

It's officially the 2026 election: California voters start receiving their ballots in the mail

Voters have through Nov. 3 to cast their ballots, but election officials are especially encouraging those who vote by mail to do so early



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PUBLISHED: October 5, 2026 at 7:15 AM PDT

Voters, you've got mail: Your [2026 general election](#) ballot.

At least soon, you will. County registrars had until today, Oct. 5, to send ballots to every registered voter across California — officially kicking off the 2026 voting season.

Early voting sites — like ballot drop boxes — also open today.

More than 23 million Californians are registered to vote and will be receiving ballots in the mail, according to [the latest voter registration stats](#) from the secretary of state's office.



That includes more than 1.9 million voters in Orange County, 1.4 million in Riverside County and 1.2 million in San Bernardino County.

Related: [Want to vote by mail? Yes, you can still do that in California](#)

Check out caearlyvoting.sos.ca.gov to find where you may drop off your ballot. The site also includes links to county elections offices, where you can find more information specific to your county.

Visit the secretary of state's website, voterstatus.sos.gov, to check if you are registered to vote. You'll need to enter your first and last name, your date of birth and either your California driver's license or ID number or the last four digits of your Social Security number.

There, you'll also be able to see the address where you are registered to vote — and where you'll receive your ballot — your political party, and contact information for your county registrar.

The secretary of state's office also allows you to track your ballot, from when it's been mailed to you to when it's been received and when it's been counted.

Head to california.ballottrax.net/voter and input your first and last name, date of birth and ZIP code.

Although state and many local election officials maintain that all voting options, including vote-by-mail, are safe and secure, they do encourage those who choose to vote by mail to do so early [to ensure adequate time for a ballot to be postmarked and delivered](#).

In California, as long as a ballot is postmarked by Nov. 3 and received by county election offices within a week of Election Day, it will count.

But there is no guarantee that a ballot dropped in a mailbox on Election Day will get postmarked the same day – hence the urgings by election officials for voters to mail their ballots back early. Election officials encourage those who do vote by mail on or close to Election Day to go inside a post office and request an employee postmark the ballot then and there.

Staff writer Linh Tat contributed to this report.

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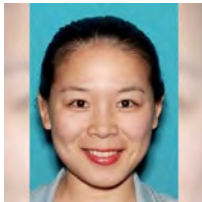
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