



King County
Elections

King County Elections Survey Research Findings

October 30, 2011

THE
GILMORE
RESEARCH
GROUP

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Executive Summary



Introduction

- **Purpose:** The King County Department of Elections is interested in learning voter perceptions of the voting process in King County, and about the ways it might be improved. For this purpose, the Department of Elections contracted with Gilmore Research Group to conduct a public opinion survey with a random sample of voters registered in King County.

- **Objectives:**
 - Understand choice of voting methods used in the last election voted
 - Determine most valued information sources for learning about the process of voting and the Department of Elections
 - Explore opinions about the King County election website
 - Learn about use of the voter's pamphlet and preferred means of receiving election information
 - Determine effect of King County Election-sponsored messaging
 - Evaluate knowledge, opinions and behavior regarding ballot instructions, vote processing and election procedures



Introduction (Continued)

■ Objectives (cont.)

- Determine interest in new options for election messaging, apps and online voting
- Understand voter awareness and need for accessible voting centers
- Discover perceptions about King County Department of Elections
- Determine satisfaction with elections results reporting and overall quality of services provided by King County Elections

■ Survey Method

- Sample was drawn from a population of King County registered voters. Both landline numbers and cell phone numbers were present in the population database from which the sample was randomly drawn. Additional phone match was conducted for those records without phone numbers. Those matched also included both landlines and cell phones. No special effort was made to generate a cell-phone only subsample.
- In total, 604 interviews were completed with a selection of randomly-called voters.
- The pre-tested survey began on September 13, 2011 and ended on October 6, 2011. This was 2+ months after the 2011 primary election.
- Surveys averaged 18 minutes in length.
- For geographical analysis, respondents were clustered by ZIP codes of residence into 3 areas of King County used in Metro Transit studies: North King, South King and East King County.



Introduction (Continued)

■ Analysis of Results

- Percentages shown in graphs and tables, and specified in text are minimally weighted (weights were determined by respondent age). All base numbers reflect a weighted number of respondents. Percentages may not add to 100% because cell percentages round up at 0.5%.
- Subgroup differences called out in the report are statistically significant at the 95% confidence level. It is important to note that not all subgroup differences can be reported in this summary of survey results. Differences that are noted in text are those that are most distinctive and that provide additional meaning to results.
- The margin of error for a sample size of 604 respondents is ± 3.98 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. This means that if the survey were repeated again and again, there would be a 95% chance that results obtained would fall within ± 3.98 percentage points of the original result.
- A complete set of data cross-tabulations is provided under separate cover. Data cross-tabulations provide significance testing at 2 levels of confidence: 95% (the most widely accepted for social science research) and 90% (this is rarely used, but sometimes asked for). Upper case letters shown beneath cell proportions in the cross-tabulations indicate statistical significance at the 95% level *between columns denoted by the letters*. Lower case letters shown beneath the proportions indicate significance at the 90% level. A 90% level of significance between subgroups *is never called out in this report*.

■ Organization of the Report

- Survey results in this report link King County Department of Elections objectives to some of the goals established by the King County Strategic Plan. The report is divided into three main topic areas:
 - *Improve Customer Satisfaction*
 - *Build a Culture of Performance, Improve Effectiveness and Efficiencies of County Programs, Services and Systems*
 - *Increase Access to King County Services, Personnel and Information*



Summary of Findings

- **Overall Satisfaction:** A very large majority of respondents (86%) said they are *satisfied* with the overall quality of services provided by KCE. Just 5% said they are not satisfied, and of these 27 respondents, 19 said they are *somewhat dissatisfied*.
- **Reasons for Satisfaction Ratings:** Top reasons for being *very satisfied* with the overall quality of services were *ease and efficiency of the process* (28%), *the problem-free history of services* (25%) and *easy to understand ballots* (28%). The top reason for being only *somewhat satisfied* was *nostalgia for voting in person* (16%). Concern about *mail fraud* was also mentioned (8%). *Nostalgia about no longer voting at a polling place* and *concern about mail fraud* were also the top two reasons for giving a rating of *somewhat* or *very dissatisfied*.
- **Satisfaction with the Posting of Election Results:** 73% of all respondents said they were satisfied with the timing of election results reporting and 8% said they were dissatisfied, including 2% (n=14) who said they were *very dissatisfied*.
- **Confidence in King County Elections:** There is a *high level of voter confidence* in King County Elections for its accuracy in maintaining registration information and proper processing of ballots
 - 83% said they felt *very confident* that the voter registration record on file at the elections office reflects their current address and official signature; just 2% said they felt *not very* or *not at all confident*.
 - 64% said they were *very confident* that KCE will properly process their ballots. An additional 30% said they were *somewhat confident*. Six percent (6%) said they were *not very* or *not at all confident*.
- **Awareness and Use of the Online Ballot Tracker:** Although most respondents (83%) said they had not heard about an online ballot tracker, 41% said they would be *somewhat likely/very likely* to use it.



Summary of Findings (Continued)

- **Information Sources Used to Learn about KCE and Voting:** The *official Voters' Pamphlet* had the highest share of recognition as an information source used for voting (96%). It clearly dominated as **best information source**, gathering 64% of respondents' choice as **best source**.
 - The *election ballot and accompanying packet materials* was an extremely popular information source, too (90%), followed by *media information* (seen or heard in the newspaper, radio or TV) – 70%.
 - Although *word of mouth* is often thought of as being a primary way to gather information about voting, in the present survey, it featured less prominently than other sources (56%), and was chosen by just 4% overall, as **best source** for information about voting.

- **Usefulness of the Official Voters' Pamphlet:** Nearly all respondents (96%) rated the Voters' Pamphlet as useful, including 62% who rated it *very useful*. Primary reasons for rating the pamphlet *very useful* were its *evaluation of pros and cons of an issue or a candidate* (30%), *it provides a good forum for candidates to voice their positions* (21%). They also like it because *it is concise* (21%).

- **Opinion of Including the Full Text of Measures & Initiatives:** A very large majority (82%) said it is useful to provide the full text, including 54% who said it is *very useful*. Of the 15% who said including the full text is not useful, most (11%) said it is not *very useful*, rather than *not at all useful* (4%).

- **Preferred Method for Receiving the Voters' Pamphlet:** By about a 3 to 1 ratio, respondents said they would rather receive their Voters' Pamphlet in the mail than receive it online (72% v. 25%).



Summary of Findings (Continued)

- **Preference for Voting by Mail or Online:** Most respondents said they would rather vote by mail in future elections (60%), than vote online (34%) if an electronic option was offered.
- **Reasons for Preferred Vote Method:** Top reasons given for preferring mail voting include *distrust for online voting because of the threat of electronic hacking* (37%), a sense of *security or reliability associated with mail service* (17%) and a desire to see *and handle a hard copy of the ballot* (15%). Top reasons given for preferring an online vote were expedience (35% said *faster, one-step, no postage*), *ease and simplicity of the process* (29%) and *concern for the environment* (15%).
- **Interest in Election Apps:** About 45% of all voters surveyed said they have smart phones. Of those with smart phones, a majority were in agreement that all 5 apps asked about seemed at least *somewhat useful*: between 54% and 76% evaluated the group of 5 as *somewhat/very useful*.
 - *Election night returns and update results* gathered the largest share of useful ratings (76%), and *online tracking for ballot packets* gathered the smallest share (54%).
 - Opinion about the apps was unequivocal, evidenced by the fact that *don't know* response was 2% or less for only 2 of the 5 items asked about.
- **Awareness and Visits to the King County Elections Website:** Among all respondents, 56% said they were uncertain about the existence of a KCE website. Of the remainder, 21% said they were aware of it and had visited, 11% were aware but had not visited and 12% answered *no*, they were not aware of the website.



Summary of Findings (Continued)

- **Impressions of the Website:** Website visitors were very positive in their assessments of website content and usability. 90% agreed *the information is useful and important*, 86% agreed *the information is clear and easy to follow* and 76% agreed *it is easy to navigate*. When all respondents were asked to rate usefulness of 3 website features, a majority said *somewhat/very useful* for each, including *access to the voter's pamphlet* (58% said useful), *access to a list of all candidates and measures* (60%) and *access to links for more information about candidates and measures* (62%).
- **Awareness of PSA Reminders about Voting:** Although 24% of respondents remembered seeing or hearing PSA reminders about voting within the last two months, the majority (70%) said they did not, in the mid-October election cycle when the survey fielded. Television and radio were named most often as sources for providing reminders to vote (50% and 35%, each). Asked about the usefulness of the reminders, 78% said useful, including 32% that said *very useful*. Respondents who recall seeing or hearing the PSAs were significantly more likely than those who do not to correctly answer 4 out of 10 general questions asked about voting procedures and correctly answer 1 in 3 specific questions asked about awareness of specific voting procedures.
- **Ease of Recognizing King County Voting Materials:** A large majority of respondents (73%) said it is very easy to spot King County voting materials when they arrive in the mail.
- **Frequency of Reading Ballot Instructions:** Many said they read the instructions included with the ballot *every time* (60%), and a substantial proportion (21%) said they read the instructions *frequently*.
- **Clarity and Ease of Ballot Instructions:** More than three-quarters of all respondents (77%) said the voting instructions included with their ballots are very clear and easy to follow.



Summary of Findings (Continued)

- **Voter Knowledge of Voting Procedures:** Of ten procedures assessed, five items showed particularly large levels of accurate response:
 - *You must wait until election day to return your ballot (95% said false)*
 - *The return envelope must be signed for the ballot envelope to be opened (82% said true)*
 - *Mistakes on ballots cannot be corrected (80% false)*
 - *You need to remove the stub from the top of your ballot (75% true)*
 - *If there is a problem with your signature, it must be corrected in order for your ballot to be processed (72% true)*

- **Voter Knowledge of Specific Elections Procedures:** The survey found a large number of voters unaware of three specific election procedures asked about.
 - The proportion of *don't know* response was especially great, ranging from 27% to 56% across the three question items.
 - The biggest magnitude of misperception was for *free placement of information about measures and candidates*: 67% said this is true. It is notable that voters with post graduate educations were more likely than those having less education to say this “false” statement is true.
 - Fewer than half were correct in their perceptions that *voting districts can choose elections to vote their measures* (only 44% said true), and *election costs are divided among districts* (only 38% said true).



Summary of Findings (Continued)

- **Voter Agreement with Aims and Objectives Statements:** A majority of respondents was in agreement with five statements made about KCE aims and objectives. These include:
 - *Administering and overseeing the elections process is one of the most important services that government provides to its citizens (89%, including 64% strongly agree).*
 - *If all voters followed the instruction included with their ballot, the King County election process would save taxpayer money (84%, with 56% strongly agree).*
 - *KCE elections helps citizens understand the voting process so that the election results will accurately reflect voters' intent (86%, with 44% strongly agree).*
 - *KCE helps citizens understand the voting process so that each election is conducted efficiently (85%, with 40% strongly agree).*
 - *It is very important that King County make investments in future elections innovations (79%, with 44% strongly agree).*



Summary of Findings (Continued)

- **Less Frequent Voter Profile:** The one third of the voting population who have participated in the voting process less often or regularly than others (33%) exhibit some of the same general attitudes as more frequent voters. However, they are more likely to include younger individuals and often display a ***preference for more technology oriented tools****. To understand this segment of King County voters, it is interesting to note:
 - ***More are younger (33% under 35 years vs 22% and 51% under 45 years vs 41%.)***
 - ***Significantly less (54% vs 66%) are likely to say that the official voters' pamphlet is very useful.***
 - ***Significantly more (13% vs 8%) are likely to mention social media as a source of election information.***
 - ***They are a little more likely (26% vs 19%) to say that it is easy to navigate around the Elections website.***
 - ***Slightly more (30% vs 23%) are likely to say they want to receive the voters' guide online. Significantly less (66% vs 74%) are likely to prefer the voters' guide be mailed.***
 - ***Significantly less aware (88% not aware vs 81%) of the online tracker but more likely to use it (47% vs 39%).***
 - ***More interested in elections apps (all of them)***
 - ***A little more likely (39% vs 31%) to vote online for Presidential election rather than mail.***
 - ***Significantly more likely to want email or cell phone contact from King County Elections (36% vs 24% and 15% vs 6%)***

* This is similar to results seen in additional analyses of voters with smart phones . See Appendix for further details from that analysis.



Summary of Findings (Continued)

- **Less Frequent Voter Profile:** Registered voters in King County who have not participated in as many elections as other voters also appear, not surprisingly, **less knowledgeable** regarding the voting process than more regular voters:
 - *Significantly less confident that the voter registration information is current (76% Very Confident vs 85%)*
 - *Significantly less likely to have voted by mail in the last election (87% vs 95%)*
 - *Significantly less likely to use information mailed by others (25% vs 35%)*
 - *Significantly more likely than frequent voters to say the ballot materials are the best source of information (14% vs 8%)*
 - *About the same likelihood of awareness of PSAs but from different sources (more tv and web rather than radio or newspaper)*
 - *Significantly less aware that you can correct mistakes on your ballot (65% vs 87%)*
 - *Less aware that you must correct your signature issue (68% vs 74%) but more likely to think you must correct it by election day (13% false vs 28%)*
 - *Significantly less aware that your move information is not updated at KC Elections (54% vs 63%)*
 - *Significantly less aware that you must remove the stub from your ballot (65% vs 80%)*
 - *Significantly more likely to disagree that correct voting would save the county and taxpayers money (18% vs 8%)*
 - *Significantly fewer white (77% vs 86%) therefore, more minorities*

- **Important to Future Tracking:** This segment of King County voters will continue to be difficult to include in future telephone surveys that track the Department's success in reaching and educating the voting public.
 - *51% report being "cell only" or "cell mostly" vs 34% of the more frequent voter population segment.*

Details from this analysis can be found in the Appendix section of this report including the definitions of voter history and cross-tabulations comparing frequent and infrequent voter population responses.



