easy to understand.
- AAPI voters lacking substantive ballot information altogether because they did not receive their sample ballot or statewide voter information guide, or because they discarded such materials not knowing what the materials were when they received them.

¹ See *Asian Americans at the Ballot Box: The 2008 General Election in Los Angeles County*, Asian Pacific American Legal Center. In Los Angeles County, the number of Asian Americans who voted in the 2008 general election increased by 39% from the 2000 general election, in comparison to a 22% increase for the general population. At the same time, 71% of Asian American registered voters in Los Angeles County cast ballots in the 2008 general election, compared with 78% of all registered voters in the county. *Asian Americans at the Ballot Box* is available online at www.demographics.apalc.org, along with similar reports on Asian American voters in Los Angeles and Orange Counties during the 2004 and 2006 general elections. These reports provide accurate and comprehensive information on Asian American registration and turnout, breakdowns by ethnic group and geography, usage of vote-by-mail ballots, need for and usage of language assistance, views on candidates and ballot measures, and attitudes toward key issues such as immigration and healthcare reform.

- AAPI voters lacking key information about the voting process, such as the location of their polling place or how to request a vote-by-mail ballot.
- AAPI voters not receiving any personal encouragement to vote.
- AAPI voters not understanding the connection between their choice whether and how to vote, and the impact of governmental decision-making on their own lives.
- So-called “voter fatigue” attributed to the holding of frequent elections.

Our other voting-related work has confirmed that AAPI voters face these barriers. For example, over the past 15 years, APALC and OCAPICA have devoted significant efforts to ensuring ballot access for limited English-speaking AAPI voters. This has included advocacy with local election officials to make sure that voting materials are appropriately translated, and that adequate numbers of bilingual poll workers are assigned to work at polling places. This has also included monitoring efforts in which volunteers are sent to polling places to ensure that election workers make available translated voting materials and bilingual oral assistance in compliance with the requirements of the Voting Rights Act.

Although Los Angeles and Orange Counties are required to provide language assistance in various Asian languages and make commendable efforts to do so, through our poll monitoring, we have observed numerous instances in which AAPI voters do not have access to language assistance because their poll sites lack translated materials or bilingual poll workers. Additionally, through calls we have received on our voter hotlines, we know that some AAPI voters do not receive or are not aware they have received their sample ballot or other voting materials. These hotline calls also indicate that many AAPI voters lack basic information about the voting process such as the location of their polling place.

Our approach in mobilizing AAPI voters took into account these barriers and proactively focused on helping voters overcome them. Because these barriers prevent or deter voters from going to the polls in the first place, we believed it was necessary to address these barriers in advance of Election Day.

Accordingly, we used our phone calls to voters as a means of determining what kind of assistance or information they needed. For example, we asked voters whether they had received their sample ballot and other voting materials, and whether they needed help in finding out their polling place location or requesting a vote-by-mail ballot. Where voters indicated they did not have voting materials or lacked information, we offered to follow up with election officials or provided the information directly to the voter. To address language barriers faced by limited English-speaking voters, we used bilingual volunteers to make these calls.

Additionally, to address informational barriers caused by a lack of easily comprehensible voting materials, we sent voter guides to voters as a supplement to the official government-prepared voting materials they received from election officials. Specifically, we mailed out “Easy Voter Guides,” which are summaries of key races and measures appearing on the ballot, written at an easy to understand reading level and laid out in a visually appealing format.

2. Our campaign should emphasize personal contact because of its key role in making mobilization efforts effective

The second core premise informing our campaign strategy was the notion that personal contact is a key factor in whether voter mobilization efforts are actually effective in increasing turnout. A growing body of social science research indicates that get-out-the-vote (GOTV) methods designed to result in personal contact between outreach workers and voters are effective in increasing turnout among the targeted voter audience. These methods include door-to-door canvassing and live phone calls. In contrast, indirect GOTV methods such as mailers, robocalls and media spots are not as effective in increasing turnout (although they may be useful in informing voters and influencing their vote choices).

This research also points to the potential for personal contact methods to increase turnout among ethnic minority voters (although prior to the California Votes Initiative experiments in 2006 and 2008, only a limited amount of research had been conducted on the effect of such methods specifically on ethnic minority turnout, including only a couple of experiments directed at AAPI voters).

APALC and OCAPICA decided upon live phone calls as its primary method of personally contacting AAPI voters. While conventional wisdom holds that door-to-door canvassing is the most effective method of increasing turnout, there are logistical issues inherent in using door-to-door canvassing to contact communities that speak multiple languages, and that are dispersed across geographically large jurisdictions such as Los Angeles County, encompassing 4,061 square miles of land, and Orange County, encompassing 789 square miles of land.

In Los Angeles County, while many AAPIs reside in traditional ethnic enclaves within the City of Los Angeles, many AAPIs also live in smaller cities located in the eastern half of the county, including the West San Gabriel Valley and East San Gabriel Valley; several of these cities have majority or near-majority AAPI populations. The southern part of Los Angeles County is home to several concentrated AAPI populations, including the city of Cerritos and several cities located in the South Bay area of the county. Growing numbers of AAPIs are locating in the northeast portion of the county as well as the San Fernando Valley, located in the northwest area of the county. In Orange County, AAPI communities are concentrated both in the northern part of the county in cities such as Fullerton, Garden Grove and Westminster, and also in the southern part of the county in cities such as Irvine. Because many Orange County neighborhoods follow suburban patterns, AAPI communities are dispersed even within these cities.

Additionally, Southern California is home to a significant number of multi-ethnic AAPI neighborhoods where no single AAPI group is dominant. Using door-to-door teams of three or four volunteers would be required in these neighborhoods, instead of the typical two-person team used in door-to-door canvassing, in order to achieve the necessary language capacity.

We believed that centralized, live phone banking would better allow us to scale our campaign upward to target large numbers of voters, without having to deal with the logistical issues of spreading volunteers across geographically large areas, and sending three or four-person volunteer teams to multi-ethnic, multi-language neighborhoods. A centralized phone bank allowed us to have volunteers call voters from the same ethnic group who were dispersed all across the county.

3. Our campaign should focus on AAPI voters who are typically ignored by mainstream political campaigns

The third premise driving our strategy was the recognition that mainstream political campaigns continue to ignore AAPI voters in general, and low-propensity AAPI voters in particular. This is attributable to several factors, including:

- The concentration of AAPI populations in non-“battleground” states.
- Political parties shifting their campaign strategies from the use of mass mobilization efforts to the targeting of specific voter segments with direct mail and robocalls.
- The perception of AAPI communities as politically disinterested.
- The perception of AAPI voters as too insignificant in number to spend resources on.
- An unwillingness to target AAPI communities due to a perceived lack of information about their political preferences.
- An unwillingness to target AAPI communities because of the perceived difficulty in running multilingual campaigns.

The end result is that mainstream political campaigns tend not to target AAPI voters with GOTV efforts. This is particularly true for low-propensity AAPI voters. Under traditional campaign strategy, GOTV efforts are focused on persuading and turning out likely voters, while infrequent voters are ignored. Because political campaigns have limited funds and seek “more bang for the buck,” they ignore infrequent voters who require more money and effort to be mobilized. This means that infrequent voters do not receive any personal encouragement to vote unless such encouragement is provided by other entities such as community organizations, unions, or faith-based institutions.

Recognizing that community organizations can play an important role in providing low-propensity voters with the type of personal contact that can effectively mobilize voters, we targeted our GOTV efforts toward low-propensity voters.

We do acknowledge that campaigns initiated for other types of purposes, for example a campaign to win or defeat a ballot measure, may better attain their goals by targeting high-propensity voters and seeking to sway them, rather than by outreaching to infrequent voters. But stakeholders seeking to expand a community’s voting base by increasing the number of voters casting ballots should include low-propensity voters within their target audience.

DESCRIPTION OF FIELD EXPERIMENT APPROACH

The purpose of applying a field experiment approach to voter mobilization work is to provide a scientific evaluation of whether the mobilization efforts are effective in increasing voter turnout. This approach can also be used to determine whether particular messages or methods of outreach are more effective than others.

Setting up a field experiment involves (1) establishing a “control” group and one or more “treatment” groups, (2) conducting an intervention directed at the treatment group but not the control group, and (3) comparing results among the groups. Subjects are randomly assigned to either the control group or the treatment group.

In the voter engagement context, setting up a field experiment entails randomly assigning individuals to one or more groups of voters that the mobilizing organization will target with door-to-door visits, phone calls, and/or mailers (the treatment group), and assigning other individuals to a group of voters that the organization will purposefully avoid targeting with any outreach efforts (the control group). Leading up to Election Day, the mobilizing organization conducts outreach directed at treatment group voters, but not control group voters.

Although a field experiment requires the mobilizing organization to purposely avoid contacting voters in the control group, the organization can start with a number of treatment voters that matches the organization’s capacity. In other words, voters in the control group are not voters that the organization would otherwise have capacity to mobilize.

After Election Day, the mobilizing organization obtains a publicly available data file from the local Registrar of Voters that represents the official record of which voters voted, and which did not. The data contained in this file allow the organization to determine the relative turnout rates of the treatment and control groups. The turnout rates are then subjected to a statistical analysis to determine what portion of the difference is attributable to the organization’s efforts.

Conducting voter mobilization work as a field experiment provides two significant benefits. First, a field experiment-driven evaluation provides an objective measure of voter behavior, and does not rely upon self-reported data obtained from voters themselves.

