

Methodology

The 2006 New Mexico & Colorado Registered Voter Election Administration Survey is based on a sample of registered voters from New Mexico's First Congressional District (NMCD1) and Colorado's Seventh Congressional District (COCD7). The population of registered voters was provided by the Secretary of State's Office in New Mexico and Colorado after the final registration day for the 2006 general election and we selected a random sample from the population.¹ Just before Election Day, we sent out letters to our sample respondents requesting their participation in our Election Administration Survey. The letter provided sample respondents with a URL (votewebnewmexico.unm.edu/votecolorado.unm.edu) and explained that respondents could also request a mail survey and a return self-addressed stamped envelope by contacting us via a toll free number or by calling our offices. Sample registered voters who did not respond were re-contacted three times with a postcard. The first postcard was sent November 17, the second was sent December 1, and the final postcard was sent December 19. The web survey software was Opinio 5.0.

The response rate for the New Mexico sample was about 15.3% (n=471), 4 in 5 of respondents (79%) chose to answer the Internet survey while the remaining 1 in 5 respondents (21%) chose to answer the mail option. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.5%. The response rate for the Colorado sample was about 12.1% (n=399), 86.7% chose to answer the Internet survey while 13.3% chose to answer the mail option. The margin of error is plus or minus 4.9%. The combined response rate is 13.7% (n=870) and the margin of error is plus or minus 3.2%, four in five respondents (82.5%) chose to answer the Internet options and less than one in five (17.5%) chose to answer the mail option. The response rate was calculated as the number of surveys returned to us, either through web submission or returned mail, divided by the total number of survey respondents that were eligible.² This response rate is the maximum response rate (RR6) as defined by the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR 2000). Post election analysis of the sample showed it accurately reflected sample population characteristics in terms of gender and in election outcomes (Atkeson et al 2007).

1. New Mexico Secretary of State Rebecca Vigil-Giron and Colorado Secretary of State Gigi Dennis were kind enough to provide us with the voter registration files for free. We thank them for their helpfulness.

2. Due to the poor quality of both states' voter registration file over 22% of our sample was unreachable.