Conclusions & Recommendations

- Results of this study find most King County registered voters have very positive impressions of the many products and services that King County Elections provides. Large proportions are *very* satisfied with its overall services, including the timing of its posting of election results.
- Voters have high confidence that King County Elections will monitor and maintain the accuracy of voting registration information, and they believe that KCE will properly process their ballots. Voters say they are easily able to spot official voting materials in their mail, and they perceive ballot instructions included in these materials as clear and easy to follow.
- The printed Voters' Pamphlet is valued for providing a concise digest of the pros and cons of the issues, and for presenting an unaltered forum in which candidates may distinguish themselves. The Voters' Pamphlet is not only the most well-known source of information about voting, it is also the most well regarded source. With respect to providing the full text of measures and initiatives in the pamphlet - a large majority of voters say it is useful to provide this feature. Having the full text is especially significant to those who have high school diplomas or less education than high school. This finding should be considered if features of the pamphlet are ever considered for trimming.



Conclusions & Recommendations (Continued)

- Because interest in all five election apps is strong, it is recommended that these be developed and offered to voters. Popularity of election apps will likely increase as the prevalence of smart phones grows.
- King County Elections should work to increase voter awareness of its website because most respondents were uncertain about the existence of a KCE website. Website visitors have very positive impressions of what they find, and so this aspect of service should be more strongly encouraged.
- With the ever-increasing cost of mail, and in order to boost participation among younger voters, KCE may wish to more vigorously promote future online voting and electronic delivery of voting information. Although large majorities of respondents currently prefer a mail ballot and voting information delivered by mail, preference for these things will likely decrease as voters now under age 45 (who largely prefer online services), make greater gains in the population of voters.
- Voter knowledge of general voting procedures is widespread, and this is good evidence that King County Elections has been effective in disseminating basic balloting information to voters. Voter knowledge of specific elections procedures was much less extensive and this indicates a need to better inform constituents about these procedures.
- Most voters are in agreement with KCE aims and objectives asked about in the survey. This indicates there is future support for possible adjustments that may be needed in the voting process to keep in step with change.



Respondent Profile

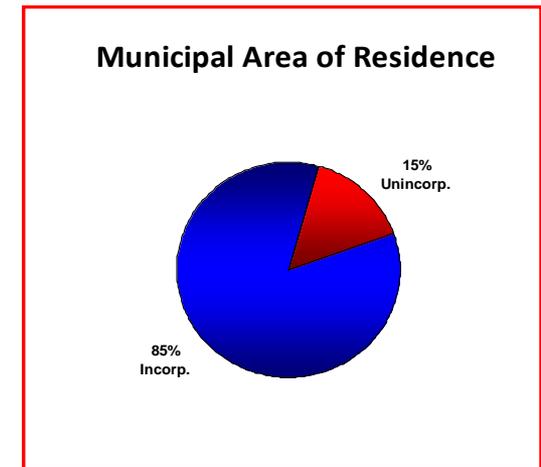
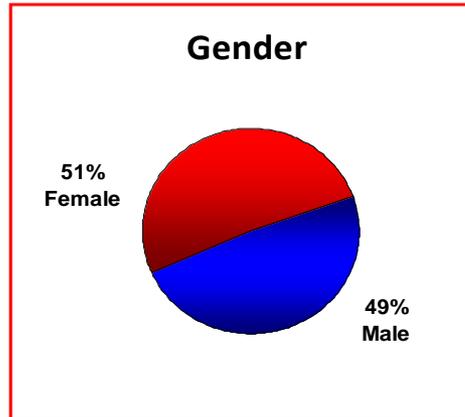
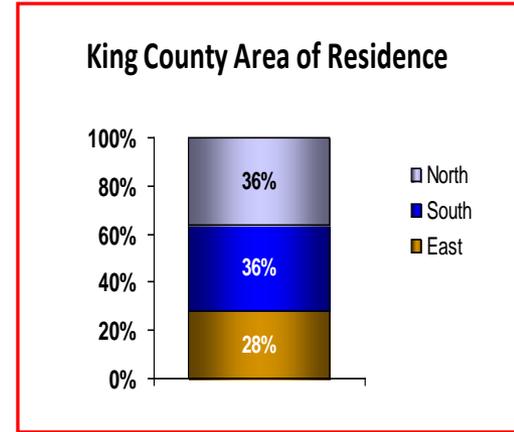
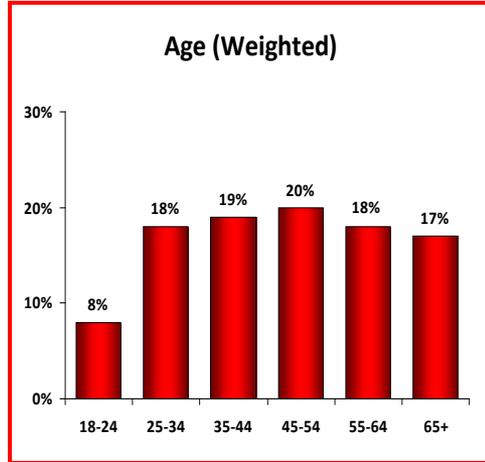


Respondent Profile

- **The following slide displays five demographic characteristics associated with respondents to the survey. The points below summarize the characteristics:**
 - About equal proportions of interviews were conducted with male and female respondents (49% and 51%, respectively). This outcome was assured by establishing gender quotas at the outset of fielding.
 - A large proportion of respondents (83%) specified their ethnic origin as Caucasian. Interviewers also spoke with many voters who identified themselves as Asian Americans (7%), African Americans (5%), Native American/Pacific Islanders (3%) and Hispanics (2%).
 - Having an average age of 47.4 years, more than half the surveys (55%) were completed by respondents 45 years old and older.
 - One out of 7 respondents were residents of unincorporated King County (15%). This is proportionate to King County overall.
 - Equal proportions of respondents (36%) were residents of South King County and North County and 28% lived in East King County. Geographic areas of residence were derived from ZIP codes that are used to delineate areas of King County in Metro Transit studies. ZIP code delineations are available upon request.



Respondent Profile (Continued)



Ethnic Origin

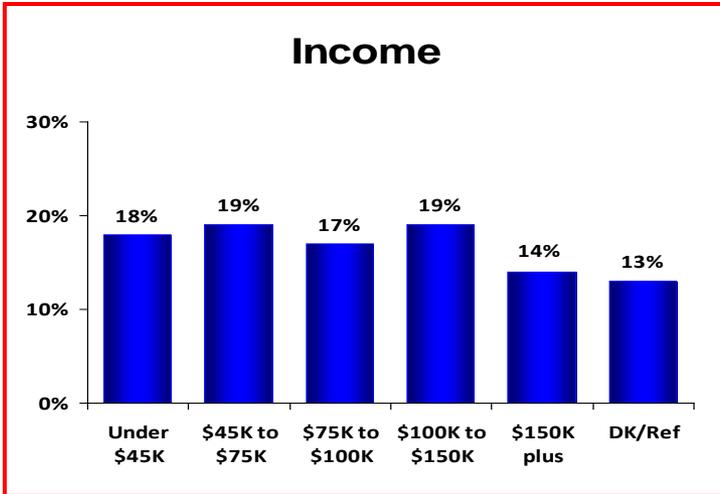
Ethnic Origin	Percentage
Caucasian	83%
Asian	7%
African American	5%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	3%
Hispanic	2%
Something else	2%
Refused	3%

Q46. What is your age? (Base=604)

Q49: Which one or more of the following would you say is your race or ethnic origin? (Base=604)



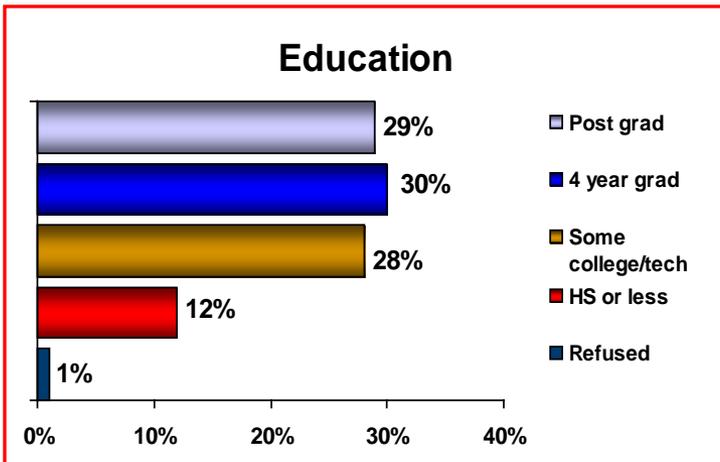
Respondent Profile (Continued)



- Registered voters are often well educated and consequently, earn higher incomes than some other demographic groups. The correlation between advanced education and high income emerged in the this study of King County registered voters:

➤ Half of those surveyed (50%) said they have annual yearly incomes of \$75,000 or more, including 33% who said they have incomes in excess of \$100,000.

➤ More than half (59%) said they had advanced degrees, with 29% having some post graduate educational experience or post graduate degrees.



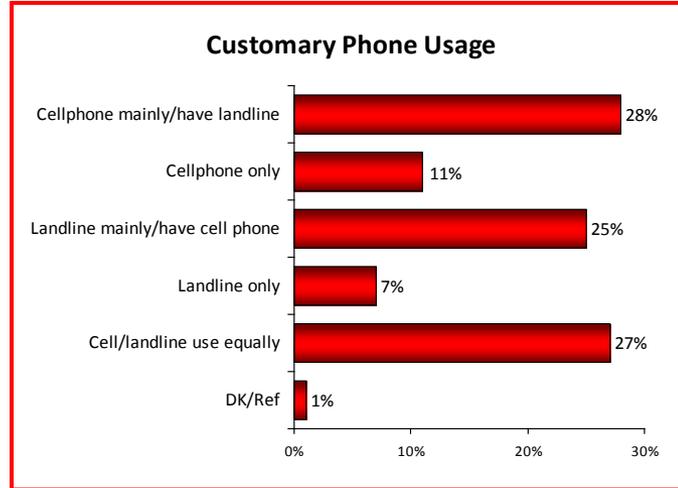
Q52. Please stop me when I read the income group that (is your) total yearly income. (Base=604)

Q47. What is the highest grade or year of school you completed? (Base=604)



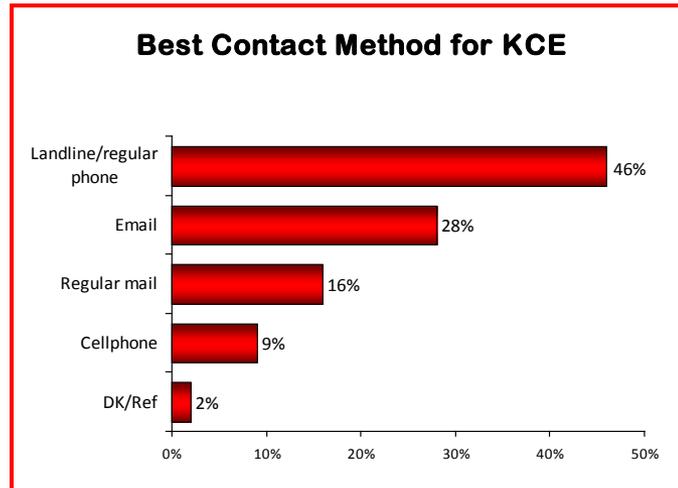
Respondent Profile (Continued)

- Voters who customarily use cell phones for personal communication outnumbered those who customarily use landline telephones (39%, cell phone mainly/cell phone only v. 32% landline mainly/landline only).



As expected, customary phone usage was strongly correlated with age: those in the youngest age group (18-34) were more likely than those in all other age groups to use cell phones. Those age 55 or older were more likely to use landline phones.

- Despite this general preference to communicate by cell phones, a plurality of voters said they would rather hear from King County Elections by landline phone than by other methods (46%).



Among respondents who wish to be contacted by cell phone, over half (54%) said they have landlines but prefer to use cell phones.

Email contact from KCE was specified more often by 18 to 34 year olds (40%).

