



2026

VOTER GUIDE



How to Vote No Matter What



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2026 VOTER GUIDE

Did you know that every registered voter in California receives a Vote-by-Mail ballot? Universal Vote-by-Mail is now a permanent part of California's voting system, making voting more accessible and convenient.

This guide provides important information about voting in California.



Elections are a key part of the democratic process. While primary elections determine which candidates will appear on the general election ballot, they also include important local races, judicial seats, and ballot measures. These elections help shape decisions on issues like housing, healthcare, criminal justice, education, and more.

Participating in primary elections ensures your voice is heard early in the decision-making process. This guide shares helpful tips to make sure your vote counts.

KEY DATES TO REMEMBER

Primary Election Day: **June 2, 2026**

- Mailing of Vote-by-Mail Ballots Begins: **May 4, 2026**
- Ballot Drop-off Locations Open: **May 5, 2026**
- Voter Registration Deadline: **May 18, 2026 (15 days before Election Day)**
- Early Vote Centers Open: **May 23, 2026**
- All Vote Centers Open: **May 30, 2026**
- Election Day: **June 2, 2026**

Midterm Election Day: **November 3, 2026**

- Mailing of Vote by Mail Ballots: **October 5, 2026**
- Drop-off Locations Open: **October 6, 2026**
- Voter Registration Deadline: **October 19, 2026**
- Early Vote Centers Open: **October 24, 2026**
- All Vote Centers Open: **October 31, 2026**
- Election Day: **November 3, 2026**

FEDERAL POLICY UPDATE



FEDERAL POLICY UPDATE: THE SAVE ACT & WHAT IT COULD MEAN FOR OUR COMMUNITIES

Voting rights are crucial in the fight for racial justice, highlighted by the Civil Rights Movement and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Current proposals like the Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act could significantly change voter registration and voting processes. As of early 2026, while versions of this act have passed the U.S. House, it hasn't yet become law.

If enacted, the SAVE Act may require:

- Proof of U.S. citizenship for voter registration
- In-person verification for registration updates
- Stricter voter ID requirements
- Changes in state voter roll maintenance and eligibility verification

Groups that could face challenges include:

- First-time voters
- Students
- Seniors
- Low-income voters
- Name changers
- Voters lacking easy access to citizenship documents.

The SAVE Act is not law yet, and the 2026 California Primary Election will still feature automatic voter registration, Vote-by-Mail ballots, and same-day voter registration. Proposals like this are significant as they can impact historically marginalized communities' voting access. Staying informed is crucial for ensuring continued ballot access and community representation in elections.

VOTER REGISTRATION

VOTER REGISTRATION IS NECESSARY TO VOTE IN CALIFORNIA.

PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO REGISTER TO VOTE IF:

- You are U.S. Citizen
- You are or will be eighteen (18) by the time of the election
- You are not currently serving a state or federal prison sentence for a felony conviction.

You CAN register and vote if you are:

- On probation or parole
- In county jail (serving a misdemeanor or certain felony sentences)
- Awaiting trial
- Formerly incarcerated and no longer in prison

You are not able to register to vote if:

- Have been found to be mentally incompetent by a court.
- Are not U.S. citizens.

HOW TO REGISTER

California residents can register to vote several ways.

- Online pre-registration is now available for eligible 16 and 17 year olds by visiting registertovote.ca.gov. California youth who pre-register to vote will have their registration become active once they turn 18 years old.
- Pre-registration does not change the voting age, which is 18. Instead, it allows eligible Californians ages 16 or 17 to complete the online voter registration form providing sufficient time and opportunity to get ready to vote. By filling out by paper registration and turning it into your local registrar office at a voting center.

The deadline to register to vote is fifteen days before the election. If you have missed this deadline, you can provisionally register and vote at a voter center in your county up until the election.

DID YOU DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING? REASONS TO RE-REGISTER TO VOTE:

- Move to a different address (permanent or semi-permanent)
- Change name (including if you changed your name because of marriage or divorce)
- Change political party affiliation

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

HOMELESS

If you do not have an address because of homelessness, you can still register to vote. The registration form leaves space for street corners, parks or shelters to use in lieu of a traditional home address.

The best option for a mailing address is to use a shelter that you trust and have access to. Some counties will allow homeless individuals to use their office as a mailing address.

