

General Election FAQ's

Registration Questions

1. Who may register to vote – you must meet the following criteria to register:

- You are a United States Citizen
- You are a resident of Yolo County
- You are at least 18 years of age on Election Day (you may *preregister* to vote at 16 or 17 years of age)
- You are not currently in state or federal prison or on parole for a felony conviction
- You have not been judged by the court to be mentally incompetent to register to vote

2. What are your office hours? What about on Election Day?

- Our office is open Monday thru Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
- On Election Day, the phones are answered at 6:30 am, our office doors open at 7:00 am, and close at 8:00 pm

3. What is the last day to register to vote for an election?

The close of registration is 15 days prior to Election Day.

4. How do I obtain an affidavit or a voter registration form?

Voters may pick up voter registration forms at the Yolo County Elections office, most government offices (such as Post Offices and Libraries) and online at www.registertovote.ca.gov. They may also call our office and request one to be mailed to them.

5. Can I register online?

Voters may register online at www.registertovote.ca.gov. To register online you will need your California driver license or California Identification card number. Your information will be provided to the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to retrieve a copy of your DMV signature. If a signature cannot be retrieved, you will need to print out the completed online registration form, sign it, and mail the signed registration form to the Yolo County Elections Office as instructed.

6. Can I register to vote at my business address or use my PO Box?

No. A person may only register to vote at his or her place of residence. A business address or PO Box can only be used for mailing purposes.

7. What if my name, address or political party changes?

You must re-register anytime you move, change your name, or change your political party.

8. What if I forgot to put all the required information on the registration card?

Our office or the secretary of state office will send you a letter requesting that you provide the required information. You will not be an active registrant to vote until the information is received.

9. What if I just moved and did not re-register? Will I be eligible to vote?

If you are registered to vote in Yolo County at your previous address and have moved within the county borders, you may vote a provisional ballot at your new polling place.

If you are registered to vote outside of Yolo County or have never registered to vote, you may register with Same Day Voter Registration (known as Conditional Voter Registration in state law) and vote a conditional ballot on Election Day at a polling place, satellite office or the Yolo County Elections Office.

10. Is Identification required to register?

The Help America Vote Act (HAVA), enacted by Congress in October of 2002, states that individuals registering to vote for the first time in the state/jurisdiction must provide either a valid California driver's license or state ID card number. Applicants who do not have either can provide the last four numbers of their Social Security number. If their identification can be matched to state records when entered into our database, then the voter will not be required to show ID when they vote.

11. What is needed to update my registration?

If a voter has moved, changed their name, or changed their political party, they must reregister by filling out a new voter registration form.

12. If I'm on probation, may I vote?

Yes, however, if someone is imprisoned or on parole for the conviction of a felony, they are not eligible to vote.

For more information, refer to the Secretary of State's [Voting Rights: Persons with a Criminal History](#)

13. How do I cancel my registration?

To cancel a registration, our office must receive a written request from the voter, which must include their name, date of birth, address, signature, and a brief statement that they wish to be removed from the voter rolls.

14. How do I know that I am registered to vote?

A voter notification card (VNC) will be mailed to you, confirming that you are registered to vote. You can also check your voter registration status online at www.yoloelections.org.

15. I registered at the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), why am I not registered?

The DMV form has a check box for voters that wish to register. After checking the box, the voter must complete the voter registration form in order to become a registered voter. California's "Automatic" voter registration began in 2018.

16. Why is DMV involved in voter registration?

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (also known as the Motor Voter Act) permits persons conducting business at a DMV office to register to vote or update voter registration information.

17. What is a pending letter?

A pending letter is a request for required missing information on their registration form. The voter must contact our office and supply the missing information in order for their registration to be processed.

18. I selected two parties on my registration form. Can I just pick one instead of having to fill out a whole new registration form?