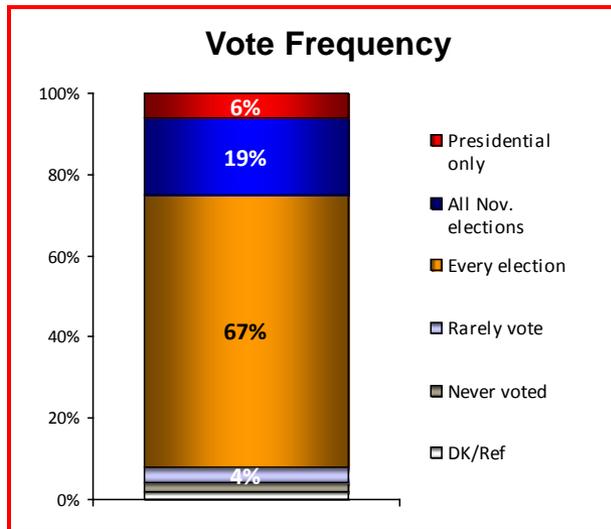
Q50. Which best describes your personal telephone usage? (Base=604)

Q51. If the Elections Department needed to contact you, what is your preferred method? (Base=604)

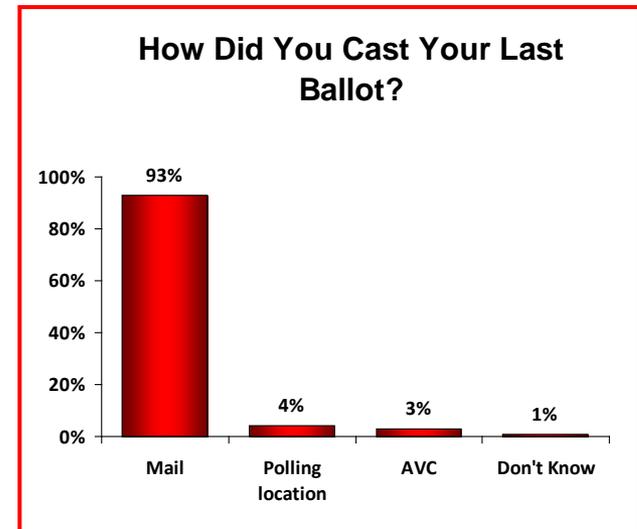


Frequency of Voting & Last Location Voted

- Two-thirds of respondents (67%) said they usually vote in every election. Within this segment, those age 65 and older dominated (90%).
 - Respondents who said they rarely vote (4%, overall) were most often those in the youngest age group (18 to 34 year olds – 12%).
 - Also worth noting is a geographical difference in presidential-only voting (6%, overall): residents of South and East King County were more likely than North King County residents to only vote in presidential elections (9% and 8% v. 2%).
- Although nearly all respondents (93%) said they cast their last ballots by mail, among those who used AVCs (3%, overall) most were the youngest age bracket (18 to 34 year olds – 9%). Asked why, 9 of these 16 respondents said they *prefer to vote in person*.



The longer the history of voting, the more accurate the self-report: Of those who have voted 16+ times, 93% report voting in every election. In comparison, of those having no votes on record, 65% said they rarely vote or have never voted, but the remainder report voting much more often: 14% said every election, 12% said presidential elections and 11% said November elections.



Q4. How often would you say you usually vote? Would you say ...? (Base=604)

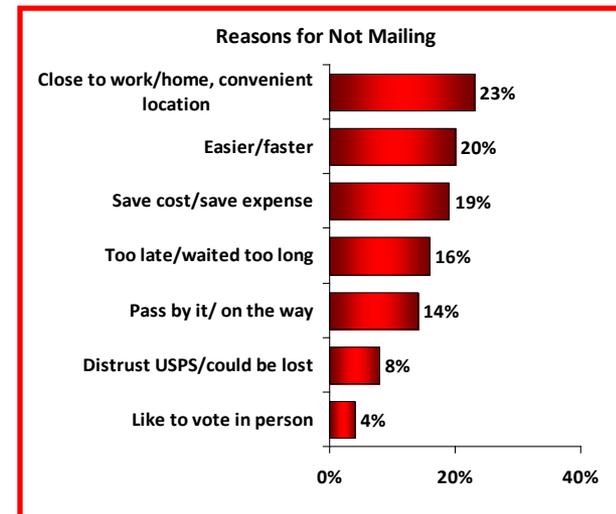
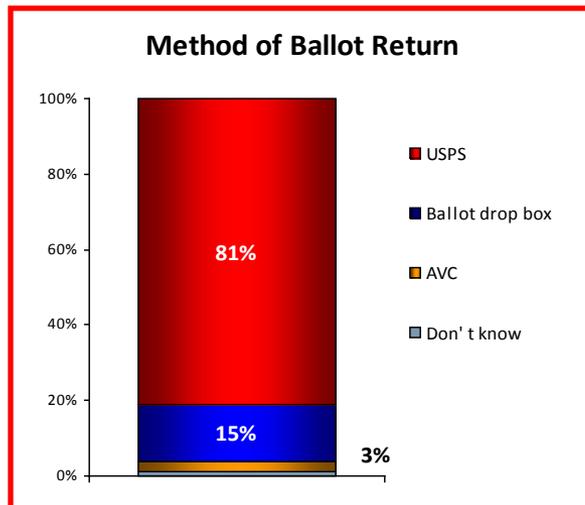
Q6. Thinking about the last time you voted in a King County Election, did you vote by mail, at a previous polling location or at an accessible voting center? (Base=592)

Q7. What was the main reason you voted at an accessible voting center (Base=16)



Method of Mail Ballot Return in Last Election Voted

- A large majority of respondents (81%) said they returned their last election ballots by mail, but 15% said they used ballot drop boxes and a small number cast ballots at accessible voting centers (3%).
- Asked why they didn't use mail to return their ballots, most gave reasons linked to convenience, including *close to work or home* (23%), *easier/faster* (20%) and *pass by [the box, the AVC] on the way to work or home* (14%).



AVC users are more likely than ballot drop box users to say it is *close to work or home* (30% v. 18%). Mail ballot drop box users are more likely to specify *save cost* (18% v. 8%) and they were *too late* (15% v. 4%).

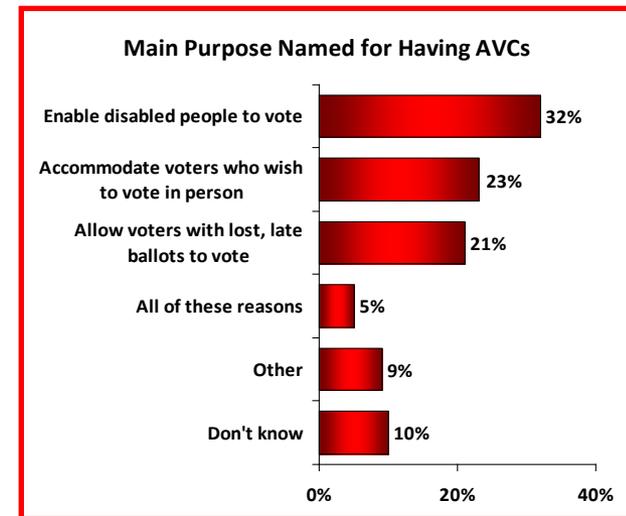
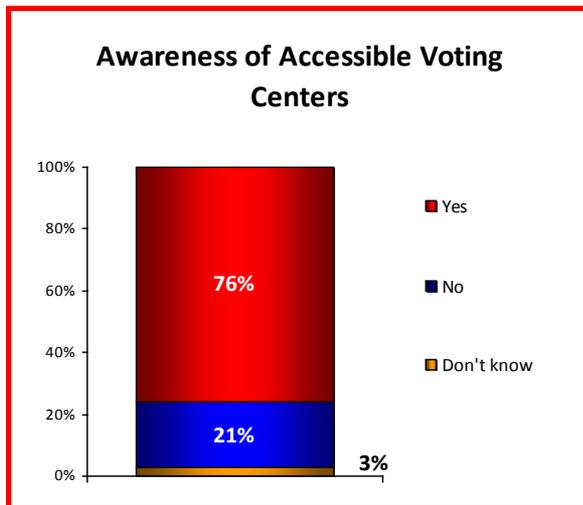
Q8. Thinking about the last time you voted, did you return your mail ballot by using the USPS, a ballot box, or one of the accessible voting centers? (Base=590)

Q9. Why did you choose this method rather than mailing it back? Multiple responses allowed. (Base=107)



Awareness of Accessible Voting Centers

- Overall, three-quarters of respondents (76%) said they were aware that accessible voting centers are available in King County.
- Asked what they thought was the main purpose of having AVCs, voters were split in their opinions: 32% said AVCs *enable people with disabilities to vote privately and independently* and 23% said they *accommodate voters who wish to cast their ballots in person*. One in five (21%) said they thought *voters without ballots (lost or late in the mail) could use AVCs*.
- Among all respondents, 5% said that they, or someone in their households has need for an accessible voting center.



Q38. Are you aware that there are accessible voting centers in King County? (Base=604)

Q39. What do you think is the main purpose of an accessible voting center? (Base=604)

Q40. Do you or does any eligible voter in your household have need of an accessible voting center? (Base=604)



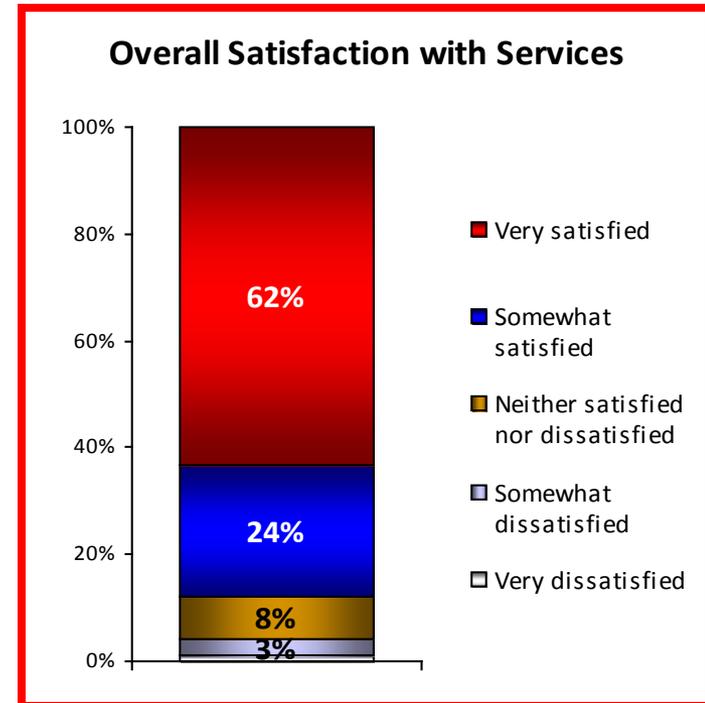
Detailed Findings: Improve Customer Satisfaction



Satisfaction with Overall Quality of Services

- A very large proportion of respondents (86%) said they were satisfied with the overall quality of services provided by KCE. This includes 62% who said they were *very satisfied*.
 - Voters age 65 and older were more likely than all other age groups to say *satisfied* (94%).
 - Males were more likely than females to say *satisfied* (91% v. 82%).

- Just 5% said they were not satisfied with KCE services, and of these 27 respondents, 19 said they were only *somewhat dissatisfied*. Though the numbers are small, survey results found two subgroup differences:
 - North County voters were more likely to be not satisfied than East County voters (6% v. 2%).
 - Females were more likely than males to be not satisfied (6% v. 3%).

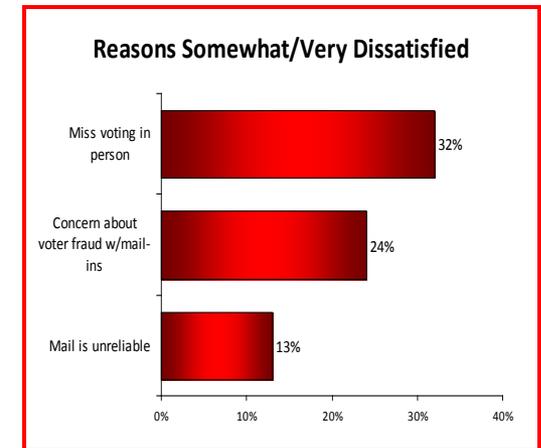
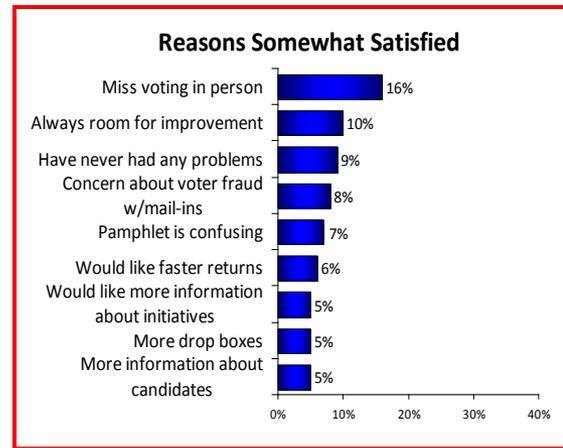
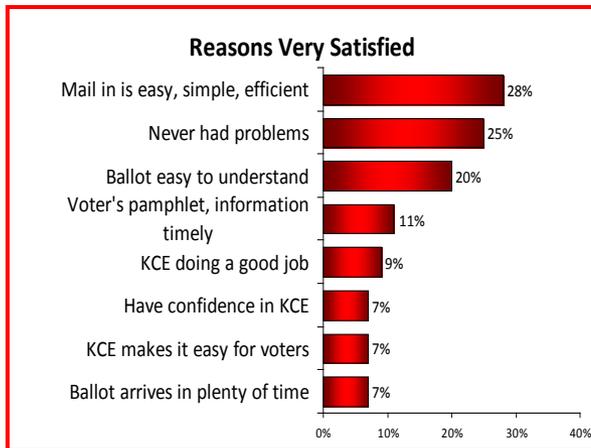


Satisfaction with services is correlated with voting frequency and confidence in the accuracy of ballot processing. Voters who are satisfied are those who cast ballots most frequently (every election). Satisfied voters tend to be very confident that KCE will process their ballots properly.



