

Request for Proposals for Public Opinion Research Services

Prepared for:



Submitted by:



EMC Research, Inc.

Contact:

Emily Kirby Goodman | Senior Principal
2001 Broadway, Suite 110
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 550-8932

THIS PAGE INTENTIONALLY LEFT BLANK



April 2, 2024

Tracy McAulay
County of Ventura
800 S. Victoria Ave
Ventura, CA 93009

Dear Ms. McAulay,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our proposal to conduct opinion research services on behalf of the County of Ventura. The enclosed outlines EMC Research's relevant qualifications as well as our recommended approach to voter opinion research.

EMC Research is a majority women-owned full-service opinion research firm serving a broad range of clients since 1989. We pride ourselves on providing highly accurate data and staying on the cutting edge of industry innovations. We believe EMC is especially well-matched for this project:

Our housing experience is unmatched. We are actively working on statewide efforts around the potential constitutional amendment to lower the voter threshold for certain local revenue measures, and are well-versed in the complexities facing local governments on the 2024 ballot. We've helped pass successful housing revenue measures and have conducted exploratory research to assess feasibility in local communities across the state, including recent research here in Ventura County. In addition to voter research around revenue measures, we have extensive experience conducting research to inform broader housing policy and narrative change work for organizations all over the state. We know housing is complex and personal, and we have the tools to research it effectively.

We know how to help local governments better understand the priorities, concerns, and needs of their community, and know what it takes to be successful on the ballot. EMC Research is one of the premier opinion research firms in California, particularly on working with public agencies to craft and pass revenue measures. EMC is adept at helping local municipalities and public agencies measure and track community satisfaction, priorities, and behavior through innovative community research. Members of our team have guided research for more than 350 revenue measures in California, raising over \$40 billion dollars at the local level. We know what it takes for a revenue measure to be successful on the ballot.

EMC Research brings to the table a committed team of research and consulting professionals who will listen to your needs, design the best combination of research methods, collect reliable and accurate data, and synthesize research results into a product that is easy to understand and apply to further your strategic goals and initiatives. Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to the prospect of working with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Emily Goodman", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Emily Kirby Goodman, Senior Principal
EMC Research, Inc.

EMCresearch.com

COLUMBUS, OH
614-268-1660

IRVING, TX
972-717-7427

OAKLAND, CA
510-844-0680

PORTLAND, OR
503-444-6000

SEATTLE, WA
206-652-2454

WASHINGTON, D.C.
202-686-5900

Firm Profile

About EMC

[EMC Research](#) is a national full-service opinion research firm serving an extensive and diverse range of public and private sector clients since 1989. We are known for crafting insightful research tools, collecting highly accurate data and providing analysis that answers the key strategic questions and challenges our clients face. **EMC is proud to be a certified women-owned business.**

Our expertise includes:

- Branding and positioning
- Data analytics
- Political polling
- Customer satisfaction
- Ad testing
- Social and behavioral studies

We utilize a wide array of research modes, methodologies, and analytic tools, and stay on the cutting edge of industry innovations in qualitative and quantitative research so that we can employ the approach that best meets your project needs.

When you hire [EMC Research](#), you are bringing on a partner that is truly invested in your goals. Our clients have turned to us time and time again to provide data-driven, actionable recommendations that are critical to their success.

Public Agency Experience

EMC Research has more than 30 years of experience conducting research on behalf of public agencies and cities across the country, with unmatched experience in California. We have worked for public utilities, transit agencies, state departments of transportation, water districts, school districts, parks departments, waste collection and recycling agencies, early childhood education agencies, cities, counties, and states.

We frequently contract with public agencies on a variety of projects, which have included a range of methodologies, from telephone surveys, online surveys, mail surveys, intercept surveys and counts, multi-modal hybrid methodology surveys, in-person and online focus groups, one-on-one interviews, bulletin board studies, and studies utilizing advanced data analysis techniques like clustering to create segments. These projects have ranged from ad hoc work to extensive annual contracts covering many different kinds of research in support of strategic planning. The size of the project varies too – sometimes our surveys are of small, targeted populations, and we collect 100 responses, or sometimes we conduct a statewide survey of residents and we collect 2,000 responses. We strive to make this research understandable and usable for internal staff and external stakeholders.

