



Bay Area - Increasing Access to the Ballot: Jail-Based Voter Registration

DECEMBER 2, 2022

Project Objective: Addressing the need to educate individuals held in custody in local jails, the project in partnership with the Alameda County Public Defender's Office (ACPDO) Voter Outreach Increases Community Empowerment (VOICE) program and the Registrar of Voters began working towards providing individuals in custody with the knowledge and support necessary to register to vote. The project is working towards synthesizing research and experiences and highlighting resource gaps and best practices in order to communicate and contextualize learnings to journalists and fellow academics.

Possibility Lab

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Can we increase civic engagement for people in jail?

More than 700,000 Americans are currently held in custody in local jails. While a common misconception is that these individuals are ineligible to vote, the vast majority are legally permitted to cast a ballot in local, state, and federal elections. Yet doing so is often difficult in practice, due to incarcerated people's limited mobility and access to informational resources.

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Visit the project website, Possibility Lab, [here](#). The website features information on how to increase civic engagement for people in jail.



Key Considerations

Delve into the challenges and solutions associated with jail-based voter registration and jail-based voting. Explore the [key considerations](#) for jurisdictions that want to explore the possibility of polling places within jails.



Media Coverage

[Oaklandside: Prop. 17 passed 2 years ago. Now, 50,000 Californians on parole can vote](#)

Established in 2016, the Public Defender's Office's VOICE (Voter Outreach Increases Community Empowerment) program has registered over 1,500 people at Santa Rita, around a third of whom have registered since Prop. 17 passed.

MEREDITH SADIN

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Sadin's research focuses on political behavior, experimental methods and inequality. She explores the ways in which social class affects voters' policy preferences, select candidates, and make political decisions. Her research examines the manner in which candidates' social class backgrounds affect voters' evaluations. Sadin is a recipient of the UC Berkeley Graduate Research Fellowship.

EMILY SWIDE

Possibility Lab



Emily Swide is a graduate of the Master of Public Policy program at UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy. She is currently the Director of Scheduling in the Office of Governor Gavin Newsom and Director of Scheduling and Advance Planning for the Governor's campaign. Before that, she worked for Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf on her re-election campaign and managed the campaign for Shanell Williams for Board of Trustees at City College of San Francisco.