Reasons for Satisfaction Rating

- Primary reasons for being *very satisfied* with quality of services provided by KCE include the *ease and efficiency of the process* (28%), *problem-free history of services* (25%) and *easy to understand ballots* (20%).
 - *Ease and efficiency of the process* was mentioned more often by respondents younger than age 65 than by those 65 and older (32% v. 10%).
 - North County voters were more likely than East County voters to say they *have confidence in KCE and the voting process* (12% v. 4%).
- The top reason for conditional satisfaction (*somewhat satisfied*) was nostalgia for *voting in person* (16%) This reason was mentioned more often by residents in East County (38%) than residents in either of the other two areas. Concern about potential *fraud with mail-in votes* was another often-mentioned specific concern (8%).
- Nostalgia about *no longer voting at a polling place* and *concern about mail fraud* were the top two reasons for giving a rating of *somewhat or very dissatisfied* with KCE services.



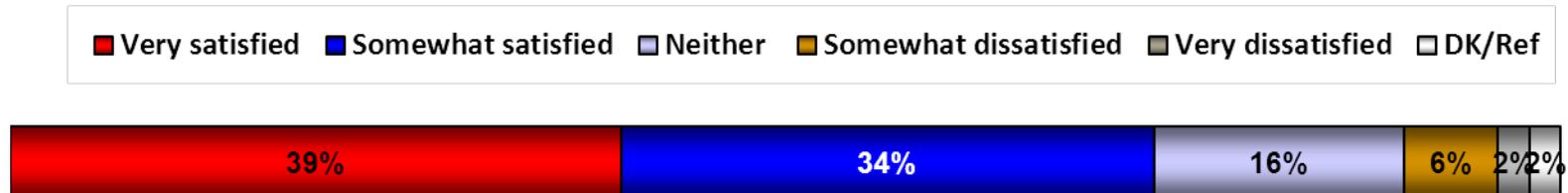
Q29. Why are you satisfied/dissatisfied? Multiple responses allowed. (Bases: Very satisfied=376; Somewhat satisfied=147; Somewhat/Very dissatisfied=27)



Satisfaction with Posting of Election Results

- Nearly three-quarters of all respondents (73%) said they were satisfied with the timing of election results reporting. Eight percent (8%) said they were dissatisfied, including 2% (n=14) who said they were *very dissatisfied*.
- Subgroup differences in opinion were very minimal, but voters who have education beyond high school were more likely to be *very satisfied* than those who have high school diplomas or less education (41% v. 26%).

Satisfaction with Posting of Election Results



Q42. King County Elections posts the first set of election results around 8:15 pm on Election Day and then typically updates them once daily until the election is legally certified. Please rate your satisfaction with the timing of elections results reporting. (Base=604)

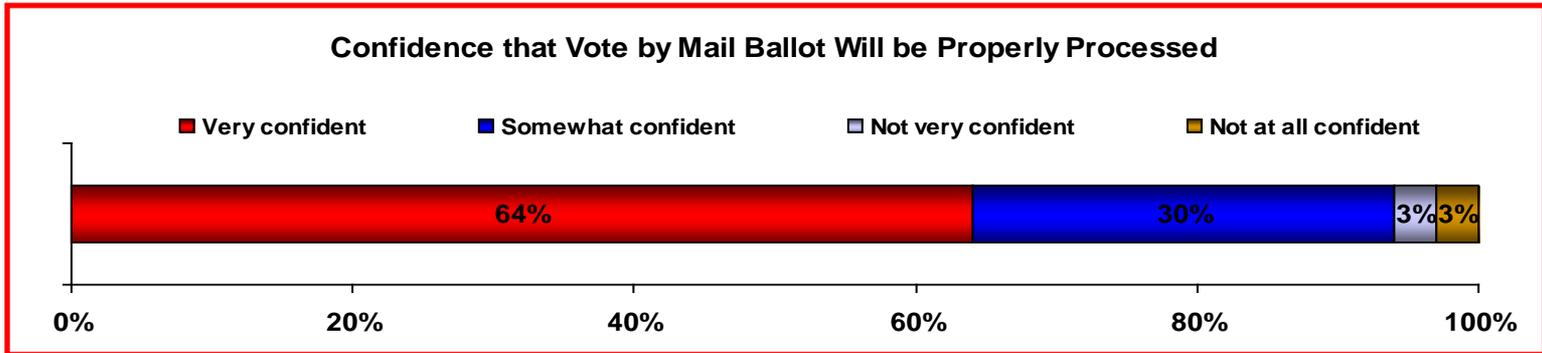
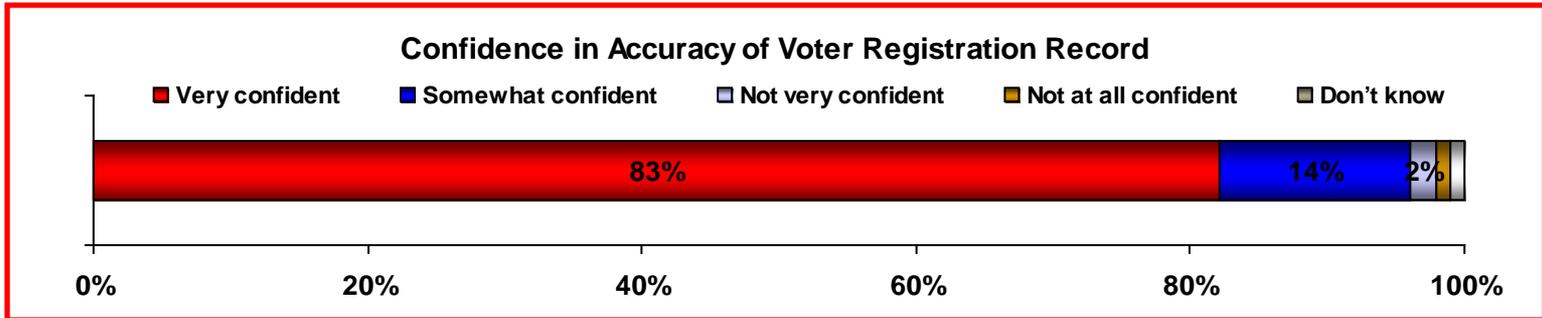


Confidence in Accuracy of Registration Information & Ballot Processing

- Results overall found a high level of voter confidence in King County Elections for two items asked about in the survey: the accuracy of registration information and the proper processing of ballots. These results are shown in the following slide.
 - More than 8 in 10 (83%) said they felt *very confident* that the voter registration record on file at the elections office reflects their current address and official signature. Just 2% said they felt *not very* or *not at all* confident.
 - Nearly two thirds (64%) told interviewers they were *very confident* that their mail ballots will be properly processed by King County Elections. An additional 30% said they were *somewhat confident*. Six percent (6%) said they were *not very* or *not at all* confident.
 - Among subgroups more likely to be *very confident* in the **accuracy of their registry information** are respondents age 65 years old and older (93%) and voters who earn incomes of \$150K or more (92%).
 - Subgroups more likely to be *very confident* that their **ballots will be properly processed** are those having education beyond college diplomas (79%) . Respondents who have high school diplomas or less education were more likely to say they are not at all confident that their ballots will be properly processed by King County Elections (9%, compared to 3%, overall).



King County Elections Confidence Measures



Q5. How confident are you that your voter registration record on file at the elections office reflects your current address and official signature? (Base=604)

Q31. How confident are you that your vote by mail ballot will be properly processed by King County Elections? (Base=604)



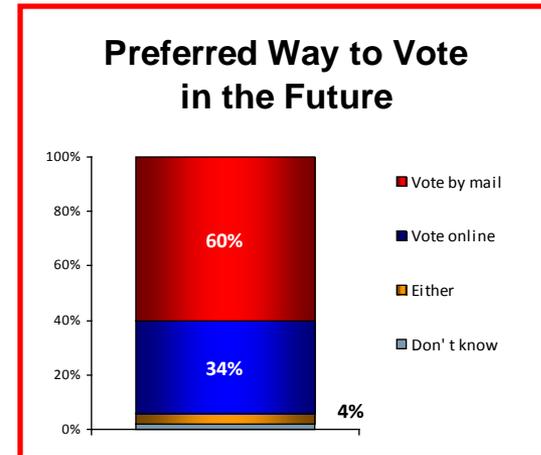
**Build Culture of Performance, Improve Effectiveness and
Efficiency of County Programs, Services & Systems**



Preferences for Voting by Mail or Voting On-line

King County Elections has chosen to adopt new technologies and processes to work more effectively and efficiently. To this end, online voting is being explored for the future.

- The survey asked respondents whether they would prefer to vote by mail or vote online in future elections.
- At this point in time, most respondents said they would rather vote by mail in future elections (60%), than vote online (34%) if an electronic option was offered.
- Major reasons given for preferring mail include *distrust for online voting because of the threat of electronic hacking* (37%), a sense of *security or reliability associated with mail service* (17%) and a desire to *see and handle a hard copy of the ballot* (15%).
- Top reasons given for preferring an online vote were expedience (35% said *faster, one-step, no postage*), *ease and simplicity* of the process (29%) and *concern for the environment* (15%).



Subgroups more likely than others to favor a mail ballot include:

- Those age 65 and older (82%)
- Respondents who usually communicate by landline telephone (76%)
- Those who vote in every election (68%)

In contrast, these subgroups were more likely than others to prefer online voting:

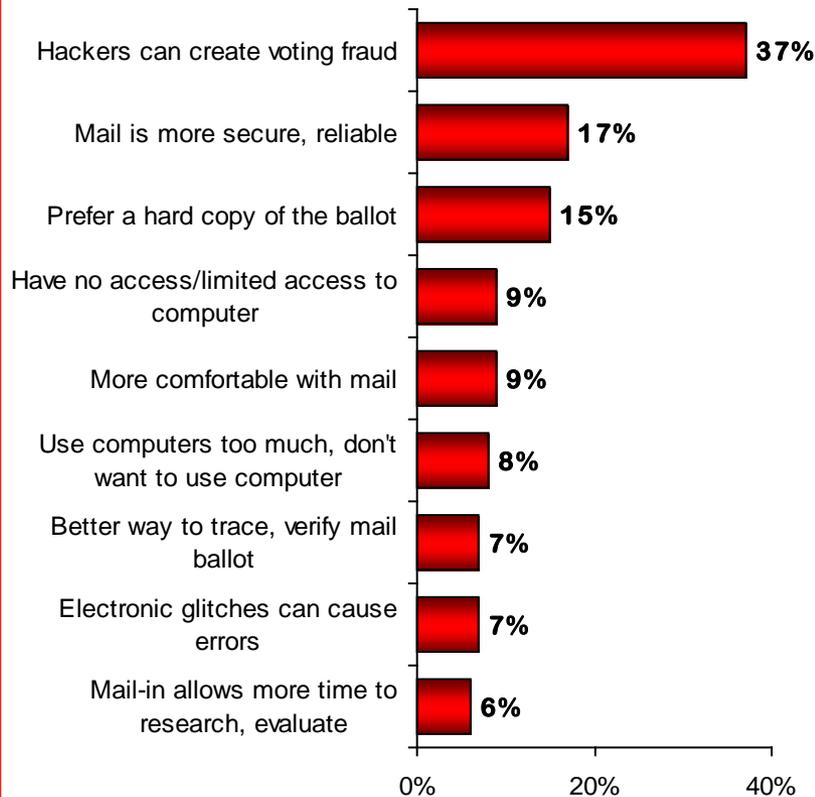
- Voters who are younger than age 45 (45%),
- College grads (43%, but not post grads) Respondents who usually use a cell phone (46%).