Second, a field experiment approach controls for factors that may affect voter turnout other than the mobilizing organization’s efforts. These factors may include the political context of the election, demographic characteristics affecting a voter’s inclination to vote, differences in past voting history among voters, and the degree to which voters can be readily contacted through door-to-door visits or live phone calls. In other words, because demographic characteristics and other factors are randomized among the treatment and control groups, this approach allows one to determine the extent to which increases in turnout are driven by the mobilization effort, without regard to other factors.

In setting up and conducting their field experiments, APALC and OCAPICA worked with an evaluation team consisting of three well-regarded political scientists: Professor Donald Green at Yale University; Professor Melissa Michelson at California State University, East Bay; and Professor Lisa García Bedolla at the University of California, Berkeley. The evaluation team worked with all of The James Irvine Foundation’s grantees under the auspices of the foundation’s California Votes Initiative.

For each of APALC and OCAPICA’s campaigns, the evaluation team conducted both the random assignment of voters to treatment and control groups, as well as the statistical analysis to evaluate the effectiveness of APALC and OCAPICA’s mobilization efforts.

The results presented in this report show the “treatment-on-treated” effect of APALC and OCAPICA’s phone banking efforts. This treatment-on-treated analysis estimates the effect of a voter actually receiving a phone call from a phone banking volunteer – in other words, how much the phone call increases the likelihood of the voter casting a ballot.² The evaluation team conducted a regression analysis, a statistical technique that allows one to estimate the effect of mobilization contact while simultaneously controlling for differences among voters with regard to their past voting history and the difficulty in contacting them.

Because other potentially intervening factors are randomized among the treatment and control groups, the only major difference between the two groups is whether a volunteer spoke with the voter. As such, the significant increases in voter turnout cited in this report are attributable to the phone calls made by APALC and OCAPICA. All of the results presented in this report are statistically significant – meaning that it is highly unlikely the increases in turnout occurred by chance rather than as a result of the phone calls – and the results can thus be considered reliable.

² The treatment-on-treated effect is different from the “intent-to-treat” effect, which is the difference in turnout between the control group and the treatment group. The intent-to-treat analysis includes all voters in the treatment group regardless of whether they actually spoke with a phone banking volunteer, whereas the treatment-on-treated analysis looks at only those treatment voters who were actually contacted.

CAMPAIGN TACTICS, PREPARATION AND EXECUTION

Four aspects of our campaigns were vital to our success. Our efforts succeeded when we carried these aspects out well, and were less effective when we implemented these aspects poorly. The four key elements include:

1. Preparing lists of voters who met our definition of low-propensity AAPI voters (identification) and ensuring the lists contained accurate phone number and mailing address information for such voters (file-cleaning).
2. Coming up with an estimated number of volunteers we needed to meet our phone calling targets (recruitment targets), making extensive, widespread recruitment efforts to secure bilingual volunteers who could commit to multiple phone banking shifts (recruitment methods and compensation), and providing them with in-depth training and supervision (training and supervision).
3. Having volunteers make phone calls from a centralized location to facilitate supervision, and providing volunteers with an easy-to-use, standardized way of recording the results of their calls (calling facilities and phone banking software).
4. Calling voters we spoke with previously an additional time immediately before Election Day to remind them to vote (follow-up calls).

These elements as well as other aspects of our campaigns are described in further detail below.

1. Preparation of Voter Lists

Identification of AAPI Voters

APALC and OCAPICA targeted low-propensity voters from a range of AAPI ethnic groups, including Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Pacific Islander, South Asian, and Vietnamese. To develop lists of voters to contact, APALC purchased voter registration and history data prior to each election from the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk and the Orange County Registrar of Voters. These voter registration and history data include fields that allowed APALC to determine voters' past voting history, registration history, age, place of birth, and geographic location.

However, these data do not include racial or ethnic identifiers. Therefore, to identify AAPI voters in the voter registration and history data, APALC developed a proxy measure that relied on the voter's place of birth and full name. Voters born in Asian or Pacific Island countries were assumed to be AAPI. Voters born in the United States were assumed to be AAPI if their last or first name were associated with a particular Asian or Pacific Islander ethnic background; this was determined by applying ethnic name lists developed by APALC.

Using this proxy measure, APALC identified a list of AAPI voters from the voter registration and history data. APALC divided the list of AAPI voters into lists of voters by ethnic group. This facilitated our ability to match phone banking volunteers with voters of the same ethnicity, and our ability to make bilingual calls to voters in the appropriate language.

Identification of Low-Propensity Voters

We used two filters to narrow the list to our desired target audience of low-propensity AAPI voters: (1) voters who resided in certain geographic areas with large numbers of AAPI voters; and (2) voters who were deemed to be low-propensity voters.

Under the geographic filter, voters were included on our target list if they resided in certain cities or zip codes with large numbers of AAPI voters.

Under the low-propensity filter, voters were included on our target list if they had an infrequent pattern of voting, were young voters, or were newly registered voters. More specifically, we included the following three categories of voters in our definition of low-propensity voter:

1. Voters who had voted only once or twice in the past four or five statewide elections.
2. Voters between the ages of 18-24, based on the fact that AAPI youth voters have the lowest turnout rates among AAPI voters generally.
3. Voters who had recently become registered to vote.

The large majority of voters included on our target list fell within the infrequent voter category. A subset of voters on our list fell within more than one category of our low-propensity definition; for example, some voters were both youth voters between the ages of 18 and 24, and also infrequent voters who had voted in only one or two of the previous four (or five) elections.

During APALC and OCAPICA's 2006 campaigns, voters were also included if they voted in zero of the last four elections, in addition to voters who voted in one or two of the last four elections. Our experience was that volunteers had difficulty in reaching the zero-of-four voters, and motivating them to vote when they did reach such voters. The lesson we learned here is that it is not resource-effective to include zero-of-four voters in a voter target list (unless the voter falls within another category of the low-propensity definition); this is because the voter has moved or cannot otherwise be contacted, or is a habitual non-voter who will never be moved to vote.

During our June 2008 campaign, based on advice from the evaluation team, we included voters who had voted in three of the last five statewide elections, in addition to voters who had voted once or twice in the past five elections. The rationale for this was that turnout in the June 2008 primary election was expected to be extremely low due to the presidential primary race being moved from the June 2008 ballot to a new February 2008 ballot. A three-of-five voter who would normally be considered a middle-propensity voter in a general election is more appropriately considered a low-propensity voter in a low turnout election such as the June 2008 primary election.

As a general matter, we found it useful to adjust our definition of low-propensity voter depending on the context of the election and the anticipated turnout. In high turnout elections such as the November 2008 presidential election, where turnout was expected to exceed 60% or even 70%, only one-of-five and two-of-five voters should be included. In low turnout elections such as the June 2006 and June 2008 primary elections, where turnout was expected to be below 30%, three-of-five voters should be included in addition to the one-of-five and two-of-five voters. In all cases, zero-of-five voters should be avoided.

“File-Cleaning” to Identify Voters with Reliable Contact Information

After APALC identified a list of AAPI voters who were low-propensity and resided in certain geographic areas, APALC sent the list to a data services vendor which used commercial marketing data, as well as the National Change of Address registry maintained by the U.S. Postal Service, to identify voters with both a current mailing address and a phone number.

The list that APALC received back from its data services vendor was generally less than half the size of the list that APALC sent to the vendor, indicating that a substantial number of voters on the initial list were missing either a current mailing address or a phone number, or both.

Even with this file-cleaning process, APALC and OCAPICA’s phone bankers encountered a fair number of voter records where the phone number was outdated or simply incorrect. In some campaigns, the wrong number rate was as high as 20% of all calls attempted. This underscores the importance of cleaning voter lists prior to conducting GOTV efforts. Without file-cleaning, volunteers could end up wasting over half their time calling voters who cannot be contacted.

Randomization of Voter Lists

As part of their field experiments, APALC and OCAPICA had their voter lists randomized by the evaluation team into treatment and control groups. The evaluation team randomly assigned some voters to one or more treatment groups which would be targeted with phone calls and mailers, and other voters to a control group which would receive no phone calls or mailers.³

The following table shows the size of APALC and OCAPICA’s treatment and control groups during each of their campaigns.

Table 1: Size of Control and Treatment Groups, Aggregated Across Ethnic Group, APALC and OCAPICA Voter Mobilization Campaigns

Campaign	Control	Phone Treatment Only	Mail Treatment Only	Phone and Mail Treatment	Total Phone Treatment	Total Mail Treatment
June 2006, APALC	28,522	4,106	6,328	4,919	9,025	11,247
Nov. 2006, APALC	14,718	7,858	6,775	4,106	11,964	10,881
June 2008, APALC	16,089	–	–	12,168	12,168	12,168
Nov. 2008, APALC	11,934	–	–	14,938	14,938	14,938
Nov. 2006, OCAPICA	13,540	345	5,752	4,363	4,708	10,115
June 2008, OCAPICA	20,976	–	2,929	6,130	6,130	9,059
Nov. 2008, OCAPICA	20,835	–	1,300	9,000	9,000	10,300

³ The evaluation team clustered voters by household, meaning that all low-propensity voters within a household were assigned to either a treatment group or a control group. In other words, low-propensity voters residing within the same household were not split up between treatment and control groups. This was done for the following reason: Because voters within the same household may talk to one another, phone treatment provided to one voter in a household may have a spillover effect on other voters in the household, even if volunteers did not talk directly with the other voters. Clustering voters by household avoids “contamination” of the control group by preventing phone calls made to treatment voters from having an unintended effect on control group voters.