DOMESTIC ABUSE SHELTER

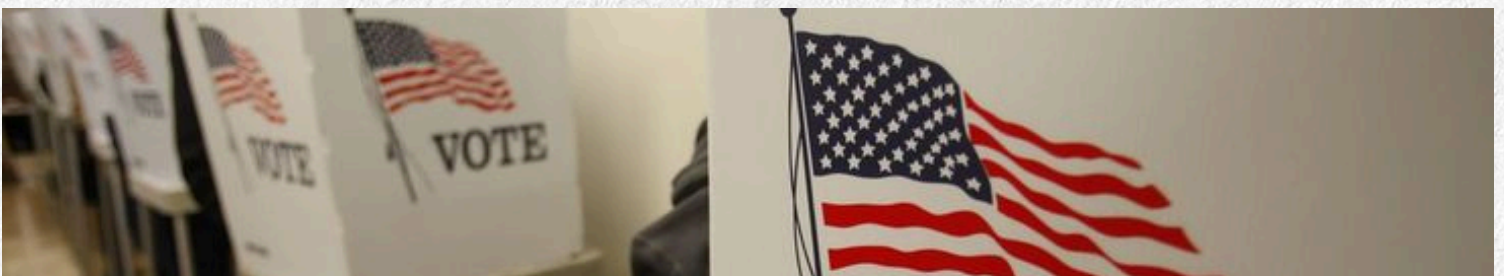
If you are in a domestic abuse shelter, contact the staff about what address to use for registering to vote.

California's Confidential Address Program

If you are in California Confidential Address program, please contact Safe at Home to register to vote. The phone number is 877-322-5227.

JUST MOVED

If you have just moved and want to register to vote in your new city, you will need to re-register to vote. This can be done by filling out a registration form. If you have moved in California, you can re-register at a Voter Center (if it's after the fifteen day cut off) or through the traditional process if it's before the fifteen days cut off.



STUDENTS



I'M A STUDENT, HOW DO I VOTE?

If you are an American Citizen who meets the qualifications of who can vote (See voting registration requirements), you are able to vote either in the city (if it's in America) you are going to school in or the city you are from/permanent address if it is different. You are only able to vote once in an election.

YOU CANNOT VOTE IN TWO DIFFERENT CITIES IN THE SAME ELECTION.

IF YOU ARE A CALIFORNIA RESIDENT BUT GO TO AN OUTSTATE SCHOOL:

To vote in California election:

If you will not be in town on Election Day, but still want to take part in the California election you must register for an absentee ballot at least one week in advance of the election, using your permanent or home address in California.

To vote in out of State election:

You must register to vote in the county where you reside for school. Be aware that states can vary in the rules around registration and voting so be sure to check what the particular rules are in your state.

IF YOU GO TO SCHOOL IN CALIFORNIA

If your permanent address is in California:

Students can register to vote using your school residence or your permanent one. Please take into account where you are going to be during the time of elections, and how familiar you are with the local politics in the area. There is always the option of using a mail-in ballot.

If your permanent address is out of state:

Students who go to school in California but want to vote in a California's election must register to vote using the address where the student lives during the school year.



LIVING ABROAD

HOW TO REGISTER



Option 1: Register or re-register to vote online at <http://registertovote.ca.gov/> and request a Vote by Mail ballot. This option is the more “permanent” option, if you’re going to be overseas for multiple election cycles, this might be the better option.

Option 2: Complete the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). You can contain the FPCA at any Voting Assistance Officer at a military base or any US Embassy/Consulate. It is recommended that you complete this form every year you request an absentee ballot. This option might be better for people that are not planning to be overseas long-term.



If you live in Los Angeles - Return your completed FPCA to LA County by mail, fax, or email.

Mail: Los Angeles Registrar-Recorder/County Clerk

Vote by Mail Section P.O. Box 30450 Los Angeles, CA 90030-0450

Fax: (562) 864-6786

Email: militaryoverseasAV@rrcc.lacounty.gov

FORMERLY INCARCERATED

In California, if you have a prior felony conviction, but are not currently serving state or federal prison terms for a felony conviction, you are able to register and vote in the state of California.

YOU MAY ALSO REGISTER AND VOTE IF YOU ARE:

- Awaiting or on trial for a criminal offense
- Serving time for a traffic or misdemeanor offense
- Serving time in a local jail as a condition of probation.
- On probation
- On mandatory supervision
- On post-release community supervision
- On federal supervised release
- A person with a juvenile wardship adjudication
- Currently on parole with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

PERSONS WITH A CRIMINAL HISTORY THAT CANNOT VOTE:

- Currently imprisoned in:
 - State prison
 - Federal prison
- Currently serving a state prison felony sentence in a county jail or other correctional facility
- Currently in county jail awaiting transfer to a state or federal prison for a felony conviction

Eligible inmates can register to vote by: Completing an Inmate Request form by checking the "Voting Information" box. An inmate will be contacted by the voting coordinator.

HOW TO RESTORE YOUR VOTE

- <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/restore-your-vote>
- <https://www.lavote.gov/home/voting-elections/voter-registration/voter-registration-programs/inmate-voting>

Your voter registration application must be received or postmarked at least fifteen (15) days before Election Day to be eligible to vote in that election. In elections conducted by your county elections official, you can “conditionally” register and vote provisionally at your county elections office after the fifteen day voter registration deadline.