Q43. The 2012 Presidential Election will represent the first presidential election that all King County voting will be by mail. If you were given a choice in the future between voting by mail and voting online, which method of voting would you prefer? (Base=604)

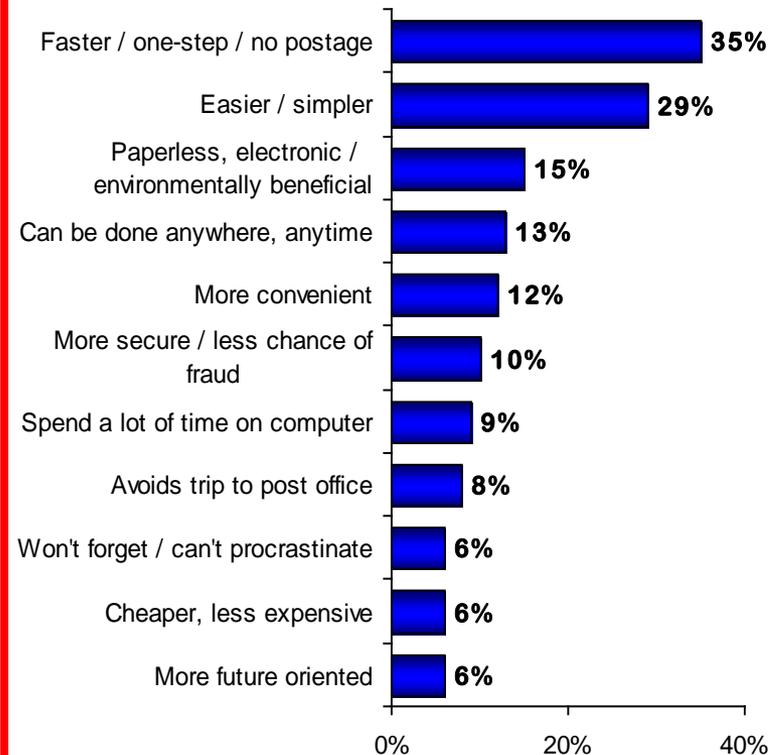


Reasons for Preferring Mail and On-line Voting

Reasons for Preferring Mail Voting



Reasons for Preferring Online Voting



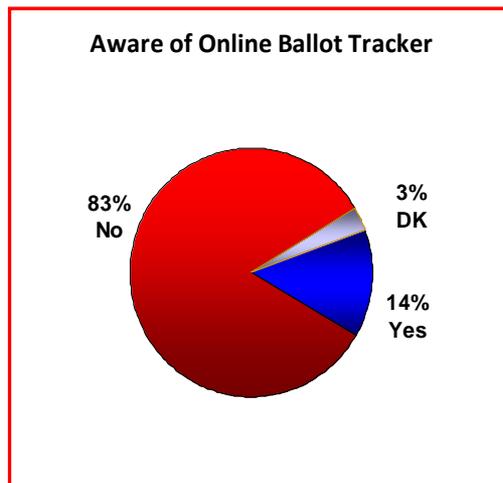
Q44. Why do you say that? Multiple responses allowed. (Bases: Prefer mail=365; Prefer online vote=203)



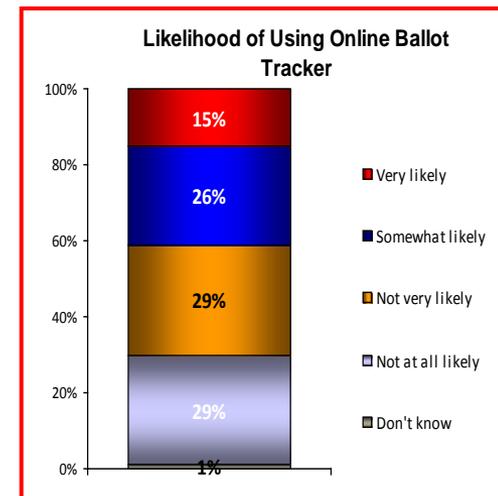
Awareness and Use of the On-line Ballot Packet Tracker

To establish accountability at every level of service delivery King County Elections implemented an online ballot tracker to provide voters with the capacity to track the progress of their ballot packets at three different points in the process. The survey asked respondents two questions related to online ballot tracking: whether they were aware of the product and (if so) how likely they would be to use it.

- Although about one in seven respondents (14%) said they were aware of the availability of an online ballot packet tracker, most (83%) said they had never heard of it.
 - Subgroups more likely than others to be aware of the tracker include respondents who vote in every election and those who prefer using mail ballots to vote in future elections.
- The option of using online ballot packet tracking appealed to about two in five voters (41% *somewhat likely/very likely* to use it).
 - Respondents who have the highest incomes (\$150K+) more often said they would be *very likely* to use it (29%).
 - Respondents who are 65 years old and older and those who prefer using mail ballots to vote in future elections more often said they would be *not at all likely* to use it (47% and 33%, respectively.)



Two respondents told interviewers that they had already used online tracking for their ballots.



Q32. Are you aware that there is an online program that tracks the progress of your ballot packet at three different points in the process? (Base=604)

Q33. How likely are you to use the online tracking for your ballot packet? (Base=604)



Interest in Election Apps

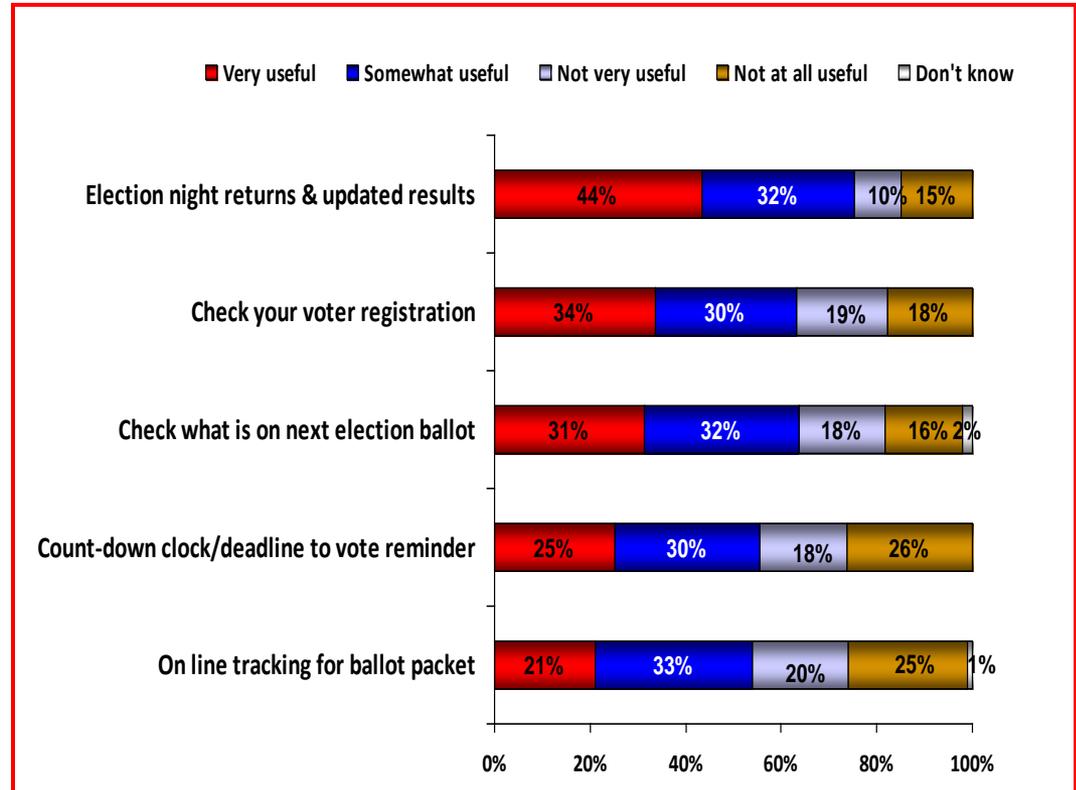
King County Elections wishes to increase and improve the use of new technology and social media tools to optimize its communications of voting information and news about elections. Pursuant to this objective, the survey asked voters who own smart phones to give their opinions about the usefulness of five specific applications.

- Among all voters surveyed, 45% said that they have smart phones or mobile devices that use apps. As expected, smart phone owners were likely to be younger (under age 45), college educated and high income earners. They were more likely to prefer online voting in the future, and said they had previously visited the KCE website.
- These respondents were asked to evaluate the usefulness of proposed Elections apps (displayed in the following slide). Overall results were very positive, with a majority of respondents in agreement that all five applications seemed at least somewhat useful.
 - Between 54% and 76% evaluated the group of 5 apps as *somewhat/very useful*. The app that gathered the largest share of *very useful/somewhat useful* ratings (76%) was *election night returns and updated results*. *Online tracking for ballot packets* gathered the smallest share of positive ratings (54%), but was still perceived as a useful app by more than half the smart phone users.
 - Opinion about the apps was unequivocal, evidenced by the fact that *don't know* response was 2% or less for only 2 of the 5 items asked about.



Usefulness of Proposed Election Apps

- Positive perception of the apps was strongly correlated with age: Voters younger than age 55 were more likely than those older, to rate four of the five apps as *somewhat / very useful*.
- Positive perception of the apps was also correlated with some behavioral characteristics, such as infrequent voting history and having experience with the KCE website. These aspects are likely linked to the somewhat younger age of respondents who have smart phones.



Q35A to Q35E. How useful would you find the following Elections apps? (Bases=277, smart phone owners only, each question)



Increase Access to King County Services, Personnel and Information



Information Sources Used to Learn about Voting and KCE

The survey asked voters several questions about information sources they use to learn about elections, and whether they would be interested in receiving messages from King County. The primary purpose of these questions was to determine whether information that is provided is easily understood, as well as culturally and linguistically appropriate for King County voters.

Overall results found that although voters consult a variety of sources to learn about elections, most are not particularly interested in receiving messages from King County Elections. When asked whether they would be interested in having news sent, such as “*your ballot has just been mailed to you,*” results found a large majority (73%) not interested. Of those who said they would like to receive these communications, nearly two-thirds (63%) would prefer having news sent as emails, followed by regular mail (19%). About one in seven would like to have text messages sent (14%).



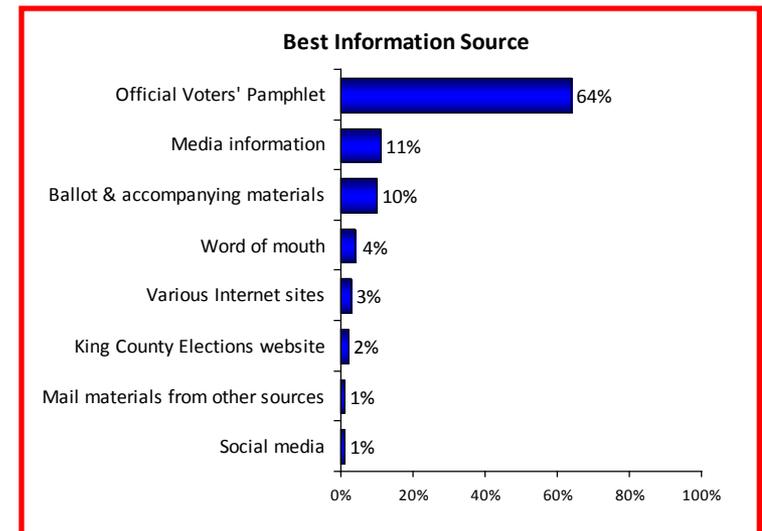
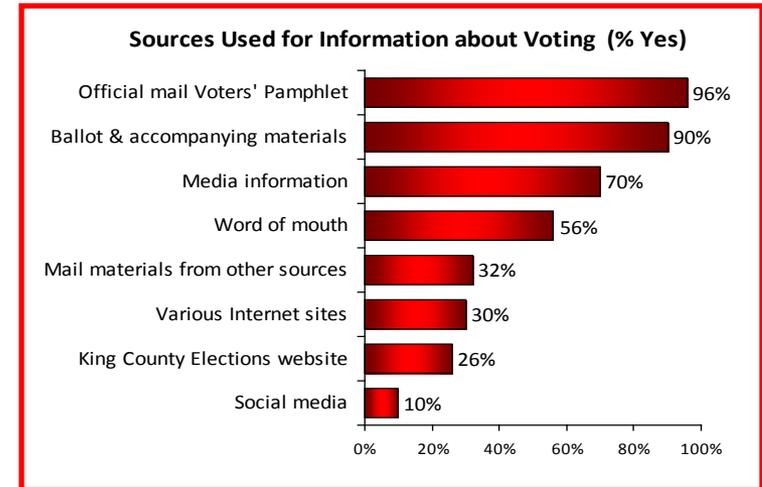
Information Sources Used to Learn about Voting and KCE

- The official Voter's Pamphlet had the highest share of recognition as an information source used for voting (96%). It clearly dominated as best information source, gathering 64% of respondents' choice as best source.
- The election ballot and accompanying packet materials was an extremely popular information source, too (90%), followed by media information (seen or heard in the newspaper, radio or TV) – 70%.
- Word of mouth is often thought of as being a primary way to gather information about voting. In the present survey however, it featured less prominently than other sources (56%), and was chosen by just 4% overall, as best source for information about voting.

- 18 to 34 year olds said *yes* for *word of mouth* more often than other groups.
- 18 to 44 year olds were more likely to name social media as a source.
- Voters 65 and older named *mail materials from other sources* more often than others.
- Non-KCE internet voting sites were mentioned more often by 35 to 44 year olds.
- Males were more likely than females to name non-KCE internet voting sites.
- Voters living in North King County more often said *yes* for *mail materials from other sources*.
- Residents of East King County were less likely than residents of other areas to mention *social media*.

