

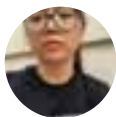
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Election 2026: What to expect on Election Day in Orange County

Don't expect winners to be determined as early as tonight. And state law prevents the county registrar from certifying election results until the end of the month.



A voting center at the Great Park in Irvine sees light traffic on Sunday, May 31, 2026. (Photo by Mindy Schauer, Orange County Register/SCNG)



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It's officially Election Day, Orange County!



And that means today is the absolutely final day for you to cast your ballot if you haven't already done so.

There are several ways to vote in Orange County: You can place your ballot in drop boxes scattered around the county or [visit one of the nearly 200 vote centers](#), which are one-stop shops where you can cast a ballot, register to vote or find other election-related assistance.

Find the nearest ballot drop box or vote center by [checking out a map located on our Voter Guide, ocregister.com/voter-guide](#).



Vote centers will open at 7 a.m. and they, along with ballot drop boxes, will

Real-time anticipated wait times at vote centers [can be found on the Orange County Registrar of Voters' website](#), ocvote.gov.

You can also still return your ballot via the U.S. Postal Service. No postage is required, but it must be postmarked by today, June 2. Because of changes to how the Postal Service now postmarks mail, [you'll want to request a manual postmark](#) from an employee when you drop off your ballot at a post office because there is no guarantee it will otherwise be postmarked by Election Day. And if it's postmarked a day or so later, it won't be counted.

The Orange County Registrar of Voters, at ocvote.gov, is expecting to release the first unofficial results at 8:05 p.m. These are early vote-by-mail ballots that had been fully processed ahead of June 2.

The first unofficial results from in-person voting will come at 9:30 p.m., with additional updates planned every half hour until all in-person votes are included.

Still, don't expect winners to be determined as early as Tuesday night. Ballot counting can take several days — or even weeks — to complete, meaning close races may take some time before a winner is crowned.

And state law prevents county election officials from certifying results until voters have a chance to fix signature issues with mailed ballots. This year, the earliest Orange County Registrar of Voters Bob Page can certify the primary election results is June 26.

The Orange County Register, at ocregister.com, will provide regular, live updates online along with reactions from candidates and experts.

What's at stake in Orange County

The major contest at the top of the ballot, of course, is the race to replace termed-out Gov. [Gavin Newsom](#).

California's ["jungle primary" election system](#) means that in most cases, including the gubernatorial contest, the top two vote-getters in the primary, regardless of party affiliation, will move on to the general election in November.

A number of other statewide races are on the ballot, including ones for [lieutenant governor](#), [secretary of state](#), [controller](#), [treasurer](#), [attorney general](#), [insurance commissioner](#) and [superintendent of public instruction](#).

In Orange County, [a trio of Assembly races has drawn a bevy of candidates](#), along with oodles of money from groups associated with Airbnb, Google and Meta, as well as casinos, crypto and hotels.

In the other six of the nine Assembly districts that cover Orange County communities, only two candidates are running. That means in those six races, both the incumbent and the challenger will advance to the general election in the fall.

But that primary election calmness is not the case in the [67th Assembly District](#) covering Buena Park, Cypress and Fullerton; [the 68th Assembly District](#) covering Orange and Santa Ana; and [the 72nd Assembly District](#) covering the coastline as well as Aliso Viejo, Laguna Woods and Lake Forest.

In the 67th Assembly District, six candidates are vying to replace Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva, D-Fullerton, who is [prevented from running for reelection](#) because of term limits. They are Democrats [Ada Briceño](#), [Paul Gonzales](#), [Mark Pulido](#) and [Ali Taj](#), along with Republicans [Adrian Oscar Ayub](#) and [Paulo Morales](#).

And in the 68th Assembly District, left open by Assemblymember [Avelino Valencia](#), who is running for a state Senate spot, three Democrats are running — [Jessie Lopez](#), [David Penalzoza](#) and [Shannon Wingfield](#) — along with Republican [Mayra Ruiz](#).

And four candidates — Republicans [Matthew Harper](#) and [Gracey Van Der Mark](#), along with Democrat [Chris Kluwe](#) and no party preference candidate [Frank Wagoner](#) — are vying for the 72nd Assembly District.

This is also the first election post-redistricting, which changed the makeup of congressional districts across the state. Orange County [now has eight congressional districts](#) that cover its residents, up two from the 2024 elections.

One contest in particular, the race for California's 40th Congressional District, has drawn national attention as redistricting pitted two Republican lawmakers, Reps. [Ken Calvert](#) and [Young Kim](#), against each other in the same district. Independent candidate [Nina Linh](#) is also running in this district, as are several Democrats who represent varying wings of the party: Francis Xavier Hoffman, Claude Keissieh, [Joe Kerr](#), [Esther Kim-Varet](#) and [Lisa Ramirez](#).

Another [new district for many Orange County voters](#) is California's 42nd Congressional District. Rep. Robert Garcia, a Democrat who represents Long Beach in a different district now, is running for this seat, as are Republicans [Brian Burley](#), [Long Pham](#) and [Noah Von Blom](#), as well as no party preference candidate [Larisa Vermeulen](#). Redistricting drew Long Beach into the same area as Orange County's more conservative coastal communities, including Huntington Beach and part of Newport Beach.

At the local level, three seats are on the ballot for the Orange County Board of Supervisors, which oversees a budget of nearly \$11 billion and countywide departments, such as public health, social services, public works and more.

The five-member governing body is guaranteed at least one new face, with four candidates vying for the open 4th District seat now that Doug Chaffee will be terming out at the end of the year. On the ballot are La Habra Councilmember [Rose Espinoza](#), Fullerton Mayor [Fred Jung](#), Orange County Board of Education trustee [Tim Shaw](#) and Buena Park Mayor [Connor Traut](#).

In the closely watched 5th District race, incumbent [Katrina Foley](#) faces off against Assemblymember [Diane Dixon](#) and educator [Lucy Vellema](#).

In the 2nd District, the county's first Latino majority district, incumbent [Vicente Sarmiento](#) is seeking reelection against Air Force veteran-turned-entrepreneur [Kimberly Davis](#), his former Santa Ana City Council colleague [Nelida Mendoza](#), and commercial decorator [James Wallace](#).

As of Monday afternoon, nearly 402,000 ballots had been cast in Orange County, almost 21% of the nearly 2 million ballots sent to registered voters last month, according to data from the California secretary of state.

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