Our office **will not** process an affidavit of registration that has more than one political party marked. This is to protect the voter's party selection as well as our office "selecting the wrong party" and causing any disenfranchisement. A new registration form must be filled out.

19. I received a letter that my name doesn't match my signature. Why isn't my affidavit being accepted?

The name of the voter (in the print name area of the affidavit) should match the signature. If a voter insists that is their signature, and has always signed that way, check with a supervisor to see if we will accept the signature.

20. Is it true that voter registration lists are used to select citizens for jury duty?

Jury summons are pulled from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and Voter Registration files.

21. Why did I receive two jury summons?

Receiving multiple jury summons usually means information received from the DMV and our office does not match. It could be the name, date of birth, or other information that doesn't match.

22. Is my registration information considered public?

A voter's name, mailing address, phone number, party preference, and voting history is considered public, and people may obtain that information for political purposes by purchasing it from their local office.

23. Why did I receive a white post card (Address Confirmation Card 8D2/2225(c) or 2225(b))?

Our office received notification that your address has changed. The voter may return the address confirmation card with their correct address and signature. No changes will be made without a signature. The only other option to correct or update your address is to re-register.

24. Why did I receive a tan (buff) or yellow post card (VNC Voter Notification Card)? Do I have to sign and return it? The card has return service requested printed on it.

The voter has registered, re-registered or made a change to their registration. The voter does not need to return the card with their signature. The reason it has return service requested is for post office use. If the card is undeliverable, the post office will return it to our office.

Election materials are not forwarded. A yellow VNC is sent to voters who registered after the County Voter Information Guides have been mailed. The yellow VNC includes their polling place location.

25. What is an abstract of registration or Copy of registration? When would I need one? How do I get one?

An abstract of registration is an official county proof of registration document. Some agencies accept them as proof of residency, (e.g., Schools, Post Office, Passport, a job application) and sometimes another form of ID. A voter may obtain an abstract of registration by request at our office, by mail, or by email. The cost of the abstract is \$1.50 certified or non-certified.

26. I did not vote in the last election. Do I need to re-register?

No. You are registered to vote as long as you remain at the same address and have voted within the last four years; you will continue to receive election material in the mail.

27. Do you ever remove my name from the voter registration file?

Yes, if you move to a different address that is not in Yolo County or if you have not responded to an address confirmation request and have not voted in an election by the next two federal elections

28. How do I notify the voter registration office that another voter needs to be cancelled?

If a voter has passed away, immediate family members can call our office to request cancellation. All others need to send a written request to cancel the voter's registration.

29. I moved, why isn't my election mail forwarded?

Election material is not forwarded because your address must be current for voting purposes. Your address is used to ensure you are voting for the correct candidates, measures, and propositions.

30. I became a new citizen after the registration deadline. Can I still register to vote?

Yes, persons who became citizens after the close of registration may only vote in the Election Office between the 14th day before an election all the way up to Election Night at 8:00 pm. Call the Elections at (530) 666-8133 or email us at elections@yolocounty.org requesting more information on this process and the required documentation.

Conditional Voter Registration also known as Same Day Registration is also available as of January 1st, 2017 and someone may come to our office and register to vote between the 14th day to Election Day.

Voting – Vote by Mail Questions

1. If I re-register to vote, does it change my permanent Vote by Mail (VBM) status?

No, the permanent VBM status follows what is indicated on the new voter registration form when you re-register. If you would like to change your VBM status, you must notify the Elections Office.

2. Where can I drop off my voted ballot?

A voter may drop off their ballot at the Yolo County Elections Office 29 days prior to and up to 8:00 pm on Election Day, and at any polling place in Yolo County on Election Day. If there are drop off sites for that election, the voter may drop their ballot off there; however, those sites and drop boxes usually are available within a certain time frame (example: 8 am to 5 pm). Ask staff for list of drop off locations.

3. Why are ballots not forwarded?

Election law requires a voter’s current address to determine their voting districts, etc., so election materials are not forwarded. They must re-register if their address information has changed.