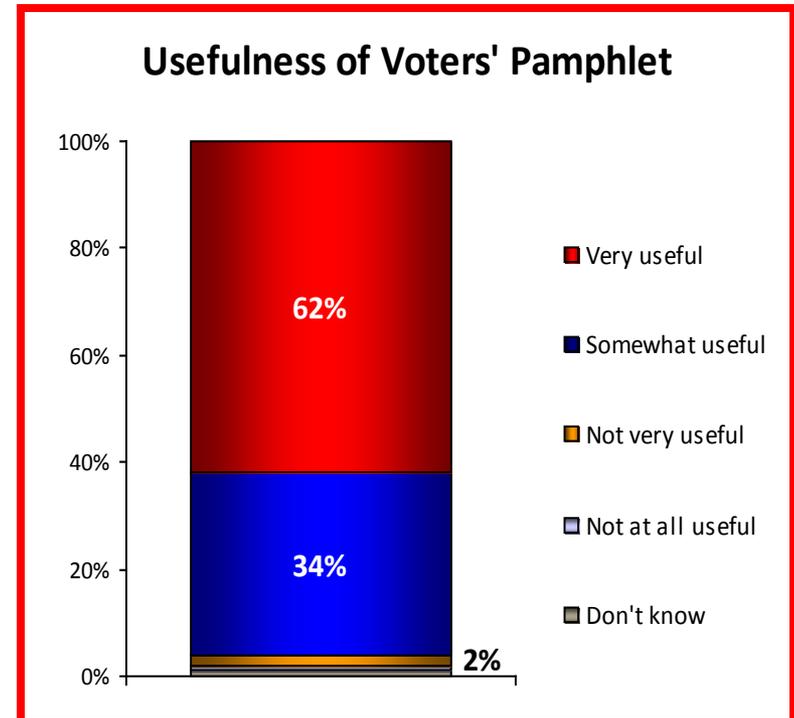
Q10. There are a number of ways to get information about voting procedures and the Department of Elections. Which of the following do you use? (Base=604, each question)

Q11. Which one would you say is your best source? (Base=604)



Usefulness of the Official Voters' Pamphlet

- Nearly all voters rated the Voters' Pamphlet as useful (96%), including more than three in five (62%) who said they found it *very useful*.
- Subgroups more likely than others to say the pamphlet is *very useful* include:
 - Respondents age 65 and older (77%).
 - Those who vote in every election (68%).
 - Voters who are *very confident* that KCE will process their ballot properly (70%).
- It is notable that respondents of non-Caucasian backgrounds were more likely to say the pamphlet is *not at all useful* (6%).



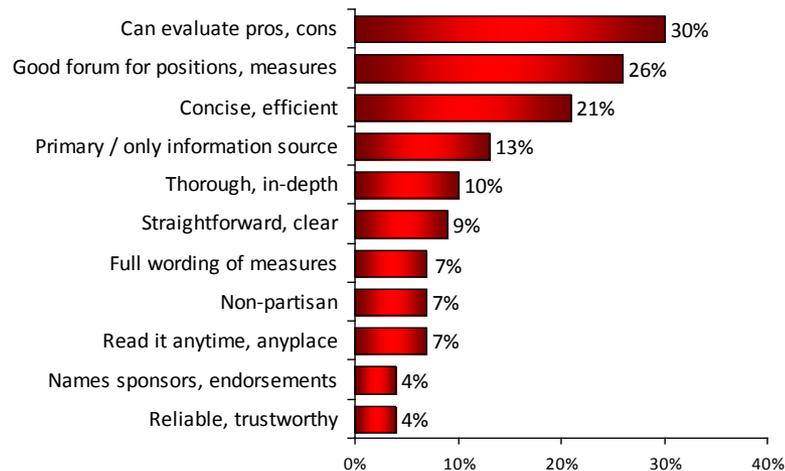
Q16. Thinking specifically about the official Voters' Pamphlet mailed to all King County voters, how useful do you find this as a source of information? (Base=602)



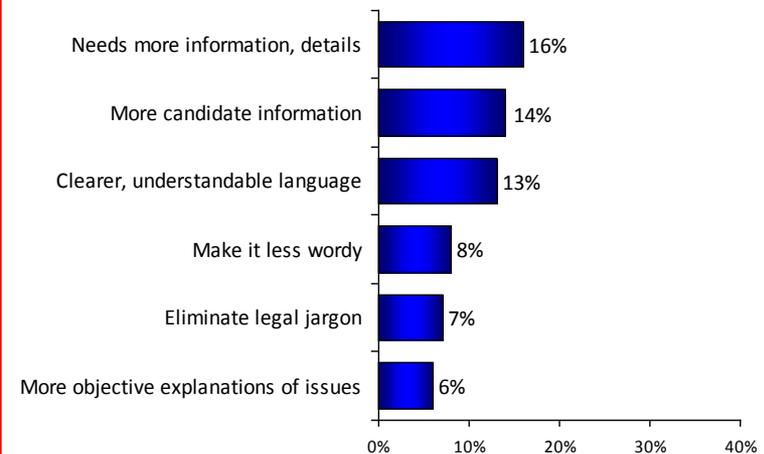
Reasons for Opinion about the Voters' Pamphlet

- Reasons for finding the pamphlet *very useful* or only *somewhat useful* are shown below. Reasons for finding the pamphlet *not useful* are not displayed because so few respondents gave this type of rating (n=16) that their responses could not be categorized in any meaningful way.
- Respondents who find it *very useful* like it because it allows them to *evaluate the pros and cons of an issue or a candidate* (30%) and they believe it provides a *good forum for candidates to voice their positions* (26%). They also like it because it is *concise* (21%).
- Reasons for withholding a fully positive rating were varied, with 30% specifying a need for more information, and 15% asking that it be made either *less wordy* or be *free of legal jargon*.

Reasons Why the Pamphlet is Very Useful



Reasons Pamphlet is Somewhat Useful

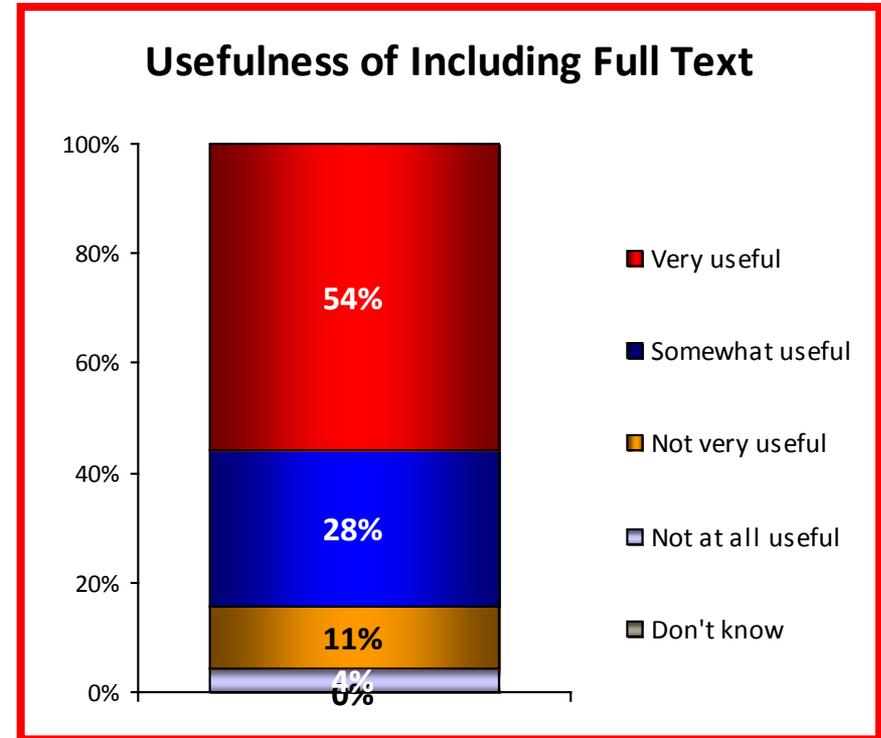


Q17. Why do you say that? What makes it useful/what would make it more useful to you? Multiple responses allowed.
(Bases: Very useful=377; Somewhat useful=204)



Opinion of Pamphlet's Inclusion of Measures & Initiatives Text

- A very large majority of respondents (82%) believe it is useful to include the complete text of all ballot measures and initiatives in the Voter's Pamphlet.
- Voters who have high school diplomas or less education were more likely than college grads and those with post graduate education to say it is very useful (65% v. 50%).
- Males were more likely than females to say very useful (62% v. 47%).
- Those having annual incomes of less than \$45,000 were more likely than those who have incomes of at least \$75,000 annually to say *very useful* (62% v. 48%).

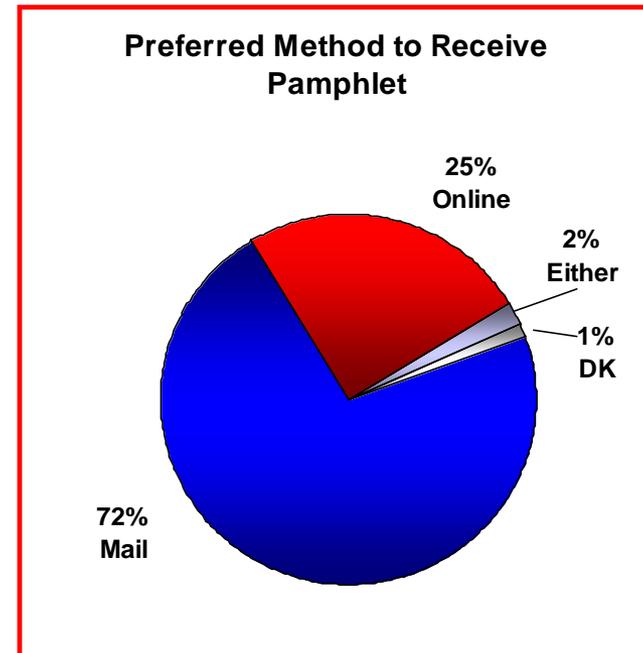


Q20. Included in the back of the voter's pamphlet that you receive in the mail is the full text of the ordinance that relates to specific ballot measures and initiatives. How useful do you find it to have the complete text included in the publication? (Base=604)



Preference for Online v. Mailed Voters' Pamphlet

- There were more respondents who said they would prefer to receive their Voter's Pamphlet in the mail than receive it online. The ratio in favor of having it delivered by mail was about 3 to 1.
- Respondent characteristics of those who would like online delivery include having a preference for future voting online, membership in the youngest age group (18 to 34 year olds), customary use of cell phones rather than landline phones, and male gender.
- If KCE would like to increase voting behavior among a younger demographic, then having an online option of delivery would make sense.



Q19. If you had to choose only one way to receive your Voters' Pamphlet, would you choose to receive it online or in the mail?
(Base=604)



Awareness & Visits to the King County Elections Website

King County Elections is committed to having a website that is easy to navigate, and one that provides needed services to voters. In keeping with this objective, the survey asked voters several questions about the site, beginning with their overall experience visiting.

- Only approximately one respondent in three (32%) was aware of the website.
- Among all respondents, a majority said they were uncertain about the existence of a King County Elections website (56%).
- Of those who said they were aware of the website, most said they had accessed the website in reply to a follow-up question.
- Respondents who have post graduate education or post graduate degrees were more likely than others to have visited the KCE website (30%).