**California Penal Code section 2910 allows the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to make agreements with local governments to house felons in a county jail or other correctional facility. A person serving a state prison sentence who is housed in a local jail or other facility under these circumstances is not allowed to register and vote.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

• I GOT MY BALLOT, NOW WHAT

- Once you receive your ballot, be sure to fill it out as soon as possible. If you know who and what you're voting for, go ahead and fill that ballot out and turn it in. However, it is ok to take your time to make sure you have it right. Fill out as much of your ballot as possible. Local races, which will be at the top of the ticket, are just as important as the federal contests. The down-ballot races are just as important as the top of the ticket. If you need help figuring out who to vote for, check-in with some of your favorite trusted community organizations, many of them have recommendations and information on who and what to vote for on the ballot.
- Make sure to sign your mail-in-ballot before you mail it out or drop it off at a local drop box location. Your signature must match the signature on file (i.e. your driver's license or the signature on your voter registration application) for it to be counted.

• HOW TO TURN IN MY MAIL-IN BALLOT

- There are three ways to turn in your mail-in-ballot:
- By mail dropping it in the mail at any mailbox or post office. All mail must be postmarked by 8:00 pm on Election Day.
- Dropping it off at a vote center within your county.
- Turn it into an official ballot drop-off location.

• DOES MY MAIL-IN BALLOT NEED A STAMP?

- No. A bill passed in 2018 requires mail-in-ballots to have pre-paid postage. You just need to drop in the mail or at a designated drop box.

• WHEN SHOULD I TURN IN MY BALLOT?

- As soon as possible. However, all the mail-in ballots need to be postmarked by 8:00 pm on Election Day. We recommend to sending three to five business days before Election Day.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **I DIDN'T GET MY BALLOT IN THE MAIL.**
 - If it's after May 15, 2026 for the primary election or October 15, 2026 for the midterm election and you still haven't received your ballot in the mail, you may need to re-register to vote with your current address. You can do that by using this link <https://registertovote.ca.gov/>. You can also call your local registrar to see if you can track down your ballot.
- **BY WHEN DO I NEED TO APPLY FOR A VOTE BY MAIL BALLOT?**
 - You need apply at least seven days before the election for vote by mail ballot.
- **I'M NOT SURE IF I AM REGISTERED TO VOTE OR IF I NEED TO RE-REGISTER TO VOTE?**
 - If you are unsure if or where you are registered to vote, go to <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/> . You will need to know the last four digits of your social security number and California ID or Driver's License Number.
- **IT'S AFTER THE DEADLINE TO REGISTER TO VOTE, BUT I STILL WANT TO REGISTER TO VOTE FOR THE ELECTION. WHAT SHOULD I DO?**
 - If you miss the deadline to vote, need some assistance to vote because of disability, or need language assistance, in person is a good option. By the way, any voter can decide to vote in person at a location. You don't need a reason to do so.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **I DON'T TRUST THE MAIL, IS THERE ANOTHER WAY TO VOTE?**
 - They are two options if you don't feel confident about the postal service getting your ballot in on time:
 - Option 1) You can turn in your mail-in ballot at drop off location, or at your polling place or vote center.
 - Option 2) You can vote in person. Most voting sites will be open the weekend and Monday before Election Day. Some in-person locations will be open as many as eleven days before the election. Check with your local registrar office to find out where your polling location or vote center is and the times it's open.
- **I'VE MOVED OR I'M MOVING BEFORE THE ELECTION. HOW DO I GET MY BALLOT?**
 - If you are moving to another place in CA, you can register to vote with the new address of where you're moving too. If you don't know the address yet, you can vote in person or send your ballot to a trusted place when you can get it (like your parents or a friend's house).
- **SO WAIT, I CAN STILL VOTE IN PERSON?**
 - Yes! You can still vote in person. You will need to check with your local registrar office to find where your closest voting location is or your polling center, depending on what county you live in, but you can totally vote in person. Most polling locations will be open the weekend before the election and some locations open eleven days before. Remember, if you are voting in person, check your local public health department for the best ways to keep safe, including wearing a mask.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **I WANT TO TRACK WHERE MY BALLOT IS TO MAKE SURE IT GETS COUNTED, HOW DO I DO THAT?**
 - California's Secretary of State's office has created a website just for tracking your ballot. It is below: <https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/>
- **WHAT IF I CAN'T DROP OFF MY MAIL-IN BALLOT MYSELF?**
 - If you are unable to return the ballot yourself, you may designate someone else to drop off your ballot for you at a polling place or voter center or at an official ballot drop-off location.





RESOURCE RECAP

- To find the nearest drop box or voting center, voters can visit:

<https://locator.lavote.gov/locations/>



- Track your ballot like you track packages at:

<https://california.ballottrax.net/voter/>



- Check your registration status by going to:

<https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>



- Register online, the deadline is fifteen days before an election:

<https://registertovote.ca.gov/>



- Restore your vote after criminal conviction:

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/restore-your-vote>



- To request a replacement ballot:





Call county elections office or the Secretary of State's toll-free Voter Hotline (800) 345-VOTE (8683)



VOTER GUIDE

Black Women for Wellness is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to enhancing the health and wellness of Black women and girls through advocacy, education and empowerment. To learn more about our organization and join our mission contact us at:

-  www.bwwla.com
-  info@bwwla.com
-  323-290-5955

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