Additional Targeting Based on Voters' Estimated English Proficiency

For their November 2006 campaigns, APALC and OCAPICA divided each ethnic-specific list of voters into two subgroups based on the estimated likelihood of voters' English proficiency. This was done based on the age of the voter and whether the voter was U.S.-born or foreign-born.

We did this for two reasons. The first was to save on the cost of mailing the Easy Voter Guides. These guides are available in English and several Asian languages, as well as Spanish. However, they are not bilingual, meaning that copies of the guides are either in English or another language, but not both. This meant that we either had to send voters both the English and the translated versions, or send one or the other based on an estimate of each voter's English proficiency or lack thereof. For our November 2006 campaign, we choose to do the latter as a cost savings measure, given the higher postage required to mail two guides to each voter.

The second was to attempt to make better use of volunteers who were truly proficient or fluent in an Asian language. During our November 2006 campaign, we had some volunteers who had conversational speaking ability in an Asian language, but were not fully able to hold a conversation with targeted voters. We attempted to make optimal use of those volunteers who were truly proficient in an Asian language by having them call voters who were less likely to be proficient in English, based on the age and place of birth proxy we used to estimate English proficiency. Other volunteers were assigned to call voters more likely to be English proficient, based on the same proxy.

In practice, this matching of volunteers to voters was difficult to pull off well because the voter data we acquired from Los Angeles and Orange County election officials lacked age and/or place of birth information for significant numbers of voters – resulting in some guesswork on our part. In our 2008 campaigns, we abandoned this approach for both our mailers and our phone calls. We sent both English and translated versions of the Easy Voter Guide to voters. For our phone calls, we placed a premium on recruiting bilingual volunteers and, to the extent possible, avoided using volunteers who had only minimal or conversational Asian language ability.

Additional Targeting to Inform Timing of Outreach Efforts

During 2008, APALC and OCAPICA subdivided their voter lists into two groups based on the estimated likelihood of voters casting their ballots by mail or at the polling place. Voters were categorized as “likely vote-by-mail” voters if they were either registered as permanent vote-by-mail (PVBM) voters, or were not registered as PVBM voters but had voted by mail at least once in the past five elections.⁴ Voters were categorized as “likely polling place voters” if they had voted by mail zero times in the past five elections.

During our 2008 campaigns, we used this targeting to time phone calls and mailers based on whether voters were more likely to vote by mail or at their polling place. We made phone calls and sent mailers to likely vote-by-mail voters further in advance of Election Day, and made phone calls and sent mailers to likely polling place voters closer to Election Day.

⁴ California law uses the terms “vote-by-mail ballot” and “vote-by-mail voter” instead of the terms “absentee ballot” and “absentee voter.” California law also allows voters to sign up as PVBM voters; PVBM voters are automatically sent a vote-by-mail ballot for every election.

We believe that it was important to contact PVBM voters around the time they received their vote-by-mail ballots from the local Registrar of Voters. Our phone calls were timed to alert PVBM voters that what they had just received or were about to receive in the mail were their vote-by-mail materials which should not be discarded. With regard to non-PVBM voters who were on our likely vote-by-mail list, it was important to contact the voters early on in the process to remind them to request a vote-by-mail ballot if they wanted to vote by mail in the upcoming election, and to provide such voters with enough time to do so.

2. Volunteer Recruitment

Recruitment Targets

We estimated the number of volunteer shifts we needed to hit our phone calling targets by using the following method:

Step 1: We first estimated the average number of voters that one volunteer could call during a phone banking shift. This was based on an estimate of how many minutes each call would take on average when a volunteer successfully spoke with a voter, and how many minutes a call would take when the volunteer was unable to reach a voter because there was no answer, the phone number was incorrect, or the voter was not home. Based on this estimate of average call lengths, we calculated how many voters one volunteer could call during a shift, using an assumed percentage of voters that the volunteer would successfully speak with.

Example: We can estimate that one volunteer will call an average of 118 voters during a two-and-a-half hour shift, if we assume that (1) volunteers speak with 16% of voters called, (2) each call where a volunteer speaks with a voter takes four minutes on average, and (3) each call where a volunteer is unable to reach a voter takes 45 seconds on average. To estimate the average number of voters each volunteer can call in one shift, solve for VC where VC equals total number of voters called:

$$150 \text{ minutes} = (0.16 \times VC \times 4 \text{ minutes}) + (0.84 \times VC \times 0.75 \text{ minutes})$$

Step 2: Based on this estimate of how many voters one volunteer could call per shift, we calculated how many volunteer shifts it would take to call the total number of voters on our target list. We did this calculation for each ethnic group we were targeting so that we had a breakdown of the language capacity needed in our volunteer pool.

Example: Based on each volunteer calling an average of 118 voters per shift, we can estimate that we need 102 volunteer shifts to call a total of 12,000 voters (12,000 voters divided by 118 voters per shift equals 102 shifts). If we have 20 volunteers per night, it will take 5 nights to complete one round of calls to the 12,000 voters (102 shifts divided by 20 volunteer shifts per night equals 5 nights). If we are targeting multiple ethnic groups, then we repeat this calculation for each ethnic group to provide a breakdown of the number of volunteers needed by ethnic group.

Step 3: We estimated the number of volunteer shifts needed for each round of call attempts we planned to make. To do this, we estimated the number of voters we would contact successfully in the first round, the number of voters whose listed phone number would

be incorrect, and the number of voters who would ask us not to call back. The number of remaining voters became the number of voters to be called during the second round of call attempts. We repeated this to estimate the number of voters to be called in the third round of calls.

Example: We can estimate that 7,680 of the 12,000 voters called in the first round of call attempts will carry over to the second round of call attempts if we assume that (1) volunteers reach 16% of voters in the first round, (2) 15% of voters have a wrong or outdated phone number, (3) 5% of calls result in a “do not call back,” and (4) the remaining 64% of voters are not home or are otherwise unavailable and thus should be given a second call attempt (64% of 12,000 voters equals 7,680 remaining voters).

We repeat Step 1 to estimate the average number of voters one volunteer could call during a second call attempt shift (based on a new assumed contact rate for the second call attempts), and then repeat Step 2 to estimate the total number of volunteer shifts we need to complete a second round of call attempts to the remaining 7,680 voters.

If we plan to make a third round of call attempts, we repeat Step 3 to estimate the number of voters in the second round of call attempts who will carry over to the third round.

Coming up with an estimate of volunteer needs allowed us to set targets for the number of volunteer shifts we needed to fill, and the number of volunteers we needed to fill these shifts. During our later campaigns, we were able to refine these estimates by comparing them to the actual contact rate in each round of call attempts, and the actual average number of calls made per shift, during our previous campaigns.

Recruitment Methods

APALC, OCAPICA and their partner organizations recruited volunteers from a range of backgrounds, including undergraduate students at local universities and colleges, international graduate students, working professionals, and older first-generation community members.

In 2006, we did not place any particular emphasis on securing volunteers who could commit to multiple phone banking shifts. In contrast, during our 2008 campaigns, we required volunteers to work at least three or four shifts, and made this explicit in our recruiting materials.

Also during our 2008 campaigns, to the extent possible while still meeting our volunteer target numbers, we placed an increased emphasis on recruiting bilingual volunteers by accepting only those individuals who were fully bilingual, or at least proficient in an Asian language. As part of this, we had all prospective volunteers fill out an application form and indicate their language ability. In contrast, in 2006, we did not turn away volunteers who had only minimal or conversational ability in an Asian language.

We matched volunteers to voters by ethnicity, and for volunteers from some ethnic groups, we relaxed the bilingual ability requirement because of the ethnic groups’ relatively lower rates of limited English proficiency. In addition to facilitating language ability, matching volunteers to voters by ethnicity also helped ensure a volunteer pool that was culturally competent.

We generally started our recruitment process several months in advance of each election by contacting professors at various academic institutions in Los Angeles and Orange Counties and asking them for assistance in recruiting volunteers from their classes. This was followed up by presentations on campus and getting students to fill out sign-up sheets.

In addition to recruiting from academic courses, we posted our volunteer opportunities at volunteer, career and student programming centers at several university institutions, and asked academic departments for their assistance in publicizing our volunteer opportunities to their students. We attempted to reach college alumni by posting on campus job sites, and we also posted on general interest websites such as volunteermatch.com and idealist.org.

Other recruiting efforts including soliciting volunteers from both college and high school-based community service organizations who received service credit for their volunteer efforts. APALC and OCAPICA also recruited volunteers from other community-based organizations.

An additional recruitment method was the placement of advertisements in ethnic newspapers. Prior to their November 2008 campaigns, APALC and OCAPICA placed advertisements in Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese language newspapers with circulations in Los Angeles and Orange Counties. The bulk of our volunteers for the November 2008 election who were native speakers of an Asian language were recruited through this method.

Compensation

During our June and November 2006 campaigns, volunteers were compensated a flat \$30 stipend per shift, regardless of how few or many shifts they worked.

In 2008, we structured our stipend system to reward returning volunteers. APALC encouraged its volunteers to work multiple phone banking shifts by providing a stipend of \$20 for the first shift, \$25 for the second shift, \$30 for the third shift, \$35 for the fourth shift, and \$40 for the fifth shift. OCAPICA also encouraged its volunteers to work multiple shifts by providing a stipend of \$50 upon completion of three phone banking shifts, and an additional \$10 for each subsequent shift.

Description of Volunteers

During our 2006 campaigns, the majority of volunteers were one-time volunteers. For example, APALC recruited over 100 volunteers for its June 2006 campaign, and over 200 volunteers for its November 2006 campaign, most of whom did one phone banking shift.

