

Frequently Asked Questions about Registration and Voting in San Francisco Answered by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Registration FAQs

Who is eligible to register and to vote in California? To vote in California elections, you must be: 1) a United States citizen; 2) a resident of California; 3) at least 18 years old on Election Day; 4) not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court; and 5) not currently serving a state or federal prison term for conviction of a felony.

Please note that the passage of Proposition 17 in the November 2020 election amended the state Constitution to allow otherwise eligible residents who are on parole to register to vote.

~~Noncitizen residents of San Francisco may register and vote in the Board of Education elections if they are parents, legal guardians or caregivers of children living in San Francisco and at least one child is under 19 years old on Election Day. The next scheduled Board of Education election will be held on November 8, 2022.~~

What is the deadline to register to vote or to update my registration information? The deadline to register online or by mail for the November 8 election is October 24, 2022. After that date, you will need to register and vote with a provisional ballot in person at the City Hall Voting Center or a polling place.

Can I register to vote in California before I turn 18? If you are a 16- or 17-year-old who meets the other state voter registration requirements, you can preregister to vote and your registration will become active on your 18th birthday.

Can I register to vote in California if I just became a new citizen? If you become a U.S. citizen after the regular registration deadline of October 24, you can register and vote in person at the City Hall Voting Center or a polling place.

Can I still vote in San Francisco if I have moved locally? If you move within San Francisco, you can reregister to vote at registertovote.ca.gov or update your address at sfelections.org/voterportal or at an in-person voting site.

Can I still vote in San Francisco if I have moved within California? If you move to a new California address outside San Francisco, you can reregister to vote at registertovote.ca.gov or contact your new county elections official.

Can I still vote in San Francisco if I have moved to another state? If you move out of state, you can register with your local elections official. You may also want to contact the Department of Elections to cancel your registration in San Francisco.

Can I still vote in San Francisco if I am currently living abroad? If you are temporarily living abroad, you may be able to reregister and request a ballot by mail, fax, or email by visiting registertovote.ca.gov or fvap.gov.

If you have questions about whether you can vote, please contact the Department of Elections at (415) 554-4375 or email at SFVote@sfgov.org.

Vote-by-Mail Ballot Delivery FAQs

Will I receive my ballot in the mail? Per state law, all voters will now receive ballots in the mail for all future elections. Any voter may choose to cast a ballot arriving in the mail or vote in person in the November 8, 2022, election.

What if my ballot does not arrive in the mail? You can track where your ballot is in the mailing process at sfelections.org/voterportal. If it has been more than three days since your ballot was mailed, you may request a replacement vote-by-mail ballot at sfelections.org/voterportal or by calling the Department of Elections at (415) 554-4375.

How can I get a replacement vote-by-mail ballot? To request a replacement vote-by-mail ballot before November 2, go to sfelections.org/voterportal or call the Department of Elections at (415) 554-4375. After that date, contact the Department as soon as possible to discuss your voting options.

Can I use the Accessible Vote-by-Mail (AVBM) system to access my ballot? Any voter can access and mark their ballot at sfelections.org/access. AVBM ballots must be printed and returned by mail or in person.

How can I track my vote-by-mail ballot? You can track your vote-by-mail ballot from assembly up through delivery, verification, and counting, at sfelections.org/voterportal. Or, sign up to receive ballot notifications via email, text, or voice message at wheresmyballot.sos.ca.gov. Alternatively, you may call or email the Department of Elections.

Vote-By-Mail Ballot Return FAQs

Can I return my ballot by mail on Election Day? For your ballot to be counted, your ballot return envelope must be postmarked by Election Day, November 8. If you mail your ballot return envelope after the last mail collection time on Election Day, your ballot will be postmarked too late to be counted. Find United States Post Office box locations and pickup times at usps.com/locator.

How should I sign the ballot return envelope? Sign your envelope with the signature you last provided on your voter registration application. If your name or signature has recently changed, please reregister at registertovote.ca.gov. If you do not sign your ballot return envelope or if your envelope signature does not match any signature in your voter record, the Department will attempt to contact you by mail, and you will need to cure the issue before your ballot can be counted.

Where can I drop off my vote-by-mail ballot? From October 10 to November 7, you can return your ballot to any official ballot drop box or the City Hall Voting Center. On Election Day, November 8, you can return your ballot to any official ballot drop box, the City Hall Voting Center, or any polling place in the City no later than 8 p.m. To find a conveniently located ballot drop box, go to sfelections.org/balлотdropoff or call (415) 554-4375.

In-Person Voting FAQs

Can I vote early in person in the November 8 election? The City Hall Voting Center will be open at these times:

- Every weekday, October 11-November 7, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.;
- Last two weekends, October 29-30 and November 5-6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; and
- Election Day, November 8, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. (same voting hours as polling places).

Can I vote at any polling place in San Francisco? There will be approximately 500 polling places open for in-person voting and vote-by-mail ballot drop off on Election Day, November 8, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. You are encouraged to vote at your assigned polling place. If you vote at another polling place, your name will not be on the roster of voters and you will be asked to vote a provisional ballot.

What kind of multilingual resources are available at in-person voting sites? Both the City Hall Voting Center and all San Francisco polling places will offer bilingual ballots in English and either Chinese, Spanish or Filipino. In addition, certain voting sites will also offer facsimile (reference) ballots in Burmese, Japanese, Korean, Thai and Vietnamese. Finally, bilingual workers will provide multilingual assistance at voting sites in most neighborhoods.

What kind of accessibility resources are available at in-person voting sites? All in-person voting sites will offer curbside voting service as well as accessible voting equipment, tools, and personal assistance. Any voter may ask one or two people to assist them with marking a ballot, provided any such assistant is not the voter's employer or a representative of the voter's union and the assistant does not attempt to influence the voter.

Can I take my Sample Ballot or my own list into the voting booth? Yes. Deciding your votes before you get to the polls is helpful. You may use your Sample Ballot or the Ballot Worksheet in this pamphlet to practice marking your selection(s) before marking your official ballot.

Do I have to vote on every contest and measure on the ballot? No. The votes you cast will be counted even if you have not voted on every contest and measure.