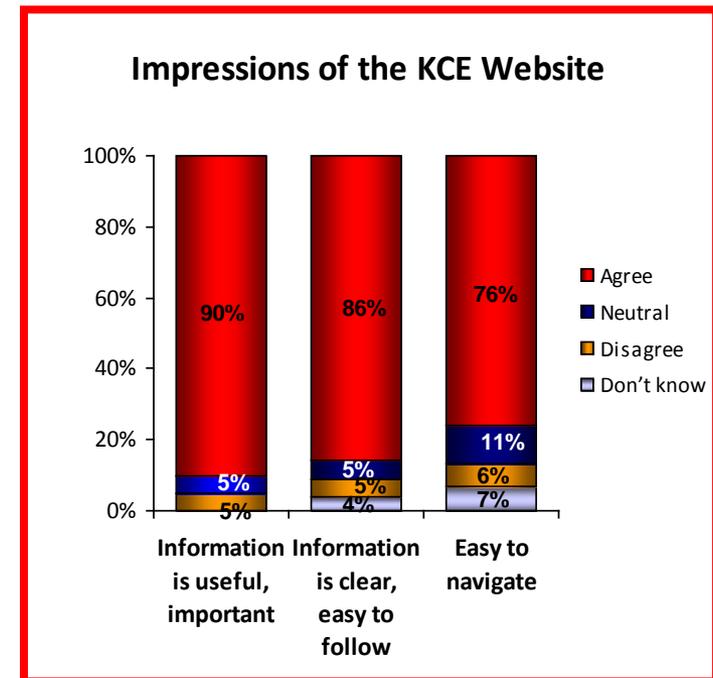
Q12. Is there a website for King County Elections? (Base=604)

Q13. Have you visited the King County Election website? (Base=204)



Impressions of the Website & Suggestions for Improvements

- Respondents who had visited the website were asked to give their impressions of three specific aspects. Results found opinions very positive: at least three-quarters of visitors agreed that the website is *easy to navigate* (76%), *the information is clear and easy to follow* (86%) and *the information is useful and important* (90%).
- Impressions tended to be very consistent across all demographic subgroups.
- Just 13 respondents were in disagreement with any of the statements, and only those in disagreement were asked to provide comments. Here are some of their suggestions for improvements:
 - *Simplify navigation (n=3 comments)*
 - *Improve the search function (n=2)*
 - *Provide links to more information (n=2)*
 - *Make tone of the content on the site less biased (n=2)*
 - *Use emails, emails are simpler (n=2)*

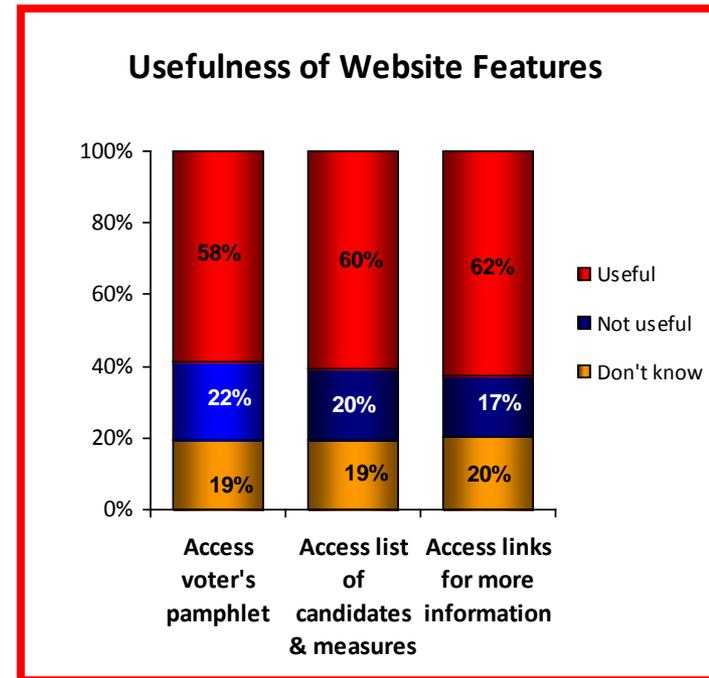


Q14A to Q14C. Please tell me how much you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Base=128, each question)
 Q15. How would you like to see the site improved? (Base=13; those who disagreed with any of the statements)



Usefulness of Website Features

- All respondents were asked to evaluate three features of the King County Elections website for their usefulness to voters. The graph to the right displays ratings grouped as *somewhat useful* plus *very useful* (useful) and *not very useful* plus *not at all useful* (not useful).
- Results found that a majority of voters gave ratings of *useful* to all three features asked about.
- Respondents more likely than others to give ratings of *useful* include:
 - Those under age 45
 - Previous website visitors
 - Those who would prefer online voting for 2012 election



The Department of Elections is committed to improving public awareness of its role and function in King County government. For this reason KCE presented a series of questions asking voters about their awareness of KCE sponsored public service announcements about voting that aired in August. Those aware of the PSAs were additionally asked to name media sources for the reminders, and to evaluate the usefulness of the messages.

- Although one quarter of all respondents (24%) had seen or heard PSAs about voting within the last two months, the majority (70%) said they had not.
- Asked to name sources for those PSAs, respondents most often mentioned television (50%) and radio (35%).
- More than three-quarters of those who evaluated the reminder messages considered them useful, including 32% who said they thought they were *very useful*.



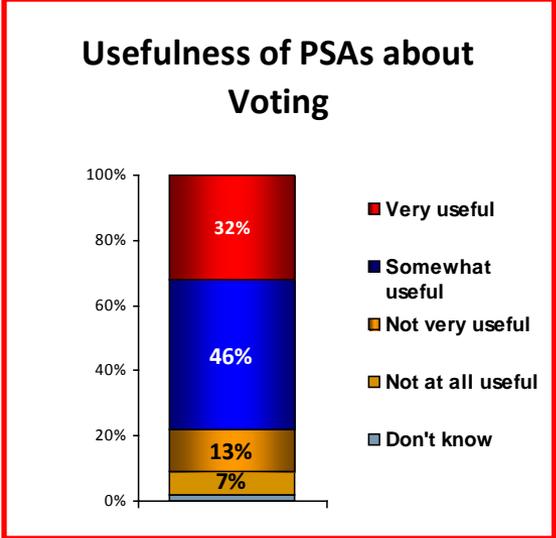
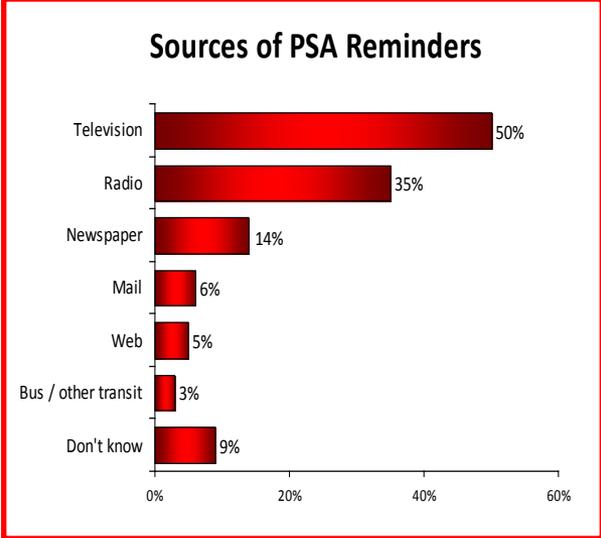
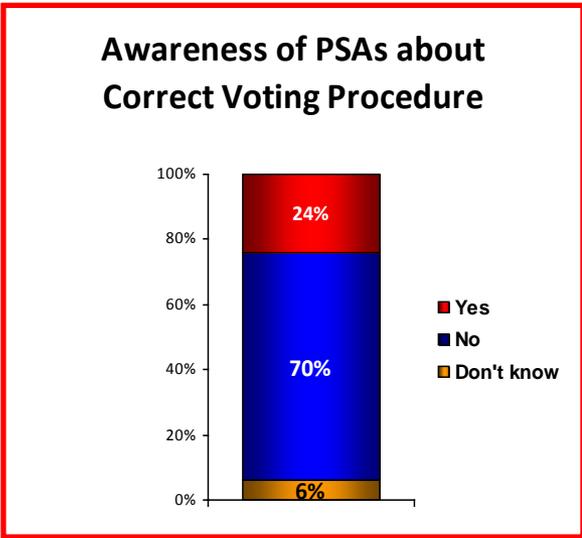
Information Sources & Evaluation of PSA Reminders

Respondents who are 65 years old and older were more likely than others to have seen or heard the reminders to vote.

Television was named as source for PSAs more often by voters 65 years old and older and by those who have incomes of less than \$45K.

Radio was mentioned more often by respondents who live in incorporated areas of the county.

More likely than others to say the reminders are *somewhat/very useful* are those who do not vote in every election, and those of non-Caucasian ethnic backgrounds. Respondents with HS diplomas or less education said the reminders are *very useful*.



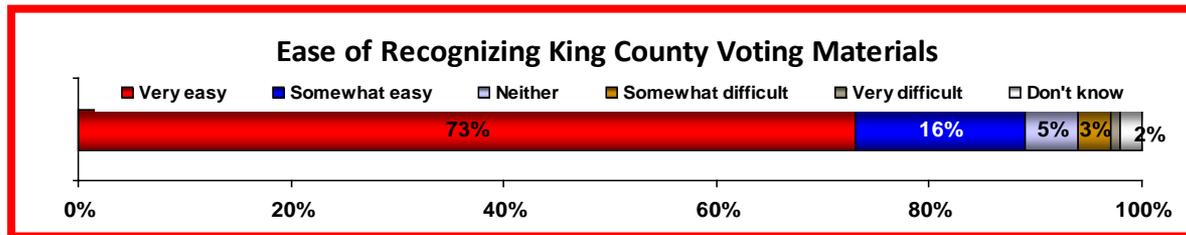
- Q21. Within the last 2 months, have you recently heard or seen any public service announcements with reminders about voting in King County? (Base=604)
- Q22. Where do you remember seeing or hearing those public service announcements? (Base=146)
- Q23. Thinking of the public service announcements and reminders on television, radio or newspapers sponsored by King County Elections and not by candidates or special interest groups, how useful do you find these reminder messages? (Base=146)



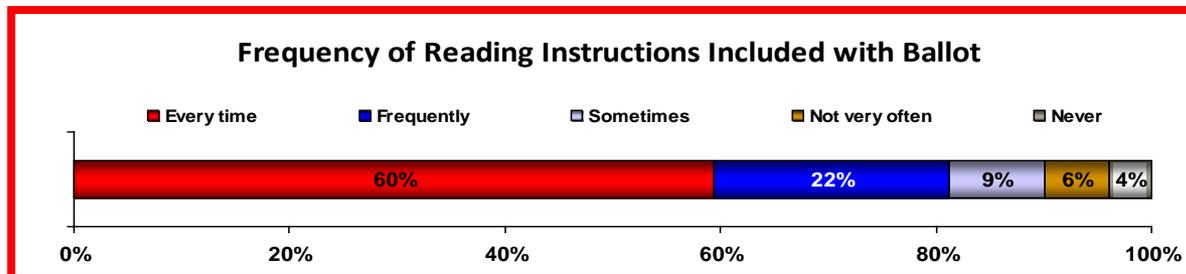
Voting Materials and Instructions

All respondents were asked to assess King County Elections voting materials for ease of recognition and clarity and simplicity of instructions. They were also asked about how often they read the instructions included with their ballots.

- A large majority of respondents (73%) said it is *very easy* to spot King County voting materials when they arrive in the mail. Subgroups were generally consistent in their assessments.



- Many said they read the instructions included with the ballot, *every time* (60%), and a substantial proportion (21%) said they read them *frequently*. Subgroups that read the instructions *every time* they get a ballot include voters 65 years old and older and those who prefer to vote by mail in future elections.



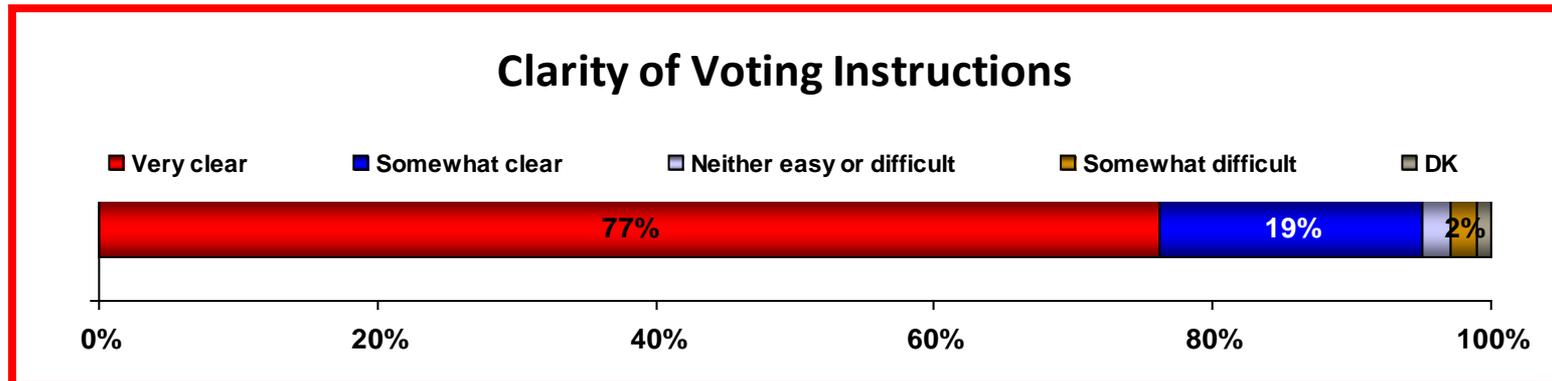
Q24. People receive information in the mail from many sources. How easy or difficult is it to recognize that voting related materials are from King County when they arrive in the mail?

Q25. How often do you read the instructions included with the ballot that arrives in the mail?



Clarity and Ease of Ballot Instructions

- Most (77%) said the voting instructions they receive with their ballots are *very clear and easy to follow*. Subgroups more likely than others to give this opinion include those who are *very satisfied* with overall services provided by KCE, and respondents who are *very confident* that their ballots will be properly processed.
- Respondents who assessed the clarity of instructions as anything less than very clear were asked to give suggestions for improvement. The most frequent comment heard was to *simplify the language* (26%). Many (35%) were unable to pinpoint anything specific to target for improvement.



Q26. How clear and easy to follow do you find the instructions included with the ballot that arrives in the mail? (Base=582)

Q27. What would make the instructions clearer and easier to follow? (Base=131)



Voter Knowledge

The survey measured voter awareness of basic balloting procedures by asking a series of 10 questions about voting by mail. Results are shown in a following slide.