During our 2008 campaigns, most volunteers worked three to four phone banking shifts. For example, APALC's June 2008 campaign used 60 volunteers who filled over 220 phone banking shifts, and its November 2008 campaign used 74 volunteers who filled over 225 phone banking shifts. We believe that the compensation system we used in 2008 helped us secure volunteers who were willing to work multiple shifts. A few volunteers worked seven or more shifts.

Volunteers varied in age, ranging from college students to older community members. This reflects the variety of recruitment methods we used, including on-campus presentations and advertisements in ethnic newspapers.

Volunteers also varied in their levels of prior voting-related experience. While several volunteers in 2008 had also served as volunteers in our 2006 campaigns, the majority of volunteers had no previous voter engagement experience. For example, approximately 15% of APALC's volunteers during its June 2008 campaign had conducted voting-related volunteer work previously, and approximately 24% of APALC's November 2008 volunteers had prior GOTV experience.

The fact that many of our volunteers had not done GOTV work before, yet were still able to make calls that succeeded in increasing voter turnout, underscores the point that community organizations can carry out effective GOTV campaigns even when using inexperienced volunteers, provided that there is adequate training and supervision of the volunteers. In addition to training and supervision, requiring volunteers to work multiple shifts enabled them to overcome their inexperience; volunteers developed an increasing comfort level with the call script and election terminology each time they came in for their shift.

3. Volunteer Training and Supervision

During their June and November 2006 campaigns, APALC and OCAPICA conducted a 20-minute training at the beginning of each phone banking shift, rather than requiring all volunteers to attend a training prior to their first shift.

Unlike in 2006, during their June and November 2008 campaigns, APALC and OCAPICA required all volunteers to attend a two-hour training before making their first calls. The training included an overview of the phone banking project and the voting process, and instructions on using the phone banking software. During the November 2008 campaign, trainers also conducted a role-playing exercise in which volunteers practiced making phone calls to gain familiarity with the call script.

We believe that as a result of our requirement in 2008 that volunteers attend in-depth trainings before their first phone bank shift, the quality of the volunteers' calls during our 2008 campaigns significantly exceeded the quality of calls made in 2006. Volunteers in 2008 received a greater amount of training and were able to take home call scripts and study them prior to their first shift. As a result, volunteers more closely adhered to the call script, and their deeper understanding of voting procedures and contests on the ballot facilitated their ability to provide information to voters.

During actual phone banking shifts, we had at least one staff member present to supervise the volunteers and answer their questions. During our 2008 campaigns, staff at our partner organizations also assisted in supervising volunteers. Supervision was facilitated by having a dedicated volunteer supervisor present throughout each campaign's phone bank.

4. Calling Facilities and Phone Banking Software

Volunteers made phone calls at APALC's office in downtown Los Angeles, and at OCAPICA's office in Garden Grove. APALC's phone bank facilities consisted of three rooms located in proximity to each other to facilitate volunteer supervision. The three rooms consisted of one large room equipped with 12 phone lines and computers, and two smaller rooms each equipped with four phone lines and computers, for a total of 20 phone lines and computers. OCAPICA's phone bank facilities consisted of two rooms equipped with a total of 10 phone lines and computers.

We believe it was important to our success to have volunteers located in a central location, rather than having volunteers make phone calls from their homes or office. Because volunteers were sitting

in the same room or rooms, our staff could more easily supervise the volunteers, answer their questions, and ensure that the volunteers were following the call script.

Volunteers made calls to voters using phone banking software that allowed the volunteers to pull up voter records on their computer screen and enter the results of the calls directly on-screen. This allowed us to avoid data entry associated with the use of paper lists.

The voter records displayed a number of fields, including the voter's name, phone number, address, age, gender, and ethnicity. Volunteers were able to enter responses in a variety of fields by using a mouse to click the appropriate options. For example, volunteers could specify whether the voter was home, whether the volunteer successfully spoke with the voter, whether the voter planned to vote, which method of voting the voter planned to use, the language that the conversation took place in, and whether the voter needed any follow-up assistance.

Volunteers also had their web browser open to the Los Angeles County or Orange County Registrar's website to facilitate easy access to those sites' polling place look-up function. Volunteers used these websites to find a voter's polling place by entering the voter's address.

Based on feedback we solicited from our volunteers, we believe that the volunteers found the software reasonably easy to use, in comparison to volunteers locating voter records on paper lists and hand-marking the call results. The software also reduced the potential for error and variation in how volunteers recorded call results.

5. Call Scripts

With the assistance of their partners, APALC and OCAPICA prepared phone bank scripts that were bilingual in English and various Asian languages. Separate scripts were prepared for each language group.

In 2006, APALC and OCAPICA used scripts that were message-based. The scripts contained a message to the effect that, "Voting empowers our community."

APALC's June 2006 campaign used two different message-based scripts, one that made an appeal to a specific ethnic group, and another that used a universalistic, pan-AAPI message. The evaluation team randomized which voters received these messages as part of a field experiment; there was no statistically significant difference between the two scripts with respect to their effectiveness in turning out voters.

In 2008, APALC and OCAPICA used scripts that were "service-oriented." The scripts consisted of a series of questions designed to gauge what information or assistance was needed by voters, and responses to help provide voters with the information or assistance they needed. For example, the script asked voters whether they knew where their polling place was, whether they needed assistance in casting a vote-by-mail ballot, and whether the voter needed information about races and measures appearing on the ballot. The script also asked voters whether they were missing any voting materials that they should have otherwise received from election officials, and whether they needed translated materials.

Lastly, the script asked voters whether they planned to vote, and if so, whether at the polls or by mail. If the voter indicated that he or she would like to vote by mail, we provided assistance in requesting a

vote-by-mail ballot. If the voter indicated that he or she would like to vote at the polls, we provided assistance in finding the voter's polling location.

We also used a supplemental script to make follow-up calls to voters who indicated previously that they planned to vote. These calls provided a short reminder to vote in the upcoming election.

During both our 2006 and 2008 campaigns, we used scripts that contained a frequently asked questions section. The frequently asked questions were designed to prepare volunteers for common questions from voters and scenarios that could potentially arise during their calls. The scripts also included ethnic-specific hotline numbers that voters could call for assistance. The hotlines were staffed by APALC, OCAPICA, and their partner organizations.

6. Phone Bank Execution

Phone Bank Shifts

During our June and November 2006 campaigns, our phone banks ran almost daily during the two-and-a-half weeks leading up to Election Day, including from 5:30 pm to 9:00 pm on weekdays, and 1:00 to 5:00 pm on Saturdays and Sundays. Volunteers were given a 20-minute meal break during their shift, and also a 30 to 45 minute training at the beginning of their shift.

During our June and November 2008 campaigns, we started our phone calls three weeks prior to Election Day, and conducted the calls in two waves. In the first wave, volunteers made calls to voters categorized as likely vote-by-mail voters. These calls took place during the third week prior to Election Day. In the second wave, volunteers made calls to voters categorized as likely polling place voters. These calls took place during the last two weeks prior to Election Day.

Our phone bank shifts were shorter in 2008, lasting two-and-a-half hours, including a 20-minute meal break. Weekday shifts started later and ended earlier than in 2006, running from 6:00 pm to 8:30 pm. Our June 2008 campaign ran Saturday shifts in the morning instead of the afternoon, going from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm. Sunday shifts continued to run in the afternoon, from 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm. Our November 2008 campaign used Saturday shifts running from 9:30 am to 12:00 pm, but no Sunday shifts. APALC's November 2008 campaign also did not use phone banking shifts on Fridays, based on experience in previous campaigns during which volunteers had low contact rates on Fridays, although OCAPICA's November 2008 campaign continued to run phone banking shifts on Fridays.

Number of Contact Attempts

During our first three campaigns (June 2006, November 2006 and June 2008), we made up to three attempts to contact each voter. If a volunteer did not reach the voter on the first attempt, then we made a second attempt on a later day. If the volunteer did not reach the voter on the second attempt, we made a third, final attempt on a subsequent day.

During our November 2008 campaign, we made up to two attempts to contact each voter. We made this decision based on an analysis of contact rates by round during our previous campaigns. Not surprisingly, we found that contact rates during the first round of attempts were higher than contact rates during the second round of attempts. We also found that contact rates during the second round of attempts were higher than contact rates during the third round.

We looked at whether our phone banking efforts would produce more voter contacts if we skipped the third round of call attempts and instead started with a larger target list – while keeping the total number of volunteer shifts used and total call attempts made the same. Our estimate was that doing so would result in about a 5% to 10% increase in the number of voter contacts we achieved. Based on this analysis, APALC and OCAPICA increased the size of their voter target lists.

For example, APALC targeted nearly 15,000 voters for the November 2008 election, making up to two attempts to talk to each voter, in comparison to its June 2008 campaign, when it targeted approximately 12,000 voters, making up to three call attempts. The end result was that APALC volunteers experienced a lower contact rate in November (i.e. they reached a smaller percentage of voters), but achieved a 4% increase in the total number of contacts compared to June. Even though both the number of volunteers needed and the total number of call attempts made were about the same for both elections, our switch to a two-attempt approach produced a slight increase in voter contacts because we avoided the drop-off in contact rate we would have encountered if we had made a third round of call attempts.

Follow-Up Calls

During our June and November 2006 campaigns, volunteers attempted to make one contact with each voter. Once a voter was contacted, no follow-up phone call was made.