4. What is the deadline to have my ballot returned to your office?

A ballot must be dropped off in our office or any polling place in Yolo County by the close of the polls, 8:00 pm on Election Day. Alternatively, a new law allows Vote by Mail ballots to be counted if they are POSTMARKED on or before Election Day **AND** delivered to the elections office by the USPS or other mail delivery service no later than three days after the election.

5. I didn’t sign up for VBM, why did I get a ballot in the mail?

If a voter receives a Vote by Mail ballot in a blue envelope, they are a mail ballot voter. Precincts (areas) with less than 250 registered voters will not have a polling place. These precincts cannot be consolidated with neighboring precincts because of district boundary lines.

If you live in one of these precincts, you are in a mail ballot precinct and will automatically receive a Vote by Mail ballot. You will also receive a list of polling places where you may drop off your voted ballot on Election Day if you do not wish to mail it. Postage paid return envelopes are provided in their ballot package.

6. Do I need to affix a stamp on my return Vote by Mail (VBM) envelope?

No, postage paid return envelopes are provided in all Vote by Mail ballot packages.

Voting – Polling Place Questions

1. Where can I find out where my polling place is?

Polling place information is listed on the back of the voter's County Voter Information Guide. Voter's may also visit our website at www.yoloelections.org, or contact our office for the polling place location.

A yellow VNC is sent to voters who registered after the County Voter Information Guides have been mailed. The yellow VNC includes their polling place location.

2. Why do I have a different polling place?

Polling places can change every election. The change is based on the number of registered voters per area, with the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) compliance, polling location availability, and the contests on the ballot.

Polling places, satellite offices and the Elections Office are open on Election Day from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. Contact our office for the dates and times of earlier days for the satellite office, if available. The Elections Office is open Monday thru Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

3. Do I need to bring my ID to the polls?

If the voter's registration has not been verified through their driver's license number or social security number, then an ID will be required the first time they vote in Yolo County. As a precaution, a voter should bring a form of ID to their polling place. *Please see [Help America Vote Act \(HAVA\) Identification Standards](#) on the California Secretary of State website for a list of acceptable identification documentation for voting purposes.*

4. How do I sign up to work as a poll worker?

You may visit our website at www.yoloelections.org and fill out the online form or you may contact our Precinct Operations Coordinator at (530) 666-8124. Poll worker requirements, training and pay are posted on our website under the Precinct Operations section.

Voting – Common Election Day Questions

1. What is the difference between a primary election and a general election?

A primary election is an election that narrows candidates to two. The general election is when you elect a candidate into office. Both elections may also contain measures and propositions.

2. May I vote for any political party?

In a general election, a voter is not restricted by party. In a primary election, the only items restricted by party on the ballot are Presidential candidates and County Central Committees.

3. Can I vote at any polling place?

Yes, as of January 1st, 2018 you can vote at any voting location if you are a polling place voter. However, if you are a vote by mail voter you will be able to vote only if you surrender your vote by mail ballot package at the polling location, and if you don't have your package to surrender then you will be required to vote a provisional ballot.

4. Where can I find my polling location?

You can check out website and use our look up tool to find more information on your polling location at www.yoloelections.org

5. How do can I find out what district I pertain to?

You can call us at (530) 666-8133 or email us at elections@yolocounty.org requesting this information.

6. Can I vote in a different county?

No, a voter is only eligible to vote in the county in which they are registered and reside. If he/she is a VBM voter, their ballot must be returned at any polling place in California by the time the polls close on Election Day or must be mailed and postmarked on or before Election Day.

7. I am not registered, but I demand to vote. Where can I go vote?

A voter can always vote a provisional ballot. That does not mean that the ballot will count; however, anyone insisting to vote may vote a provisional ballot. If they have not been previously registered in Yolo County, their ballot will not be counted unless they vote conditionally with Same Day Voter Registration.

