

575 Market, Suite 3400  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
Telephone 415.777.2244  
Fax 415.777.0869

Los Angeles:  
Telephone 213.236.0552

[www.irvine.org](http://www.irvine.org)

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**Contact:**

Jordan Pierce  
O: 510.550.8176  
C: 510.593.5785

**As November Elections Approach, New Pathbreaking Research  
Identifies Effective Strategies for Increasing Voter Turnout in  
Low-Income and Ethnic Communities**

**San Francisco, CA** – The James Irvine Foundation today released a pathbreaking new report detailing best practices for increasing voter turnout in low-income and ethnic communities. The research documented in the report indicates that rather than the more-typical mailers and pre-recorded phone calls, quality personal contact is the key to reaching these underrepresented groups. The report, “New Experiments in Minority Voter Mobilization,” notes how the application of these successful tactics could result in even greater participation from underrepresented communities in November 2008.

“We cannot have a well-functioning democracy if the political debate lacks voices from the full spectrum of our state’s diverse population,” said Amy Dominguez-Arms, California Perspectives Program Director for The James Irvine Foundation. “It is our hope that the best practices discovered by this research will inform future outreach efforts and thereby improve the representation of underrepresented communities at the ballot box.”

The James Irvine Foundation launched the California Votes Initiative in January 2006 to increase voter participation among low-income and ethnic communities and to share best practices in nonpartisan voter mobilization. A recent report by the Public Policy Institute of California revealed that while whites represent less than a majority (47%) of California’s adult population, they constitute 70% of likely voters.

Through a series of voter outreach experiments in communities throughout Central and Southern California, researchers determined that, with the right tactics, these voters can be encouraged to participate in the electoral process in far higher numbers. In some cases, electoral participation among low-propensity ethnic voters increased by as much as 13 percentage points among those targeted for contact, compared to another group of similar voters. Quality personal contact was found to be critical. A live phone call in their native language or a personal visit from a member of their own community had considerable influence on low-propensity voters. Thorough training of those conducting the outreach — and proper timing of their efforts — was also found to be of crucial importance.

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“Through this research, we have gained an understanding of which approaches are most effective,” said Jim Keddy, Director of PICO California, whose affiliates participated in the study. “We applied these lessons and the results have been impressive. We’re now sharing these tactics — and our success — with organizers throughout the country.”

Another group participating in the study — Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) — faced the difficult proposition of reaching out to various Asian American populations spread over a large geographic area. OCAPICA effectively reached these voters through a multilingual phone bank. The surnames of low-propensity voters were sorted by ethnicity and voters were contacted by bilingual volunteers who could speak to voters in the language most comfortable to them.

“It was so inspiring to walk into the room that held our phone bank and hear eight different languages being spoken simultaneously, each voicing the same message — your vote counts,” said Tanzila Ahmed, Policy Manager of OCAPICA.

“New Experiments in Minority Voter Mobilization” is the second in a series of reports from the California Votes Initiative. Research for the report was conducted by Melissa Michelson of California State University East Bay, Don Green of Yale University, and Lisa García Bedolla of UC Berkeley. The evaluators worked with the community organizations to embed field experiments into their outreach efforts, comparing turnout among those targeted for contact and those assigned to control groups.

Community organizations that contributed to the research include:

<b>Outreach Organizations</b>	<b>Geographic Outreach Areas</b>
Asian Pacific American Legal Center ( <b>APALC</b> )	Los Angeles County
California Public Interest Research Group ( <b>CALPIRG</b> )	Los Angeles County
Center for Community Action and Environmental Justice ( <b>CCA EJ</b> )	Riverside and San Bernardino counties
Central American Resource Center ( <b>CARECEN</b> )	Los Angeles County
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials ( <b>NALEO</b> )	Fresno, Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties
Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance ( <b>OCAPICA</b> )	Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties
Pacific Institute for Community Organization ( <b>PICO</b> )	Central Valley and Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside and San Bernardino counties
Southwest Voter Registration Education Project ( <b>SVREP</b> )	Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education ( <b>SCOPE</b> )	Los Angeles County

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