During our June and November 2008 campaigns, we made follow-up phone calls to voters who indicated they planned to vote when they were first contacted by our volunteers, but not to voters who said they would not vote. The overwhelming majority of voters contacted by our volunteers indicated they intended to vote, and excluding the few voters who said they would not vote allowed us to conserve resources.

The follow-up calls provided a short reminder that we had talked to the voter previously and that the voter had indicated he or she was planning to vote in the upcoming election. The calls were placed a week before Election Day to voters who indicated they planned to vote by mail, and the day before Election Day to voters who indicated they planned to vote at their polling place.

The results for our 2008 campaigns that are presented later in this report indicate the powerful effect these follow-up calls have, and show that the follow-up calls we made in 2008 were a critical part of our success in increasing AAPI voter turnout.

7. Mailer Design and Delivery

In addition to phone calls, APALC and OCAPICA sent Easy Voter Guides to targeted voters. The Easy Voter Guide is produced by the League of Women Voters of California and is widely recognized for containing easy-to-read and reliable information about statewide races and ballot measures, as well as instructional information about the process of voting. Printed copies of the Easy Voter Guide are available in English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish and Vietnamese, and electronic copies are available online in Japanese and Tagalog.

During their November 2006, June 2008 and November 2008 campaigns, APALC and OCAPICA sent English and translated versions of the guides to Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese American

voters.⁵ APALC and OCAPICA sent English versions of the guides to Cambodian, Filipino, Japanese, Pacific Islander, and South Asian American voters. APALC used a commercial mail house to laserprint voters' mailing addresses on the guides, along with APALC and OCAPICA's return mailing address and ethnic-specific phone numbers that voters could call if they had questions.

APALC's commercial mail house sent the mailers by nonprofit, bulk rate postage. While the United States Postal Service cannot guarantee timely delivery of mail that is sent by bulk rate postage, we found that the Easy Voter Guides were received by voters generally within two weeks of mailing; we included a "test voter" on the mailing list for the voter guides to estimate when voters were receiving the guides in reality. We timed the mailing of the guides so that they would be delivered to voters generally around the time that volunteers first started making phone calls to voters.

During its November 2008 campaign, in addition to mailing Easy Voter Guides, APALC also sent an application form to likely vote-by-mail voters in Los Angeles County who were not registered as PVBM voters. We did this so that the voters could fill out and mail the form to the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk to become a PVBM voter. This application form was inserted between pages of the Easy Voter Guide.

⁵ During its June 2006 campaign, APALC sent an one-page mailer that it designed internally instead of Easy Voter Guides.

CAMPAIGN RESULTS

As described above, APALC and OCAPICA conducted their 2006 and 2008 mobilization campaigns as field experiments in which lists of low-propensity AAPI voters were randomly divided into treatment and control groups. Prior to Election Day, we made phone calls and sent mailers to voters in the treatment group. We did not make phone calls or send mailers to voters in the control group.

This approach allowed our evaluation team to compare turnout rates between treatment voters and control voters – and determine how effective our calls and mailers were in increasing voter turnout.

As illustrated in Figures 1, 2 and 3 below, phone calls made by volunteers during our 2006 campaigns increased turnout among voters we contacted by 3 to 4 percentage points. These results are similar to those achieved by other large-scale, well-run phone banks.

During our 2008 campaigns, we added a follow-up phone call component to our outreach plan. This consisted of making follow-up calls to voters who indicated they were planning to vote in the upcoming election when we had talked to them previously. As shown in Figures 4, 5 and 6 below, these follow-up calls provided a tremendous boost to the effectiveness of our calls, resulting in double-digit increases in turnout among voters we contacted.

The power of the follow-up calls is most clearly illustrated in the results for APALC's June 2008 campaign. APALC carried out two field experiments – one to estimate the effect of the initial calls, and another to estimate the effect of the follow-up calls. As shown in Figure 4, of the treatment voters who were successfully contacted with an initial call, voters who were contacted again with a follow-up call voted at a rate 13 percentage points higher than voters who were not targeted for any follow-up call treatment.⁶ These follow-up calls represent a valuable best practice that campaigns should follow when using phone calls to contact voters.

Across all of our campaigns, mailers produced little or no increase in turnout, consistent with past experiments showing that indirect GOTV methods such as mail are not as effective in getting voters to the polls (although they may be useful as a means of informing or influencing voters' ballot choices).

The following figures and accompanying text illustrate the significant increases in turnout attributable to our campaigns. Results are described here for the following campaigns:

1. June 2006 Primary Election, APALC Campaign
2. November 2006 General Election, APALC Campaign
3. November 2006 General Election, OCAPICA Campaign
4. June 2008 Primary Election, APALC Campaign
5. June 2008 Primary Election, OCAPICA Campaign
6. November 2008 General Election, APALC Campaign
7. November 2008 General Election, OCAPICA Campaign

⁶ This latter group – voters not targeted for follow-up treatment – comprised the control group for the second experiment we conducted to estimate the effect of the follow-up calls.

Results are presented for AAPIs as a whole, but not by ethnic group. With a few exceptions, our experiments did not yield ethnic-specific effects that were statistically significant (in other words, results that are reliable because it is highly unlikely they occurred by chance). However, in every campaign except one, the experiments achieved statistically significant positive effects for AAPIs pooled together.

Notably, our voter mobilization efforts are the first ever to generate statistically significant increases in AAPI voter turnout. Prior to 2006, a couple of experiments directed at AAPI voters yielded positive turnout gains, but these effects were not statistically significant and the gains in turnout could not be reliably attributed to the outreach efforts rather than to chance. The results presented here confirm the potential power of personalized outreach shown by these previous experiments, and provide concrete evidence that AAPI voters do in fact respond to GOTV techniques.

Technical Note: In Figures 1 to 6, the turnout rate shown in the asterisked bar represents the predicted voting rate among voters successfully contacted, which is obtained by adding the estimated effect of actual contact with treatment group voters (the “treatment-on-treated” effect) to the turnout rate of control group voters.

The predicted voting rate is shown here instead of the empirical turnout rate of voters successfully contacted because it provides a more appropriate measure of turnout attributable to the phone calls. A simple comparison of the turnout rate among voters actually contacted to that of other voters does not account for differences in the ease or difficulty of contacting voters – it is not random that some voters in the treatment group are successfully contacted while others are not, and varying degrees of “contactability” may be correlated to the likelihood of voting.

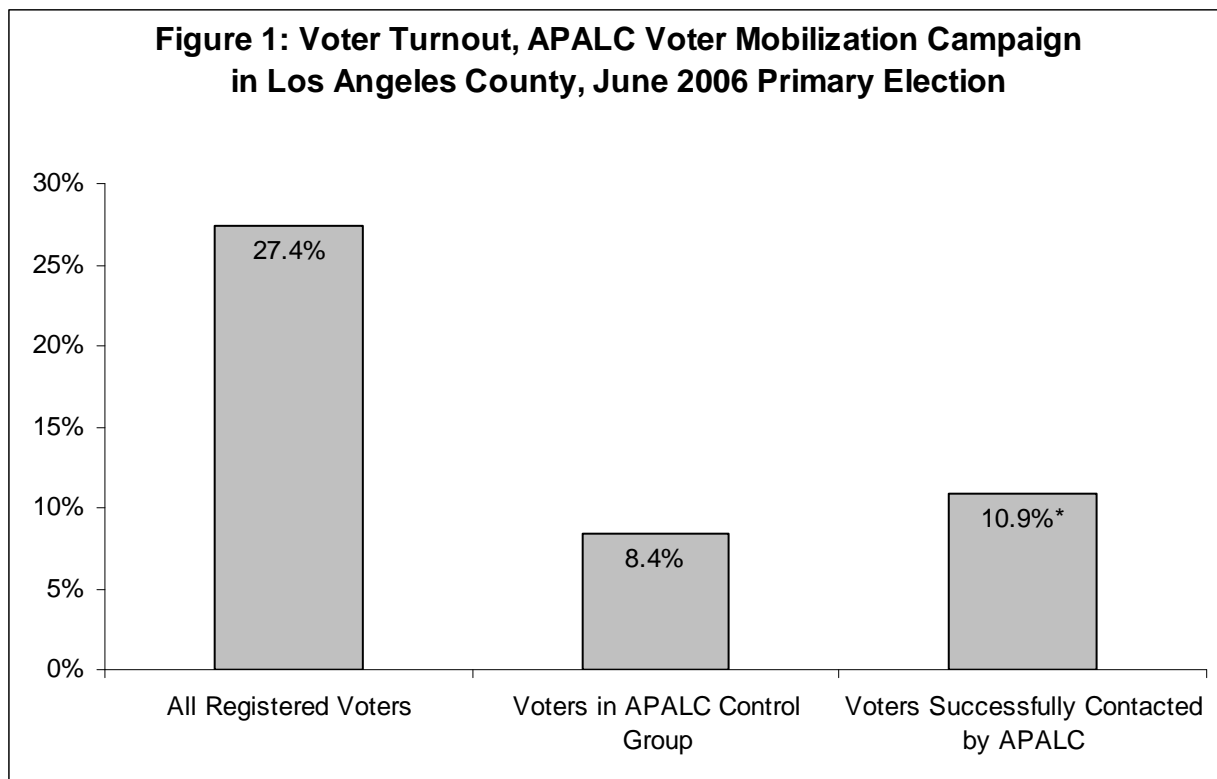
The treatment-on-treated analysis does take these variations into account, and makes the predicted voting rate a more appropriate measure to use for purposes of examining how gains in turnout among contacted voters relate to turnout rates among general population voters, Asian American voters as a whole, and Asian American low-propensity voters assigned to a control group.