8. Why did I receive my Election material in English with some content being either Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, or Russian?

The census determines what language shall be made available to voters. Yolo County currently has no mandated languages required by the federal laws, but as of 2020 the State has determined that Yolo County Elections materials are to provide facsimile election information in the following languages: Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, and Russian.

9. I moved before the close of registration, where do I go to vote?

If the voter moved within the county, we will look up their new polling place and tell the voter to vote a provisional ballot and fill out a new Conditional Voter Registration form. This will update the voter to their current address.

If the voter moved from another California county into Yolo County and has not re-registered before the close of registration, they may vote in this election with by re-registering to vote using the Conditional Voter Registration process.

10. I moved after the close of registration, where do I go to vote?

A voter that moved after the 15-day close of registration may go to their old polling place and vote a regular ballot or they may register to vote using our Conditional Voter Registration process at our office, any polling place, or satellite office.

11. What if a voter asks your opinion on a candidate, proposition or measure?

Our office is nonpartisan; we do not support or endorse any political candidate, proposition, or measure. We do not give our opinion on any political matters.

12. What is electioneering?

Electioneering is a visible display of information for or against any political candidate/proposition/measure that is within 100 feet of a polling place, which includes the elections office. An example is a political sign supporting a proposition or a shirt for or against a candidate.

13. What is the difference between a proposition and a measure?

A measure is a statute in draft before it becomes law. A statute is a law enacted by a legislature. A proposition is a proposal offered for acceptance or rejection.

Voting – Provisional Ballot Questions

1. What is a provisional ballot?

A provisional ballot is used to record a vote when there are questions in regards to a voter's eligibility. A provisional ballot would be cast when:

- The voter's name is not listed on the roster
- The voter's address has changed
- The roster indicates the voter was issued a Vote by Mail ballot and cannot surrender the VBM ballot
- The voter went to the wrong polling place

Voting – County Voter Information Guide

1. What is a County Voter Information Guide?

It is an information booklet mailed to registered voters for the upcoming election. It provides candidate statements, local district measures, and a sample of the actual ballot. The County Voter Information Guide also indicates if a voter is registered to vote at the polls, is a permanent Vote by Mail voter, or if they are in a mail ballot precinct.

2. Why don't I see a candidate statement for all of the candidates on the ballot?

The Candidate Statement (also known as "Statement of Qualifications") is a statement of the candidate's background and education prepared by the candidate on a form issued along with the nomination documents. The candidate statement of qualifications is optional for each candidate.

3. I opted out of my County Voter Information Guide. How do I have them mailed to me again?

A request needs to be sent to us in writing, or a voter may use the website and request to start receiving it again.

4. I never received my State Voter Information Guide. Will you send me another one?

A voter may view their state pamphlet online at www.sos.ca.gov. If they insist on receiving one in the mail, please have them contact the Secretary of State or our office to send them another one.

Petition Questions

1. May I sign a petition if I am not a registered voter?

No. You must be a registered voter in order for your signature to be valid on a petition.

2. Why do you have petitioners in front of stores?

Petitioners are not affiliated with our office. Political parties and special interest groups hire them to circulate petitions. For more information, or if you have questions about the status or the proponents circulating a petition, contact the Secretary of State's office at (916) 657-2166.

3. How do I remove my name from a petition?

Our office must receive a letter from the voter requesting to have their signature withdrawn from the petition. The letter must have their name, address, signature, and name of the petition as well as the date (estimated) that they signed it. This request must be received in our office before the petition is turned in by the proponents.

Electoral College Questions

1. What is the Electoral College?

The Electoral College consists of the popularly elected representatives (electors) who formally elect the President and Vice President of the United States.

Each state has a number of electors equal to the number of its US senators (2 in each state) plus the number of its US representatives, which varies according to the state's population.

The Electoral College has 538 electors. A candidate only needs to receive a majority of the electoral votes (270) to be elected to the office of President.

