

Accessible Voting in San Francisco

This brochure provides information about accessible services and resources available to San Francisco voters and potential registrants.

For additional information and assistance, contact the San Francisco Department of Elections.

- Call (415) 554-4375 or (TTY) (415) 554-4386
- Email sfvote@sfgov.org
- Visit our office in City Hall, Room 48. All four entrances to City Hall are accessible.
- Go to sfelections.org. The website was designed to meet web accessibility standards.

Are you interested in providing recommendations for improving access to voting and election materials? Join the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee. For information, go to sfelections.org/committees or contact the Department.

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I. Voter Registration

Register or re-register to vote online or using a paper application.

1. Online Application

To register online, go to registertovote.ca.gov.

Submit the online application electronically using a DMV signature on file, or print it out, sign, and return by mail or in person. For website help, go to registertovote.ca.gov/help.

2. Paper Application

To request a paper application, contact the Department. Complete, sign, and return the application by mail or in person.

If you are unable to sign the application, make an identifying mark witnessed by a person 18 years of age or older or use your signature stamp.

Once your application is processed, the Department will mail you a Voter Notification Card. To check your registration, go to sfelections.org/reglookup or contact the Department.

II. Election Information

Learn about voting and the upcoming election from the San Francisco Voter Information Pamphlet and California Voter Information Guide.

1. San Francisco Voter Information Pamphlet

One month before every election, all voters are sent a Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP), which contains information about

local contests and candidates. To stop mail delivery and request the VIP by email, go to sfelections.org/viponline.

The VIP is available in English, Chinese, Filipino, and Spanish in PDF, HTML, XML, and MP3 formats at sfelections.org. The VIP is also available in large-print and audio formats, including USB flash drive, CD, and National Library Service (NLS) cartridge.

To request accessible-format VIPs, contact the Department. Accessible VIPs are also available through the Talking Books and Braille Center at the San Francisco Public Library, 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, (415) 557-4253.

2. California Voter Information Guide

For statewide elections, all voting households are sent a Voter Information Guide (VIG) prepared by the Secretary of State, which contains information about state candidates and measures. To stop mail delivery and request the VIG by email, go to voterstatus.sos.ca.gov.

The VIG is available in 10 languages in PDF, large-print, audio CD, and American Sign Language formats at voterguide.sos.ca.gov.

III. Voting by Mail

Voters have several options to request a ballot by mail. The Department must receive a voter's request no later than one week before Election Day.

1. Requesting a ballot for all elections

If registering to vote:

- a. Check the box in the designated section of the application

If already registered:

- a. Download and complete a Vote-By-Mail application on sfelections.org/vbm, or
- b. Use the form on the back cover of your Voter Information Pamphlet

2. Requesting a ballot for one election only

- a. Submit a request online at sfelections.org/vbm, or
- b. Contact the Department.

3. Accessible Vote-By-Mail System

Voters who requested a vote-by-mail ballot can access a screen-readable version of the ballot from any computer with internet access at sfelections.org/access. Marked ballots must be printed, enclosed in a return envelope, and returned by mail or in person.

4. Large-Print Ballots

To request a large-print vote-by-mail ballot, contact the Department.

5. Ballot Return Options

Voters can choose to return their ballots:

- a. By mail – must be postmarked by Election Day and received by the Department no later than three days after Election Day.

- b. In person, at any voting center or polling place in California – must be dropped off by 8 p.m. on Election Day.
- c. By authorizing someone else to return by mail or in person – must complete the designated section on the ballot return envelope.

IV. Voting in Person

Accessible ballots and resources are available at all Voting Centers (go to sfelections.org/earlyvoting for locations and hours) and polling places on Election Day.

1. Signage

“Accessible Entry” signs are posted outside voting locations to direct voters towards the accessible entrance.

To confirm whether your polling place has an accessible entrance, check the back cover of your Voter Information Pamphlet, go to sfelections.org/pollsite, or contact the Department.

If your polling place is not accessible, you can request curbside voting assistance or vote at a nearby accessible polling place. Contact the Department to find the nearest accessible polling place that has the same ballot as your precinct.

2. Accessible Ballot-Marking Device

Voters may choose to mark their ballots using an accessible device that features:

- a. Touchscreen voting with options to adjust text size and background colors
- b. Audio voting with Braille-embossed keypad, headphones, and audio instructions in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Spanish, and Filipino

The ballot-marking device is also compatible with other assistive devices, such as paddles, sip-and-puff, and head-pointers.

Voters using the ballot-marking device have the option to view or hear a summary of their choices and to change any selections before printing their ballots.

The ballot-marking device does not store or count votes. The device only marks the ballots. The ballot must be printed and inserted into a ballot-scanning machine for tabulation.

3. Seated Voting

Chairs and wheelchair accessible voting booths are available at all voting locations. The international symbol of access is posted on accessible voting booths.

4. Voting Tools

Accessible tools, such as magnifying sheets for reading election materials, and pen attachments to make pens easier to grip, are available at all voting locations.

5. Curbside Voting

Any voter unable to enter a voting location may request curbside voting by contacting the Department. An election official will

bring voting materials outside and retrieve them when the voter has finished voting.

V. Ballot Delivery Programs

For every election, the Department offers ballot pick-up and delivery, including emergency ballot delivery.

Starting 29 days before Election Day, voters may authorize another person, such as a the voter's spouse, child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, or sibling, or a person residing in the same household as the voter, to pick up a ballot from the Department and deliver it to them. Voters may request such a ballot delivery using the Ballot Pick-up Authorization and Delivery Form at sfelections.org/vbm or by contacting the Department.

After the deadline to request a ballot by mail, or six days before Election Day, voters who are hospitalized or otherwise unable to travel to the polls, may request ballot delivery using the Emergency Ballot Pick-Up Authorization and Delivery Form at sfelections.org/emergencyballot or by contacting the Department. The Department may deliver the ballot directly to the voter or to an authorized representative, such as a caregiver or hospital employee.

VI. Voter Rights

All voters have the following rights:

- The right to vote in an accessible place
- The right to vote privately and independently

- The right to bring one or two people to help you vote
- The right to receive help marking a ballot
- The right to bring a service animal to the polling place and into the voting booth
- The right to ask questions to election officials and poll workers about election procedures.

A person providing assistance to a voter marking a ballot can never:

- Make decisions for the voter
- Guess what the voter wants
- Try to influence the voter's choices
- Show the voter biased materials
- Reveal the voter's choices to anyone

A person providing such assistance cannot be:

- The voter's employer,
- An agent of the voter's employer, or
- A representative of the voter's union.