1. June 2006 Primary Election, APALC Campaign

Voters have significantly lower levels of interest and engagement in primary elections, and in particular those conducted during non-presidential election years. With the selection of gubernatorial nominees at stake but no presidential race on the ballot, the June 2006 primary election was no exception.

As shown in Figure 1, turnout was low among Los Angeles County registered voters (27.4%), and starkly so among low-propensity AAPI voters in our control group (8.4%).

Turnout among treatment group voters we contacted was 10.9%, representing an increase of 2.5 percentage points attributable to our phone calls – or a 30% relative gain in votes compared to control group voters.



Source: California Secretary of State, The James Irvine Foundation Evaluation Team

* Represents predicted voting rate among voters successfully contacted, obtained by adding estimated effect of actual contact with treatment group voters to turnout rate of control group voters; see technical note on page 27.

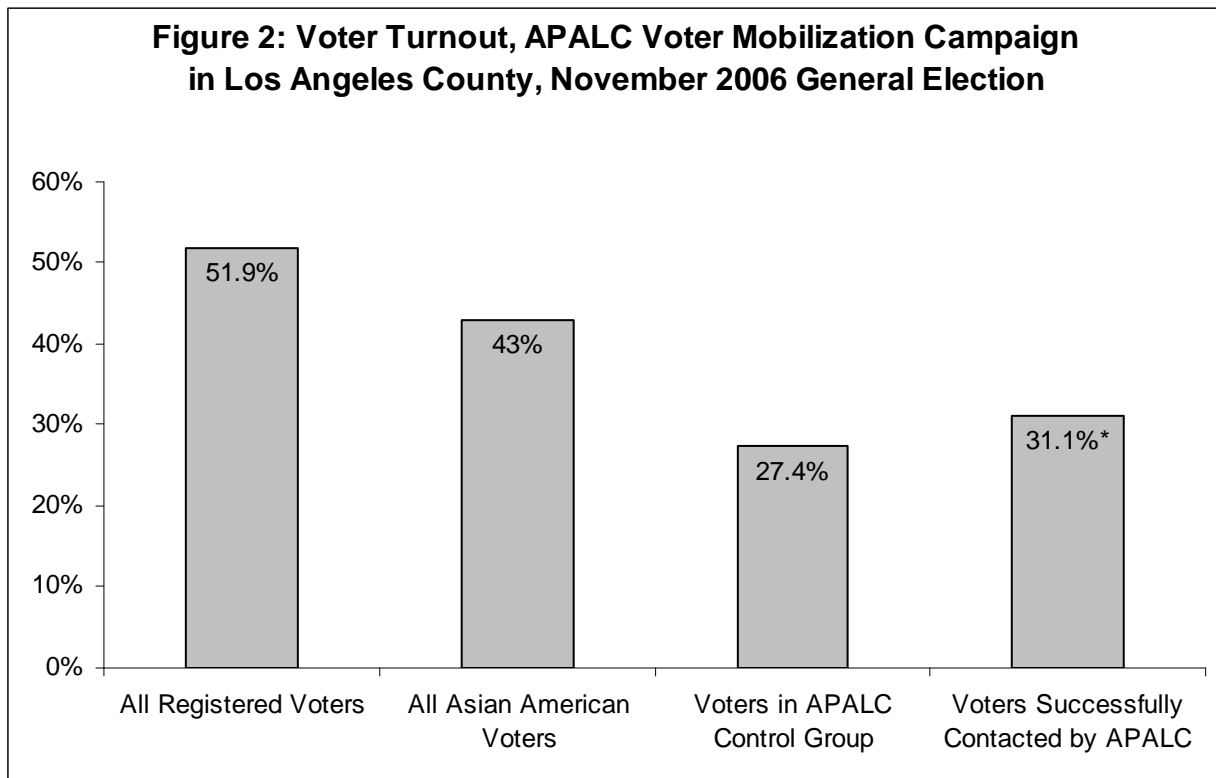
2. November 2006 General Election, APALC Campaign

Turnout during the November 2006 general election slightly surpassed half of all registered voters. The highest profile race on the ballot was the gubernatorial contest between incumbent Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and challenger Phil Angelides.

As shown in Figure 2, turnout was moderate among Los Angeles County registered voters (51.9%), but low among low-propensity AAPI voters in APALC's control group (27.4%), who were about half as likely to vote as general population voters.

Turnout among treatment group voters we contacted was 31.1%, representing an increase of 3.7 percentage points attributable to our phone calls – or a 14% relative gain in votes compared to control group voters.

Our phone calls to youth voters 18 to 24 years in age were particularly effective. Calls to youth voters we contacted increased turnout by 13.4 percentage points compared to their control group counterparts.



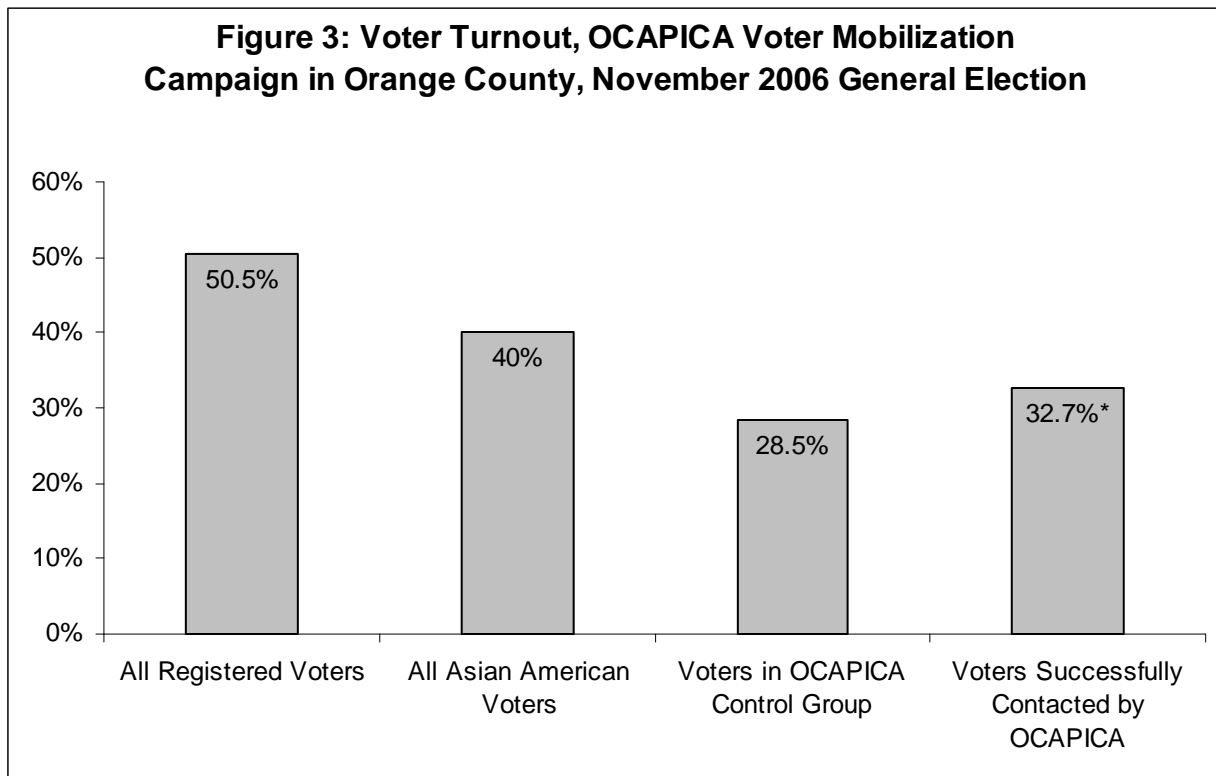
Source: California Secretary of State, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, The James Irvine Foundation Evaluation Team

* Represents predicted voting rate among voters successfully contacted, obtained by adding estimated effect of actual contact with treatment group voters to turnout rate of control group voters; see technical note on page 27.

3. November 2006 General Election, OCAPICA Campaign

As shown in Figure 3, turnout among Orange County registered voters was moderate (50.5%), but low among low-propensity AAPI voters in OCAPICA's control group (28.5%).

Turnout among treatment group voters we contacted was 32.7%, representing an increase of 4.2 percentage points attributable to our phone calls – or a 15% relative gain in votes compared to control group voters.



Source: California Secretary of State, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, The James Irvine Foundation Evaluation Team
* Represents predicted voting rate among voters successfully contacted, obtained by adding estimated effect of actual contact with treatment group voters to turnout rate of control group voters; see technical note on page 27.