Traditionally, electors cast their ballots for the candidate who wins their state's popular vote.

2. What are political party delegates?

Delegates are people who attend a political party national convention and who elect the party nominee. Some states select delegates during a Presidential primary and others during caucuses; some states also have a state convention where national convention delegates are selected. The Democratic Party also has super delegates.

3. What is a super delegate?

Super delegate is an informal term commonly used for some of the delegates to the Democratic National Convention (DNC), the presidential nominating convention of the US Democratic Party.

Super party delegates include the following:

- Elected members of the DNC
- Democratic Governors
- Democratic US Senators and US Representatives
- Distinguished party leaders (current and former Presidents and VP's; former Democratic leaders of the Senate and House; former DNC chairmen)
- Unpledged "add-ons" chosen by the DNC

If there is no clear winner after state primaries and caucuses, then the super delegates, who are bound only by their consciences, will decide the nominee.

County Central Committee Questions

What is a County Central Committee and what do they do?

County Committee members are average folks who volunteer their time to serve their political party. They are officials that function, essentially, as the Board of Directors for the political party of the county they reside in. They have official duties, as defined by the California Election Code, and carry the weight of the California Political Party for certain matters within their jurisdiction.

Examples of their functions:

- **Endorsements:** They take positions on candidates and ballot measures at the county and city level, including nonpartisan contests
- **Resolutions:** They take nonbinding positions on issues of relevance to the Party in the form of resolutions. These actions signal the body's consensus opinion to their Party's elected officials, who often may choose to allow the issue to take shape in the form of actual legislation.
- **Fundraising:** Proposition 34 gives the County Central Committees special authority to raise contributions for their party's candidates and causes.
- **Voter Communication:** The County Central Committee has the authority to purchase an official ballot statement or to utilize the Registrar's voter index to communicate directly with the electorate.
- **Party-Building Activities:** Communicating important policy issues to the electorate and adding new registered voters to their party ranks.
- **State Central Committee and State Executive Board:** The County Central Committee selects members to represent it at higher levels of Party leadership, such as the State Central Committee and State Executive Board, which, in turn, has the important responsibility of producing a biennial Party Platform and selecting members to the National Committee.
- **Electoral Continuity:** Should there ever be a vacancy by the party nominee that occurs after a primary but before a general election, state law specifically delegates the responsibility for selecting a replacement candidate to the County and State Central Committees of each party.

Voting and Minority Languages

Why is Yolo County now required to print voting materials in other languages?

In September 2002 and October 2011, the Director of the Bureau of the Census determined that Yolo County was NOT subject to the minority language requirements of Section 203 of the Federal Voting Rights Act, based on responses to census surveys. As a result of these determinations, Yolo County still only provides voting material in English.

In past years, this information was collected every ten years in the Federal Census. This information is now being collected every five years in the American Community Survey.

This determination is a combination of both the number of people in a single minority language group having limited or no English skills and the number of these individuals who are of voting age. The County is required to provide voting materials in that language when that number reaches at least 10,000 or 5% of that language group – Yolo Counties state language requirements are Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, and Russian.

Voting Rights Act

1. What is the Voting Rights Act?

The Voting Rights Act is a federal law enacted in 1965 to combat discrimination against African Americans and break down barriers to vote (e.g., poll tax, literacy test). In 1975, the Act was amended to include language minority groups. In 2006, Congress renewed the Voting Rights Act for 25 years.

2. What is a language minority group?

A language minority group is defined as American Indian, Asian American, Alaskan Natives, and people of Spanish heritage.

3. Why is the Voting Rights Act important?

Voting is a fundamental right in a democratic society. The Voting Rights Act is intended to ensure that voting age citizens can exercise their right to vote.

4. How does the Voting Rights Act help me if I am part of a language minority group?

All voting materials at each polling site will be available in English with some in Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, and Russian. Precinct officers at designated polling sites will be available to assist voters in these languages as well as any other language.