We have learned the unique challenges and requirements of conducting research for public agencies, including presenting politically sensitive opinion research in a public setting, dealing with media inquiries, and meeting open records requirements. Our public agency clients return to EMC Research year after year because of our responsiveness and our ability to present research findings in the context of the local political environment.



Revenue Measure Experience

In addition to our public agency work, we have decades of experience working with local governments to craft and pass revenue measures. We have years of tracking data on voter opinions on a variety of issues and have a deep understanding of voter reactions to increasing taxes. We are well-versed in the differences between counties, cities, ethnicities and other demographic sub-groups that make-up our diverse state and are aware of the timelines and processes brought about by a public environment. Our work is respected and familiar to many local public figures and has been used in the development, timing, wording and strategy for tax measures throughout the state. These measures have provided millions of dollars in funding for transportation projects, schools, hospitals, local services and facilities, open space, the environment, libraries, and other projects and services.

Housing Measure Experience

Our research experience in the housing space is unmatched. EMC is currently providing research and strategic consulting on 2024 efforts around a potential statewide constitutional amendment to lower the voter threshold (ACA1), and the potential Bay Area regional housing bond. Previously, we conducted research to inform successful ballot measures including California Props 1 & 2 (2018, Veterans and Affordable Housing Bonds), Alameda County Measure A1 (2016 Affordable Housing Bond), Santa Clara County Measure A (2016, Affordable Housing Bond), San Francisco Prop A (2015, Affordable Housing Bond), City of Emeryville Measure C (2018, Housing and Homelessness Bond), City of Oakland Measure Q (2020, Parks & Homeless Services Parcel Tax), among others. We have also conducted feasibility studies regarding housing policy and revenue measure efforts in Santa Cruz County, San Luis Obispo County, San Diego, Santa Clara County, Contra Costa County, Marin County, Ventura County, and elsewhere. Some of our relevant clients include the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California, the San Diego Housing Federation, All Home, Destination Home, Silicon Valley at Home, Santa Clara County Office of Supportive Housing, the Bay Area Housing Finance Authority, MTC Regional Housing Technical Assistance, Opening Doors Marin, Bring California Home, Ventura County Affordable Housing Coalition, and many more.

Client References

We have worked with hundreds of public agencies, many in California, helping to assess feasibility for potential revenue measures. The following references highlight some of our relevant recent research.

County of Santa Clara

Reference: Cindy Chavez | **Title:** County Supervisor

Phone: (408) 299-5020 | **Email:** Cindy.Chavez@bos.sccgov.org

Address: 70 W Hedding St, San Jose, CA 95110

EMC Research has been a trusted research partner to the County of Santa Clara for 30 years. Our work has spanned a range of departments throughout the County including the hospital system, parks, COVID response, and administration. EMC was instrumental in the successful passage of the landmark 2016 Affordable Housing Bond (Measure A) that secured \$950 million in funding for affordable housing. After the successful passage of Measure A, Santa Clara County engaged EMC in 2019 to conduct research to understand resident views around how and where the funds would be spent. EMC's relationship with the County has continued as they have explored additional community feedback on a variety of topics, including potential future revenue measures for housing and other priorities.

Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH)

Reference: Amie Fishman | **Title:** Executive Director

Phone: (414) 989-8160 | **Email:** amiefishman@nonprofithousing.org

Address: 49 Stevenson, Suite 500, San Francisco, CA 94105

EMC Research has worked with the Non-Profit Housing Association of Northern California (NPH) since 2016, partnering with the organization in their efforts to represent and advocate for those who support, build and finance affordable housing throughout Northern California. EMC's findings and recommendations have helped pass affordable housing measures in cities and counties throughout the region and secure funding and housing for vulnerable communities. In addition to the partnership with NPH on local revenue measures, EMC conducts annual research to better understand underlying voter attitudes and values about housing. This work has informed local, state, and national efforts around narrative change to advance housing justice.

Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Reference: Carolyn Shaffer | **Title:** Member Services and Public Outreach Section Manager

Phone: (213) 217-6833 | **Email:** CSchaffer@mwdh2o.com

Address: 700 North Alameda Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Since 2015, EMC has conducted community research on behalf of Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. This partnership has included comprehensive research assessing the water supply attitudes, behaviors, and priorities of SoCal residents. Recent survey research includes a May 2023 survey of 1000 residents within the MWD service area that explored opinions on drought, water supply, and water quality in Southern California. Additionally, in December of 2023 EMC conducted a series of qualitative focus groups among residents to explore perceptions of trust in local government as well as the quality of local water supplies. Participants discussed expectations for local water agencies, awareness of Metropolitan and agency initiatives, and trust in the services provided by MWD. The findings of this ongoing research will continue to inform the District's strategic planning and priorities as California continues to navigate extreme weather cycles.

Process and Methods



EMC Research tailors our research plan individually to every project on which we work. In this section, we have outlined the approach we believe is appropriate based on our initial understanding of the project goals. We would work in consultation with the County of Ventura to refine this plan based on team input and any changes in overall goals or budget. We believe strongly in providing innovative research options when they are most likely to yield accurate, actionable results for our clients.

Benchmark Quantitative Survey

We recommend conducting a benchmark of likely November 2024 voters in the County of Ventura to determine the feasibility of a potential housing bond. The goal of the proposed research will be to provide scientifically valid data regarding the opinions of County of Ventura to inform strategic decisions such as:

- How should a measure be structured in order to most likely meet with success?
- What is the appropriate amount for a measure?
- What are the types of projects that are most important to those who will vote?
- What are the themes and messages that will assist in reaching a successful outcome?
- Would the measure be vulnerable to opposition?
- What are suggested areas for public education and community outreach?

Survey Methodology

We recommend a mixed-mode/hybrid methodology where we will conduct interviews among likely November 2024 voters by phone, email-to-web, and text-to-web modes. These modes complement each other well; we are able to obtain data from a broad cross-section of voters because those who may not answer their phone may take the survey online, and those who do not respond to the email or text survey invitation may take the survey over the phone.

Based on our current understanding of the project goals, we recommend a sample size of up to 1,000 interviews overall (200 interviews per County Supervisorial District). A robust sample size will allow for more reliable analysis within key subpopulations including but not limited to BOS District, homeownership, party registration, ethnicity, among others. We anticipate that an average interview length of 12-18 minutes will be sufficient to ask a variety of questions to assess the overall feasibility of a revenue measure, determine voters' priorities for the components and outcomes of a potential measure, and compare results within and across the five supervisorial districts. Depending on the final sample size, the survey could potentially incorporate a split sample methodology, which may be used to test different bond amounts, ballot language, or other considerations. We recommend offering the survey in English and Spanish. In the cost section at the end of this proposal, we provide different options for sample size and survey length. We will work with you to determine the best research specifications to meet your overall goals and budget.

Work Plan*Project Kick-Off*

Our team will conduct a kick-off session with the County, strategy consultants, and any other stakeholders to scope the project and work through details. The kick-off session will provide an opportunity for our team to introduce itself, and to establish the parameters for the research. At this meeting, we will discuss the content of the questionnaire, identify the questionnaire approval process, and answer any questions the County may have regarding approach or methodology.

Sample Design

Following the project kick-off, EMC Research will have a thorough understanding of the specific goals and objectives for this research. Based on this knowledge, we will develop a detailed sample design to ensure the research methodology matches the specific goals of this project. We will thoroughly review the demographics of voters in the County of Ventura, as well as past election results and relevant voter trends. After reviewing this information, EMC will define a sample universe that models likely November 2024 voters in the County of Ventura.

Research Instrument Design

Based on the information covered in the kick-off meeting, other background research, review of past polling, and additional discussions, an effective survey questionnaire will be created. This questionnaire draft will be thoroughly reviewed and discussed with the team and will be revised and re-circulated as needed. We will ensure that the questionnaire measures voter perceptions of taxes and services, important issues facing the County, a potential revenue measure, as well as messaging in support and opposition to a potential measure.

Data Collection

We will manage and oversee all aspects of the data collection process, including determining the sample universe, setting up quotas, monitoring interviews in real-time, and verifying and reviewing the data. Prior to fielding the survey, we will test the instrument to ensure it is understandable, logical, programmed correctly, and flows in a coherent manner. Throughout the data collection process, we will verify the accuracy of data coding and data entry, ensure the collected data meets the prescribed sampling plan, and ensure data integrity. With each night of interviewing, EMC staff will track demographic and geographic variables (such as age, ethnicity, and zip code) to ensure that they are falling within the appropriate proportions as compared with the overall population.