4. June 2008 Primary Election, APALC Campaign

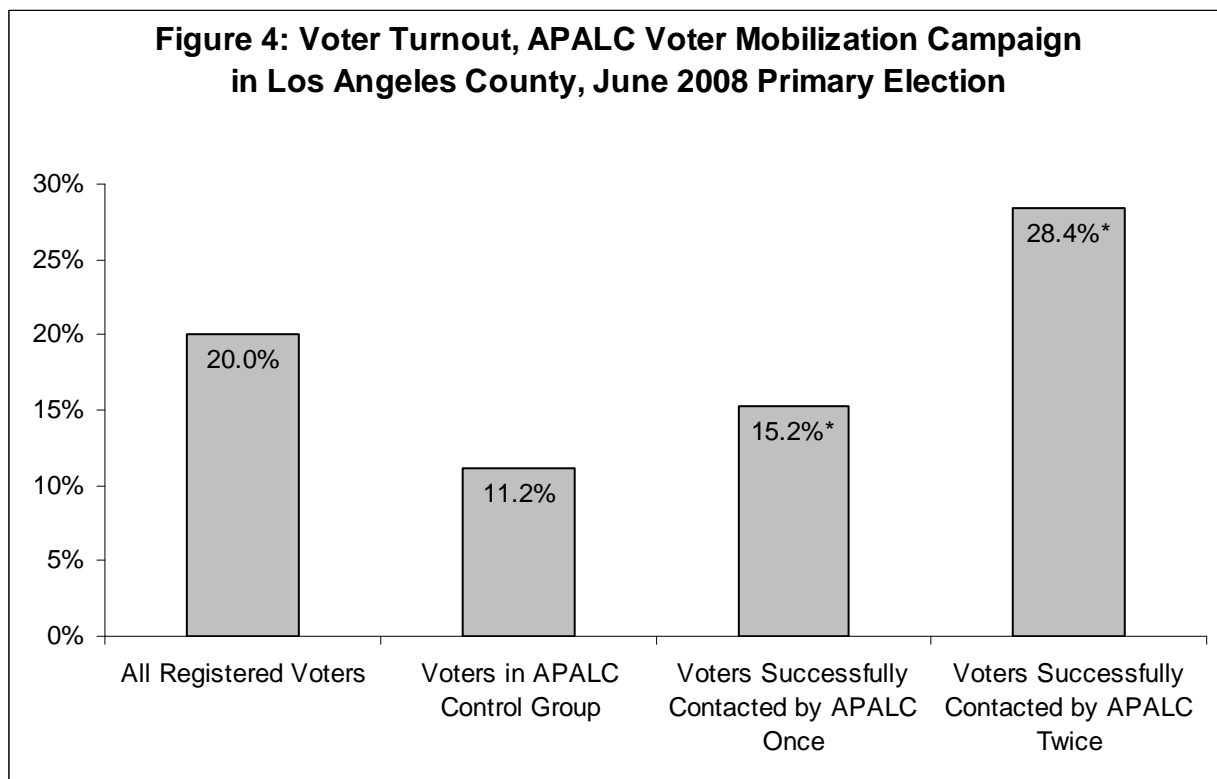
Turnout during the June 2008 primary election was dramatically affected by the lack of a presidential primary race on the ballot, which was due to the legislature moving the California presidential primary to a new election on February 5, 2008.

As shown in Figure 4, turnout was notably low among Los Angeles County registered voters (20.0%). This can be attributed to the lack of excitement around the June 2008 ballot, which listed only state legislative and local races, and state and local ballot measures. Turnout among low-propensity AAPI voters in APALC's control group was even lower (11.2%).

However, turnout among treatment group voters we spoke with twice was 28.4%, representing an increase of 17.2 percentage points attributable to our phone calls – or an astonishing 154% relative gain in votes compared to control group voters. In other words, our phone calls to voters we spoke with twice more than doubled the turnout rate of such voters.

More importantly, our phone calls closed the gap between low-propensity voters and general population voters. Voters we spoke with twice – low-propensity AAPI voters who normally are about half as likely to vote as the average voter – actually surpassed the general population in turnout rate.

As shown in Figure 4, the effectiveness of our calls were driven by the follow-up calls we made, which increased turnout by 13.2 percentage points, in comparison to our first-round calls, which increased turnout by a still significant 4.0 percentage points.



Source: California Secretary of State, The James Irvine Foundation Evaluation Team

* Represents predicted voting rate among voters successfully contacted, obtained by adding estimated effect of actual contact with treatment group voters to turnout rate of control group voters; see technical note on page 27.

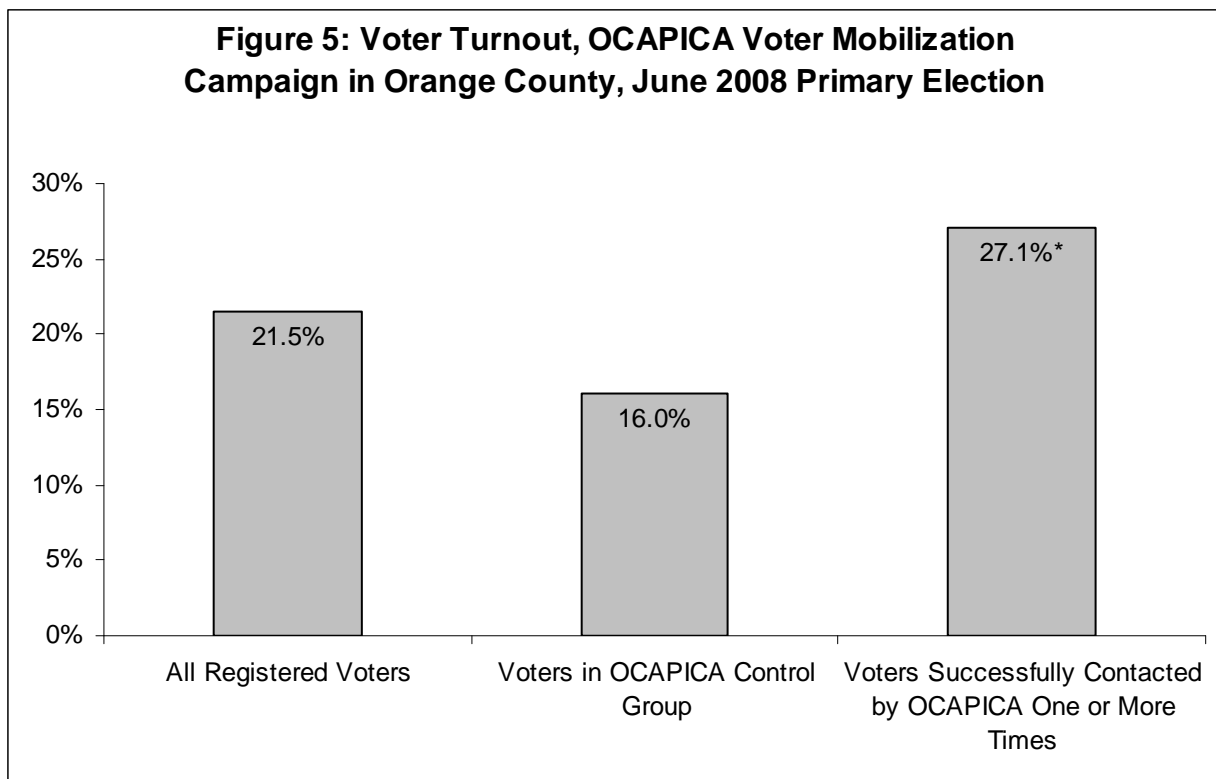
5. June 2008 Primary Election, OCAPICA Campaign

OCAPICA's June 2008 campaign enjoyed similar success in mobilizing AAPI voters.

As shown in Figure 5, turnout was very low among Orange County registered voters (21.5%), similar to the low turnout among Los Angeles County registered voters, and even lower among low-propensity AAPI voters in OCAPICA's control group (16.0%).

However, turnout among treatment group voters we spoke with one or more times was 27.1%, representing an increase of 11.2 percentage points attributable to our phone calls – or a remarkable 69% relative gain in votes compared to control group voters.

As they did in Los Angeles County, our phone calls closed the gap between low-propensity AAPI voters and general population voters. The turnout rate of low-propensity AAPI voters we spoke with – voters who normally vote at much lower rates than the general population – actually surpassed that of the general population.



Source: California Secretary of State, The James Irvine Foundation Evaluation Team

* Represents predicted voting rate among voters successfully contacted, obtained by adding estimated effect of actual contact with treatment group voters to turnout rate of control group voters; see technical note on page 27.

6. November 2008 General Election, APALC Campaign

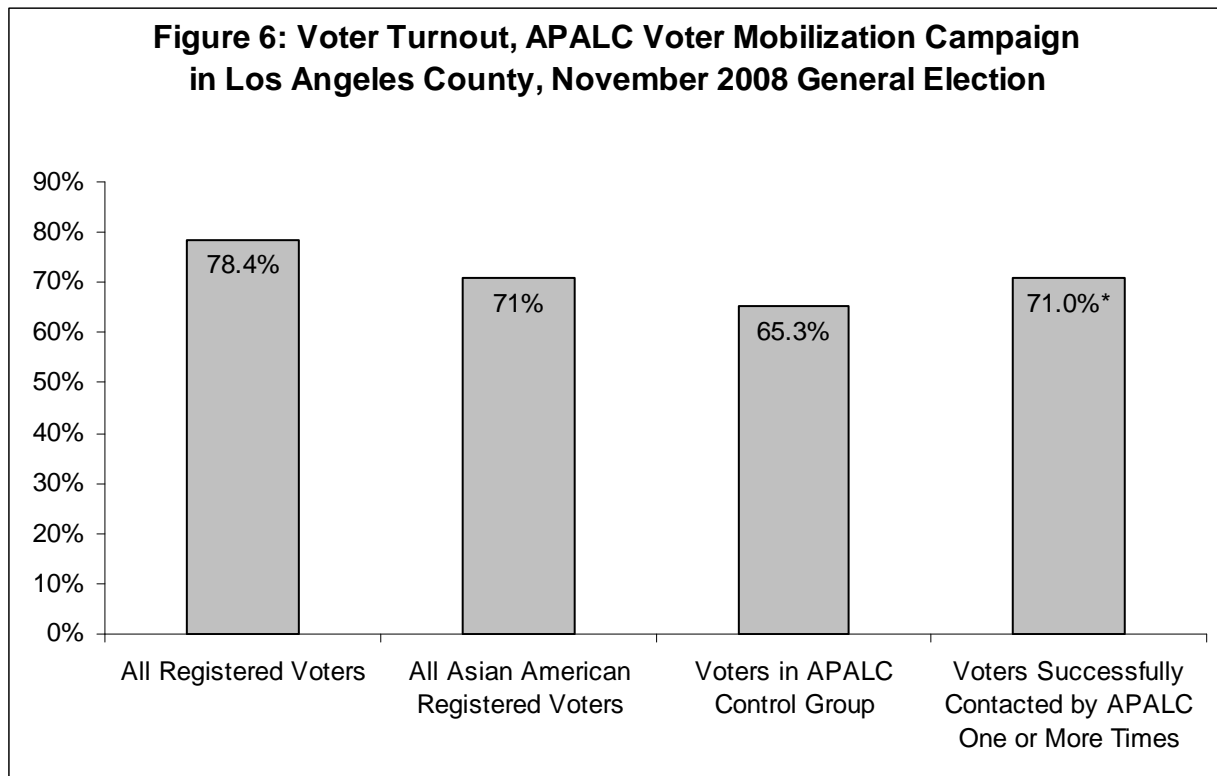
A record number of voters cast ballots in the November 2008 election, with the highest profile race being the presidential contest between John McCain and Barack Obama.

