

Contra Costa County achieves third-highest census self-response rate in California

County also surpasses national response rate by 7.8%

by [Ryan J. Degan](#) / Danville San Ramon Uploaded: Wed, Dec 2, 2020, 10:27 pm 1

Contra Costa County achieved the third-highest census 2020 self-response rate of all California counties according to county officials, who have documented a 77.4% self-response rate from all residents for the once in a decade count.

Contra Costa County's self-response rate outperformed the country's 67% and the state's 69.6% self-response rates, according to county census officials, who added that this decade's figures surpassed the county's 2010 rate by 7.4%.

In fact, nearly every municipality in Contra Costa County surpassed their 2010 rates, and those that did not were still within 1% of doing so, officials said.

“Thanks to all of the residents who responded to the census. You have guaranteed that Contra Costa County will receive its fair share of representation and much-needed funding for critical programs and infrastructure for the next decade,” said District 2 Supervisor Candace Andersen, vice-chair of the Complete Count Committee.

All four San Ramon Valley communities saw their self-response rates improve compared to their 2010 figures, with Blackhawk leading the way with an 88.4% response rate in 2020, followed by Danville with 87%, Alamo with 84.4% and San Ramon 80.8% -- county officials say the Dougherty Valley region has a self-response rate of 78.9%.

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For reference, in 2010 Danville had a self-response rate of 81.4%, followed by Blackhawk with 79.8%, Alamo with 79.2% and San Ramon with 74.4%.

To achieve these high response rates for 2020, Contra Costa County's Complete Count Steering Committee partners with 67 community based organizations to get out the word and ensure that as many residents as possible were counted. Partnerships county officials say were instrumental in achieving record breaking self-response rates.

“Our success in Contra Costa County could not have happened without the strong partnerships with our local non-profits and community based organizations,” said District 3 Supervisor Diane Burgis, Chair of the Complete Count Committee. “We have built lasting relationships and capacity that will be mutually beneficial as we collaborate on outreach in all aspects of our work.”

Now that the census count is complete, the U.S. Census Bureau will prepare the data to present to President Donald Trump on Dec. 31, with the redistricting process set to begin in spring 2021.

Contra Costa Posts Final Vote Tally From 2020 Election

A record number of votes were cast, and the whole process went smoothly.

By [Bay City News](#), News Partner

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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY — Contra Costa County elections officials finalized voting totals Monday for the Nov. 3 general election, and they showed a total of 591,143 of the county's 703,021 registered voters cast ballots, an 84 percent turnout.

That number of ballots cast was a record for Contra Costa County, said Scott Konopasek, the county's assistant registrar of voters. It represents an increase of more than 20 percent from the 2016 presidential election, in which more than 487,000 ballots were cast.

The turnout percentage on Nov. 3 was close to a record, Konopasek said, but not quite. It was higher than in 2016, though, when 79 percent of registered voters in Contra Costa County voted.

And there were no significant problems.

"This was the smoothest presidential election, of six I've been part of, not just for us, but for counties across the state and across the country," he said.

These final official results will now be sent to the California Secretary of State's office.

Of those 591,143 Contra Costa ballots cast in the 2020 general election, 539,451 of them — about 90 percent — were mail-in ballots. But of those, almost 70 percent arrived not via the U.S. Mail, but through the 37 election drop-boxes placed throughout the county by the county elections office.

Almost 51,700 voters, about 7.35 percent of the county's registered voters, cast ballots at walk-in polling places.

Konopasek said the move toward mail-in ballots is here to stay, and in fact has been growing as in-person voting at traditional polling places has been going down for years.

The prominence of county-owned drop boxes will fade, though, he said, as the public regains trust in the post office, the Trump Administration's efforts to discredit mail-in voting will recede into the background.

"I think people will come to trust the Post Office once again," he said.

Despite some older prospective poll workers (and voters) being discouraged from participating at the polling place by the fear of COVID-19, the feared shortage of poll workers for the Nov. 3 didn't materialize, Konopasek said.

"It worked out a lot more smoothly than expected," he said.

The vast majority of polling places in the 2018 off-year election were staffed again in November, he said.

While most election results remain unchanged from unofficial vote totals tabulated early on the morning of Nov. 4, one did — incumbent San Ramon City Council member Scott Perkins, who was losing by about 40 votes to challenger Luz Gomez after initial results were in, ended up defeating Gomez by 72 votes, 4,687 to 4,615.

Two Martinez City Council races that were fewer than 100 votes apart on election night finished with a slightly wider spread; incumbent Mark Ross defeated challenger Danial Leahy by a 1,995-to-1,881 count, and challenger Brianne Zorn edged out incumbent Noralea Gipner 2,337 to 2,186.

And in the presidential race, Contra Costa County voters supported Democratic challenger and former Vice President Joe Biden overwhelmingly over President Donald Trump by a 71.63 to 26.3 percent margin.

About 12,000 county voters split votes between nine other candidates, five of them write-ins.

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