Section 208 of the Voting Rights Act and California Law allow voters to bring an individual of their choice (other than a representative of their employer or union) to the polls to assist them in voting. If voters want help, but did not bring anyone with them, a Precinct Officer can assist the voters with marking their ballot.

5. What does voting material mean?

According to the Department of Justice, *“all election information that is available in English must also be available in the minority language so that all citizens will have an effective opportunity to register, learn the details of the elections, and cast a free and effective ballot.”*

This means that registration forms, voting notices, voting instructions, ballots, sample ballots, polling place notices (including posters), voter information pamphlets, and any other written materials related to the voting process must be translated accurately into the covered languages, and distributed to people who need the information.

6. Does the Voting Rights Act apply to Yolo County?

Yes. Yolo County has the following language groups: Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, and Russian who meet the required percentages of people who are members of a single language minority group who have limited or no English skills. Determinations for language groups are made every five years according to the American Community Survey.

7. Is Yolo the only county required to have translated voting materials in other languages?

No. Several other counties in California (Alameda, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara) and other states that have at least 10,000 or 5% of the total voting age citizens who have limited or no English skills and who are members of a minority language group are required by law to have translated voting materials.

8. What is Yolo County doing to assist limited and non-English speaking voters at the polls?

Yolo County Voter Registration and Elections has been providing voting materials and language assistance since its determinations were made.

Bilingual precinct officers will have language tags in their appropriate other language to let limited and non-English speaking voters know who to approach for assistance on Election Day.

Voting Materials and Language Assistance in Other Languages

1. How do I get voting materials in other languages?

Before the election, fill out a Voter Registration form, and check the box next to your preferred language. If you are already registered and now want your materials in other languages contact our office and request the change to your voter registration file.

You can call us at (530) 666-8133, email us at elections@yolocounty.org or send us a written request at Yolo County Elections, 625 Court St, B-05 Woodland CA 95695.

On Election Day at the polling place, look for precinct officers with language name tags. If there are no bilingual precinct officers in other languages, ask for assistance. Say the language you speak.

2. Why are voting materials available in some languages but not others?

Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Punjabi, and Russian are the only languages in Yolo County that meet the requirements set by the State at this time. The American Community Survey will conduct its next survey in 2020 at which time Yolo may have other languages that meet this requirement.

Be a Part of the Process Now

Yolo County Voter Registration and Elections values the rights of every voter. To help us provide the best service, please do the following:

Register in time for the election.

We want you to be able to vote, so be sure you are registered correctly.

Sign up to be a precinct officer.

This is an easy way to help other voters, especially if you speak one of the required languages.

Select the right language when you register as interested in becoming a precinct officer.

This helps us schedule the right bilingual precinct officers to help at the right polling places.

Contact us when you have questions about elections or the voting process.

We want to make sure you have the information you need to vote on Election Day.

Let us know when you see problems.

Help us improve our process by telling us where you see problems on Election Day or in our voting materials.

You can call us at (530) 666-8133, email us at elections@yolocounty.org, or write to us at Yolo County Elections Office, 625 Court St, Suite B-05 Woodland CA 95695.

References Accessed March 2012

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- http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/sec_203/2011_notice.pdf Department of Justice – An alternate website for Voting Rights Act information specific to minority language requirements
- www.census.gov Census – A Federal agency with information on the census
- <http://www.census.gov/2010census/> Census – An alternate website for census information specific to the 2010 census
- www.eac.gov Election Assistance Commission – A Federal agency with resources for voters and voter guides in various languages
- www.sos.ca.gov Secretary of State – A state agency with information for California voters
- www.yoloelections.org Yolo County's Voter Registration and Elections webpage
- Strengthening Democratic Participation, Asian Law Caucus and Asian Law Alliance, April 2011. A report on voting access by limited English speaking Asian Americans in various California Counties, available on line at www.asianlawalliance.org