As shown in Figure 6, turnout was high among Los Angeles County registered voters (78.4%), in sharp contrast to the low turnout during the June 2008 primary election. Turnout was high even among low-propensity AAPI voters in APALC's control group (65.3%), indicating that many low-propensity AAPI voters were already inclined to vote even without receiving any encouragement.

Turnout among treatment group voters we spoke with one or more times was 71.0%, representing an increase of 5.7 percentage points attributable to our phone calls – a significant increase given the excitement surrounding the election and the willingness of many voters to go to the polls without being prompted by door knocks or phone calls.

Our phone calls to South Asian American voters, as well as to PVBM voters, were particularly effective. Calls to South Asian American voters we contacted increased turnout by 19.3 percentage points compared to their control group counterparts. Calls to PVBM voters increased turnout by 14.3 percentage points compared to their control group counterparts.

More importantly, our phone calls reduced nearly half the gap between low-propensity voters and general population voters – and low-propensity AAPI voters we spoke with voted at the same rate as all AAPI voters in general (71%).



Source: California Secretary of State, Asian Pacific American Legal Center, The James Irvine Foundation Evaluation Team

* Represents predicted voting rate among voters successfully contacted, obtained by adding estimated effect of actual contact with treatment group voters to turnout rate of control group voters; see technical note on page 27.

7. November 2008 General Election, OCAPICA Campaign

Similar to Los Angeles County, there was high turnout among Orange County registered voters, 72.6% of whom voted in the November 2008 general election. Turnout among low-propensity AAPI voters in OCAPICA's control group was also high, at 65.6%.

While we did not obtain statistically significant results for our phone calls to treatment group voters as a whole, our calls did increase turnout by a notable 7.0 percentage points among decline-to-state voters we spoke with, in comparison to their control group counterparts.

BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

1. Best Practices

Based on our experience in 2006 and 2008 and with the assistance of the evaluation team, we have identified the following best practices in mobilizing AAPI voters. Further evidence of the salience of these best practices, which are applicable to other ethnic minority voters as well, can be found in The James Irvine Foundation's voter engagement reports, available online at www.irvine.org.

- *File-Cleaning*: Use a data services vendor to conduct “file-cleaning” of the voter target list. The vendor can use commercial marketing databases and the National Change of Address Registry to append current phone number and mailing address information to outdated voter records, and remove records for which no updated information is available. This dramatically reduces the number of voters on the target list who cannot be contacted, making more efficient use of volunteers' time.
- *Follow-Up Phone Calls*: Make follow-up calls to voters whom volunteers have spoken with once already and who have indicated they plan to vote in the upcoming election. These calls provide a quick reminder to voters who have already shown an inclination to vote. The power of these calls to increase turnout is clearly demonstrated by APALC and OCAPICA's 2008 campaigns.
- *Volunteer Recruitment, Compensation, Training and Supervision*: Recruit volunteers who can commit to multiple outreach shifts. The confidence of these volunteers will increase over time. Compensation can be structured to secure and reward returning volunteers, for example by providing incrementally larger stipends for each succeeding shift. Volunteers should receive an in-depth training prior to their first outreach shift, which both increases call quality and also cuts down the amount of time spent on training, in comparison to training volunteers when they come in for their first shift. Volunteers should also be closely supervised by the mobilizing organization's staff.
- *Bilingual and Culturally Competent Phone Banking Volunteers*: Use volunteers who are proficient or fluent in an Asian language; also match volunteers with voters of the same ethnicity. The ability to deliver in-language messages is critical to ensuring the success of efforts to mobilize AAPI voters. This is because several AAPI ethnic groups have large numbers of individuals who have difficulty speaking English. Additionally, using volunteers to call voters of the same ethnicity helps achieve a volunteer base that understands the cultural nuances of the targeted population. This has an impact on something as simple, but also as important, as whether the voter stays on the phone or hangs up right away.

2. Lessons Learned

Our work also resulted in the following lessons learned. We offer these as practical suggestions for how to carry out voter engagement efforts targeting low-propensity ethnic voters.

- *Matching Voter Targeting to Electoral Context*: Determining which voters to target should be done to match the context of the election. For purposes of calling low-propensity voters, we found it helpful and appropriate to adjust our definition of low-propensity voter based on anticipated voter turnout. For example, during low turnout elections such as the June 2008

primary election, we included voters who voted in three of the last five statewide elections in our low-propensity definition, but excluded such voters during high turnout elections such as the November 2008 general election. A voter who would be considered a middle-propensity voter in a high turnout election can appropriately be considered a low-propensity voter in a low turnout election. Also, campaigns should ignore voters who have voted in zero of the last four or five elections because those voters have moved or cannot otherwise be contacted, or they are habitual non-voters who cannot be moved to vote.

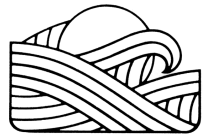
- *Optimization of Voter Contact Goals:* The number of voter contacts achieved by a campaign can be maximized by selecting the number of call attempt rounds to be made, and the number of voters to be targeted, that will produce the most number of voter contacts. The number of anticipated voter contacts can be estimated by multiplying the anticipated contact rate during each round of call attempts by the number of call attempts that volunteers are expected to make during the applicable round. Because contact rates can vary by call attempt round, this calculation should be done for different initial voter target goals, and for different numbers of call attempt rounds, to determine which configuration will result in the most number of voter contacts. The total number of volunteers needed, and the total number of call attempts made, may be equal, but the number of voter contacts achieved may be different.
- *Timing of Outreach to Voters Likely to Vote by Mail:* We found it helpful to subdivide our voter lists between voters who were likely to vote by mail, and voters who were likely to vote at their polling place. To do this, we identified voters who were registered as PVBM voters, and also non-PVBM voters who had voted by mail previously. We initiated our mailers and phone calls to these “likely vote-by-mail” voters further in advance of Election Day, in comparison to our outreach to “likely polling place” voters. For example, we sent our mailers to likely vote-by-mail voters five weeks before Election Day, timed to arrive about three weeks before Election Day, which is also when we started to make our phone calls to those voters. Doing so ensured that PVBM voters received our outreach at the same time they received their official vote-by-mail materials from the Registrar of Voters, and that non-PVBM voters who wanted to vote by mail had sufficient time to request a vote-by-mail ballot.
- *Calling Facilities and Phone Banking Software:* Our ability to supervise phone banking volunteers was facilitated by having all of the volunteers make calls from a centralized location, rather than from their homes or office. Additionally, we saved time that we would have otherwise spent on data entry by having volunteers use phone banking software to access voter records and record call results. The standardized nature of the software’s call result recording system reduced error and variation in how our volunteers documented their calls.
- *In-Language Targeting:* Our experience in targeting voters for whether they were to receive English versus translated materials did not work out well, nor did our experience in matching volunteers with Asian language proficiency to voters who were less likely to speak English well. We found that a proxy based on age and place of birth entailed too much guesswork due to limitations in available voter data. One can eliminate the need to use an estimation of English proficiency by mailing materials that are bilingual, or both English and translated versions of materials, in comparison to mailing just an English version or a translated version. Similarly, we found it helpful during 2008 to accept only those volunteers who were fully bilingual, or at least fully proficient in an Asian language (although we relaxed this requirement for volunteers from some ethnic groups because of those groups’ relatively lower rates of limited English proficiency).

CONCLUSION

These results presented in this report represent the first definitive evidence that AAPI voters respond to conventional campaign tactics such as personal phone calls. Political parties, candidates, and issue campaigns can no longer justify leaving AAPI voters out of their strategic campaign planning by citing uncertainty about how AAPI voters will respond to get-out-the-vote efforts. AAPI voters are ripe for mobilization.

The larger implication is this: Because the AAPI electorate is growing at a pace surpassing that of the electorate as a whole, and because there is a developing community infrastructure to mobilize and increase participation among AAPI voters, AAPIs are poised to change the political landscape in Southern California and in other areas of the country.

More broadly, AAPIs have much in common with other underserved communities such as Latinos and African Americans. While differences obviously exist among these communities, they face common issues of economic justice, civil rights, and racial marginalization. Candidates, issue campaigns, and elected officials should not ignore the potential impact of AAPI communities working in coalition with other historically underrepresented communities to make their concerns heard.



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