

Accessible Voting in San Francisco

This flyer describes some of the resources provided by the Department of Elections to help San Franciscans participate in elections privately and independently.

To contact the Department or join its Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and help improve the accessibility of election services in San Francisco:

 Call (415) 554-4375/TTY: (415) 554-4386

 Email SFVote@sfgov.org

 Visit City Hall, Room 48 (all entryways are accessible)

 Go to sfelections.org

1. Registering to Vote

To register to vote in California, a person must be: 1) a U.S. citizen, 2) a California resident, 3) at least 18 years old on Election Day, 4) not currently in prison for a felony conviction, and 5) not currently found mentally incompetent to vote by a court.

Eligible San Franciscans can register online or by mail up until 15 days before the next election. After that date, people will need to register in person at a voting center or polling place, and vote while they are there.

A voter unable to sign their registration form can make an identifying mark witnessed by a person 18 years of age or older, or use their signature stamp.

- ✓ Contact the Department of Elections to receive a paper registration form in the mail or visit registertovote.ca.gov to fill out an online application.

2. Accessible Elections Information

One month before every election, San Francisco voters receive a Voter Information Pamphlet and Sample Ballot (VIP) with information about local candidates and ballot measures. For statewide elections, voters also receive a Voter Information Guide (VIG) with information about state and federal offices and state ballot measures. Both the VIP and VIG are available in several accessible formats.

- ✓ To access an audio MP3, HTML, XML, or PDF VIP, go to sfelections.org/vip.
- ✓ To request a large-print, audio on CD, USB, or National Library Service (NLS) cartridge VIP, call (415) 554-4375/TTY: (415) 554-4386.
- ✓ To access an American Sign Language or PDF VIG, go to voterguide.sos.ca.gov/asl/.
- ✓ To request a large-print or audio VIG, call (800) 833-8683/TTY/TDD: (916) 657-2166 or go to voterguide.sos.ca.gov/en/alt-versions/.

3. Accessible Voting Options

A. Voting by mail

One month before Election Day, vote-by-mail voters receive packets in the mail containing an official ballot, instructions, a postage-paid return envelope, and an “I Voted” sticker.

Voters with disabilities can access a screen-readable version of their ballot via the accessible vote-by-mail system at sfelections.org/access. Marked ballot must be printed, enclosed in a return envelope, and returned by mail or in person.

Voters may request a large-print ballot by contacting the Department of Elections.

B. In-person voting

Every voting site has an accessible ballot-marking device with several features:

- Multilingual touchscreen navigation with adjustable text size and background color
- Multilingual audio navigation with Braille-embossed keypad and privacy headphones
- Compatibility with assistive devices, such as paddles, sip-and-puff, and head-pointers
- Easy printing of marked ballots (for security, ballot-marking devices do not store or transmit vote data)

Every voting site offers accessible voting resources, such as magnifying sheets, ballot marking pen grips, wheelchair accessible voting booths, and seated voting.

The Department of Elections strives to ensure that all voting sites are ADA accessible in every election. To confirm whether their polling place is accessible, voters can check the back cover of their Voter Information Pamphlet or contact the Department.

If a voter is unable to enter a voting site for any reason, they may request to vote “curbside” by calling (415) 554-4375 or having their companion enter the voting site and give the voter’s information to a poll worker. Next, a poll worker will bring the ballot and voting materials to the voter and assist the voter, if necessary.

C. Ballot delivery

During a 29-day early voting period before Election Day, voters may authorize a household or family member over the age of 16 to pick up their ballot from the Department of Elections.

In the last week of the early voting period, voters who are hospitalized or homebound can request ballot delivery. Department of Elections’ staff can deliver a ballot directly to the voter or to an authorized representative, such as a caregiver or hospital staff.

Forms to authorize another person to pick up or deliver a voter’s ballot are available at sfelections.org/ballotservices or by calling the Department.

4. Right to a Secret Ballot

All voters have the right to cast a secret ballot. A voter can ask or bring up to two people to assist them with voting, with the exceptions of the voter’s employer, an agent of the voter’s employer, or a representative of the voter’s union. It is against the law for any person helping a voter to tell that voter how to vote or reveal the voter’s choices to others.