- Five items scored the greatest levels of accurate voter knowledge (at least 7 out of 10 respondents):
 - *You must wait until election day to return your ballot (95% said false)*
 - *The return envelope must be signed for the ballot envelope to be opened (82% said true)*
 - *Mistakes on ballots cannot be corrected (80% false)*
 - *You need to remove the stub from the top of your ballot (75% true)*
 - *If there is a problem with your signature, it must be corrected in order for your ballot to be processed (72% true)*

- At least half of all respondents also knew that:
 - *Updating addresses with the USPS doesn't automatically update voter registration information (61% true)*
 - *Voting for frivolous write-ins delays election results and costs more for a ballot to be processed (57% true)*

- Voters with the lengthiest voting histories (16 elections or more) were more likely than those with shorter voting histories to know that: *return envelopes must be signed (89%), ballot stubs must be removed (86%) and updating a residential address doesn't automatically update a voter registration (74%).*



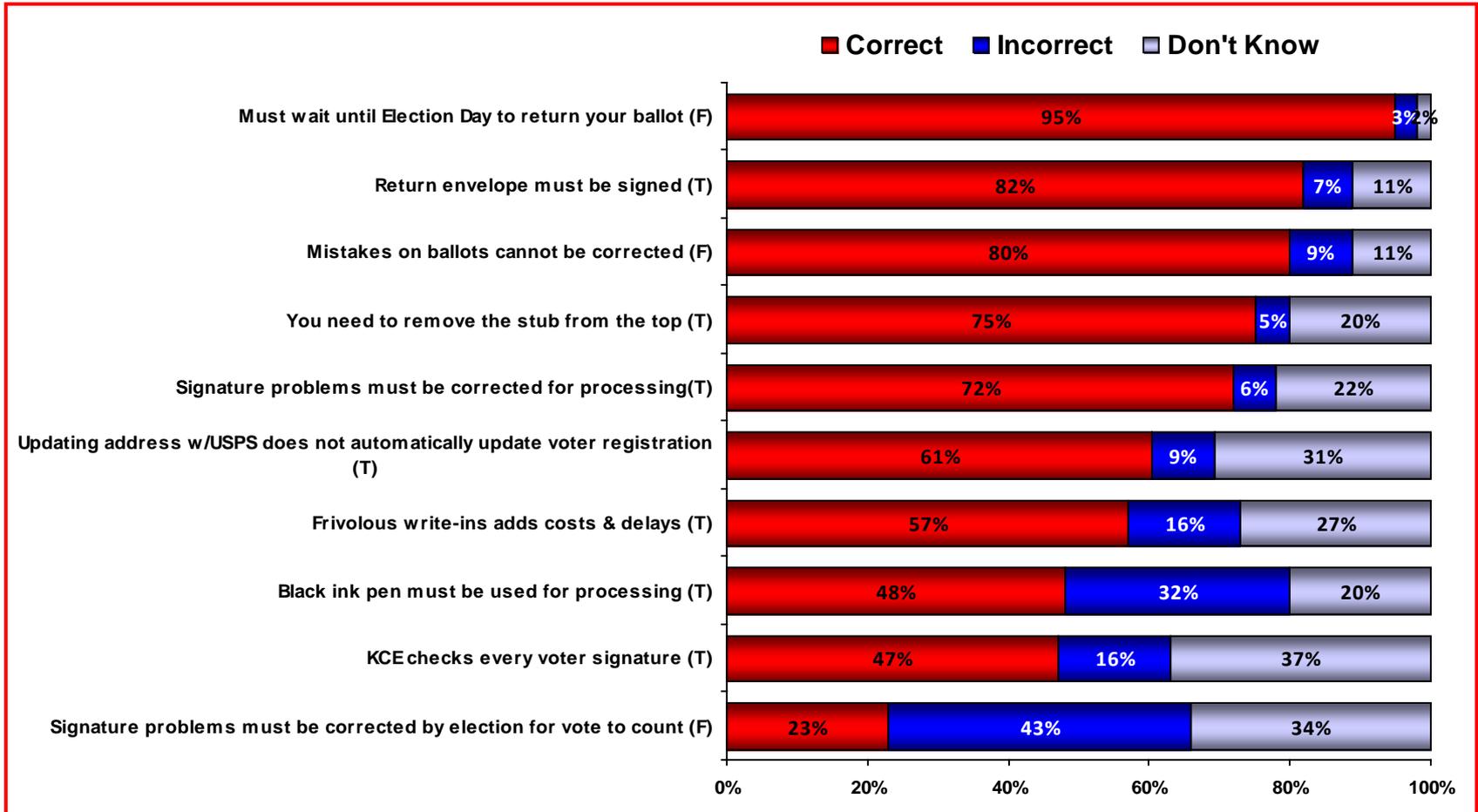
Voter Knowledge (Continued)

- The lowest level of correct awareness relates to the perception that *signature problems must be corrected by election day in order to count*.
 - Only 23% of respondents knew this statement was false. Almost twice as many (43%) believed it to be true and the rest were not sure.
 - Website visitors exhibited some of the highest levels of awareness of the correct perception of this concept (38% “false” v. 19% among non-website visitors.)

- Respondents who recall seeing or hearing PSA reminders to vote were significantly more likely than those who do not to recall them to correctly answer 4 out of 10 of these general questions asked about voting procedures:
 - *If there is a problem with your signature, it must be corrected in order for your ballot to be processed (79% v. 69%).*
 - *Updating your address with the USPS does not automatically update your voter registration information with King County Elections (69% v. 58%).*
 - *In order for your ballot to be processed, you must use a black ink pen to mark your ballot (59% v. 43%).*
 - *The Elections Department checks and verifies that every voter’s signature matches the one they have on file before their ballot envelope goes on to be verified (55% v. 45%)*



Awareness of Processes & Procedures for Voting by Mail

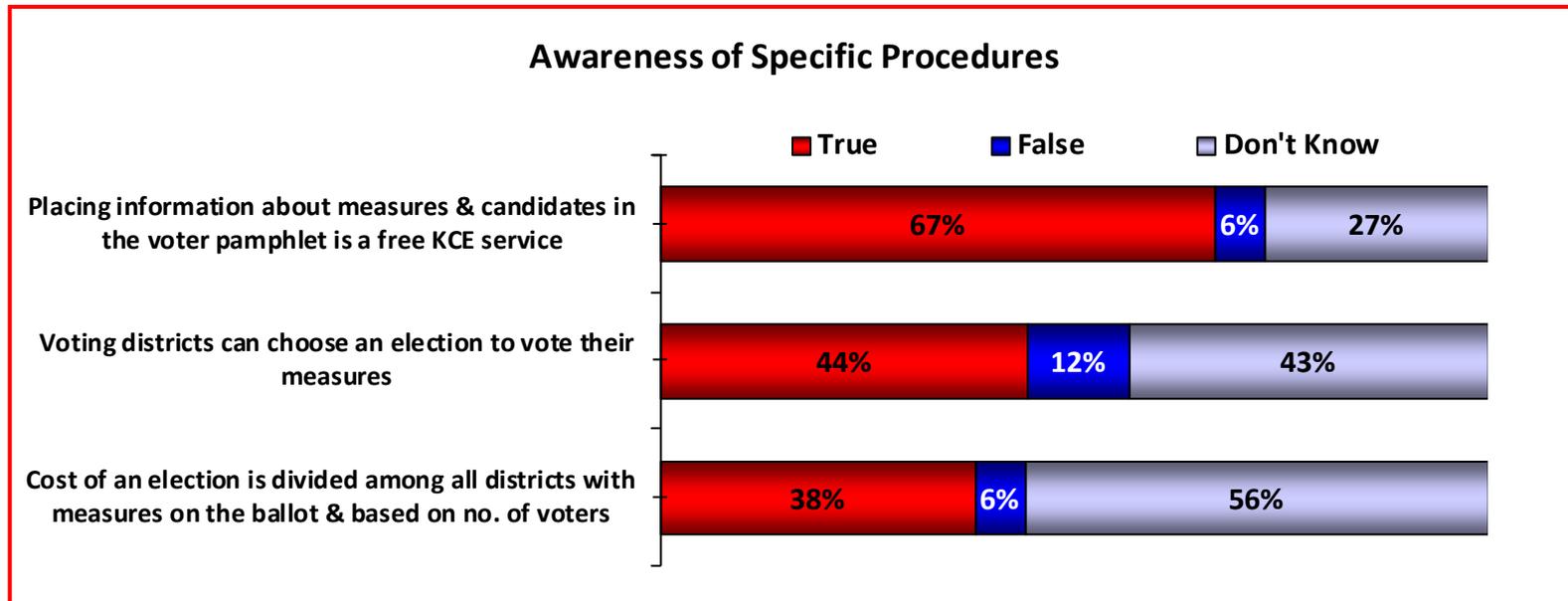


NOTE: Percentages indicate respondents answering “True” or “False” correctly or incorrectly. Q30A to Q30J. Based on what you know, have read or may have heard, please tell me if you believe the following statements are true or false. (Bases=604, each question)



Voter Awareness of Specific Elections Procedures

- The survey found a large number of voters unaware of three specific election procedures they were asked about.
 - The proportion of *don't know* response was especially great, ranging from 27% to 56% across the three question items.
- The most prevalent misperception was for *free placement of information about measures and candidates* (67% said *true*). It is notable that voters with post graduate educations were more likely than those having less education to say this (false) statement is true.
- Respondents who recall seeing or hearing PSA reminders to vote were significantly more likely than those who do not to say it is *true* that the cost of an election is divided among districts and based on the number of voters residing in those districts (45% v. 35%).

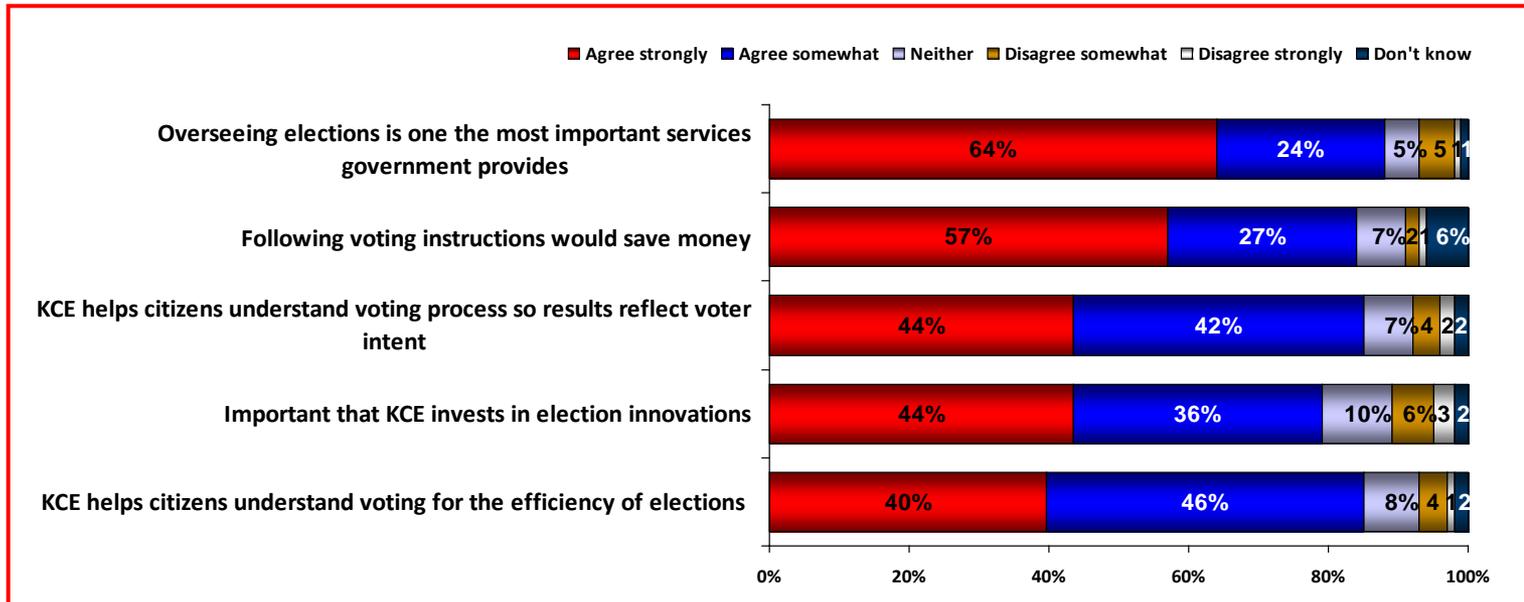


Q41A to Q41C. Thinking about voting on issues or candidates specifically for your community, please tell me whether you believe the following statements are true, false or don't know. (Bases=604, each question)



Voter Agreement with KCE Aims and Objectives

- A majority of respondents was in agreement with each of the five aims and objectives statements. *Overseeing elections is one of the most important services government provides* gathered the largest share of strong agreement (64%), and *KCE helps citizens understand voting for the efficiency of elections* had the smallest share (40%).
- Disagreement ranged from 4% to 9%.
- It is notable that most respondents voiced an opinion: the largest share of uncertainty (6%) was associated with the items regarding *potential cost savings gained when voters follow ballot instructions*.



Q45 to Q45E. For the next statements, please tell me how much you agree or disagree with them? (Bases=604, each question)



For more information

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