Analysis and Reporting

Our team will provide the County with a number of deliverables including a copy of the final questionnaire, a topline report showing the frequency of responses for each question, survey crosstabs, and a survey report with statistical analysis, graphs, and an overview of the sampling and survey methodology.

After data collection is complete, we will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of results that will describe the methodology, tabulate all contacts made as part of the survey, and tabulate the results, key findings, detailed findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

We'll coordinate with the County to share initial results and analysis, and work in tandem with the team to develop final recommendations. EMC will be available to attend and present to the County of Ventura Board of Supervisors and/or the County Board Ad Hoc Committee to describe the findings,

analysis, and recommendations. We provide consulting as long as our research is used, at no additional charge, and are available for additional presentations as needed.

Scope of Services

In summary, for this project, EMC Research will:

- Work in tandem with the County, consultants, and any other stakeholders to design and prepare survey instruments that address the project goals;
- Review local voter demographics and past electoral results and design sample universe of likely voters;
- Translate the survey into Spanish;
- Collect survey data through interviews conducted on cellphones and landlines from a central telephone bank, monitored by an on-duty supervisor;
- Adapt the questionnaire for web application; programming and hosting the survey using professional survey software; managing the deployment of survey invitations via email; and collecting survey responses online;
- Closely monitor the data collection process to ensure quality data;
- Tabulate all survey contacts, and apply weighting if needed to ensure results accurately represent the November 2024 likely electorate;
- Present findings of research results and provide additional executive summary presentations or memos as needed; and
- Attend and present to the County of Ventura Board of Supervisors and/or the County Board Ad Hoc Committee to describe the findings, analysis, and recommendations.

Proposed Timeline

EMC is prepared to begin working on this project immediately. We will work with the County team to determine the most appropriate timeline. We recommend the County begins working on this project quickly to inform the path to the ballot. Below is projected timeline for completion of the studies. A more project-specific timeline will be prepared based on information from the kick-off meeting for the project.

Week of April 8:	Project kick-off meeting; review past research and other background materials; identify key project goals and objectives; begin drafting questionnaire
Week of April 15:	Conference call(s) as necessary to review and edit the questionnaire; submit revised drafts as needed
Week of April 22:	Final questionnaire sign-off. Questionnaire programming
Week of April 29:	Conduct telephone and web interviewing
Week of May 6:	Process and weight data; provide topline survey results to County
Week of May 13:	Discuss initial results and analysis with the County and other key stakeholders
May 21:	Presentation of results, analysis, and specific strategic recommendations to County of Ventura Board of Supervisors and/or the County Board Ad Hoc Committee
Ongoing:	Survey results presented to other groups as needed; provide ongoing consultation

Price Proposal

The pricing provided in the table below includes all costs necessary for a start-to-finish research project, including ongoing consulting on usage of the data and all reporting and presentations for as long as the research is used.

	Sample Size	Survey Length	Cost
Benchmark Quantitative Survey	1,000 interviews (200 interviews per BOS District)	12 minutes	\$59,000
	1,000 interviews (200 interviews per BOS District)	15 minutes	\$62,000
	1,000 interviews (200 interviews per BOS District)	18 minutes	\$69,200

Budget by Project Task

Project costs will be billed by task as work is completed.

Task	Description	% of Work
Research Existing Information	Review current environment, and any previous relevant polling	5%
Kickoff Meeting	Meet with stakeholders to discuss research needs and structure	5%
Project Design	Develop survey methodology and questionnaire	20%
Conduct Research	Telephone and online interviewing	35%
Data Preparation	Clean and weight data, code any open-ended responses	5%
Data Analysis	Conduct data analysis, prepare topline report	15%
Prepare Report	Generate survey crosstabulations and prepare summary report of research	15%

We've provided a breakdown of hourly rates for EMC personnel below for reference.

EMC Research Position	Hourly Rate
Principal	\$200
Senior and Strategy Associate	\$97
Data Associate	\$84
Field Coordinator / Accounting	\$84

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to the prospect of working with the County of Ventura!