

# Website FAQ's

FAQ Committee, as of September 4, 2019

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## 1. VCA FAQ

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## ANSWERS TO FAQ'S ON VOTE CENTERS AND BALLOT DROP BOXES

- I did not request to be a permanent Vote By Mail voter, why did I receive a Vote by Mail ballot?

*With the passage of the California Voter's Choice Act (VCA), and approval by the Board of Supervisors, every registered voter in Santa Clara County --- starting with the March 2020 election --- will automatically be mailed a Vote by Mail ballot, beginning 29 days before an election. This allows voters to decide how, when, and where they vote.*

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- Why did Santa Clara County choose to adopt the Voter's Choice Act?

*Santa Clara County adopted the Voter's Choice Act to modernize elections to reflect the lives of today's voters. The Voter's Choice Act will make voting more convenient by providing voters with more options of how, when, and where they vote. All voters will receive a Vote by Mail ballot, and instead of being limited to voting at one polling place on Election Day, you will now be able to vote in person at any Vote Center in Santa Clara County (as early as 10 days before Election Day) or at our office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112 (as early as 29 days before Election Day), or by dropping your voted ballot in a Ballot Drop Box.*

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- What is a Vote Center?

*A "Vote Center" is a universal polling place where any registered voter in Santa Clara County may vote. Simply stated, with Vote Centers, there is no wrong place to vote.*

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- How are people going to find out about the change from polling places to Vote Centers?
  - *We will be contacting each voter directly by mail at least twice.*
  - *We are creating public service announcements, and working closely with media outlets, that include required minority languages, such as: local newspapers, radio stations, and television. We are issuing Press Releases to let media outlets know about the change so they can help get the word out. We also plan to use all of our social media outlets to get the word out such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.*
  - *We participate in community events throughout the year and work with local community, disability and language groups to educate the public. If you know of any events that you would like the Registrar of Voters' Office to participate in, please email [Outreach@rov.sccgov.org](mailto:Outreach@rov.sccgov.org) with more information.*

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- What are the advantages of the Voter's Choice Act?

*The Voter's Choice Act provides for Vote Centers which make voting more convenient. Voters are able to choose how, when and where they vote. All registered voters receive a Vote by Mail ballot in the mail. There are more days to vote, starting 10 days before election day, including weekends and holidays. There are more locations to register to vote, And more locations to vote in person before Election Day. Ballots can be dropped off at any Ballot Drop Box location or Vote Center. There are more locations to get a replacement ballot, more accessible voting machines, and more language assistance at Vote Centers.*

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- What voting assistance is available at a Vote Center?

*Each Vote Center will be equipped with a minimum of three (3) accessible ballot marking devices so all voters can cast a ballot independently and privately. Voters can still bring up to two people to assist them during the voting process, as long as they are not the voter's employer or union representative. Vote Centers will also have bilingual assistance. Please call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683, to see what language assistance is available at a Vote Center near you.*

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- How do I find the closest Vote Center to me?

*Beginning 40 days before each election, you can find a list of Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box locations, in our County Voter Information Guides that will be mailed to each voter, and posted on our website.*

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- Can anyone in the State of California vote at a Santa Clara County Vote Center?

*No, only those that are registered or are eligible to register to vote in Santa Clara County may vote at a Vote Center in Santa Clara County.*

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- Are Vote Centers open on weekends or holidays?

*Vote Centers will be open as early as 10 days before Election Day. This includes two weekends and holidays that may occur within that timeframe.*

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- How many Vote Centers is Santa Clara County required to have?

*The number of Vote Centers is determined by the number of registered voters in the County. Based on our projected registration totals for 2020, Santa Clara County will provide up to 25 Vote Centers open for 11 days and up to 100 Vote Centers open for 4 days.*

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- What keeps a person from voting twice by going to a different Vote Center?

*The State of California has implemented a statewide voter registration database known as VoteCal. All counties are connected through VoteCal and will be able to determine if a voter has already voted anywhere in the State of California.*

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- What is a Ballot Drop Box?

*A Ballot Drop Box is a secure, accessible, and locked receptacle available for voters to drop-off Vote by Mail ballot envelopes beginning 28 days before the election. Drop Boxes will be available during the locations' regular business hours. No postage will be needed when using a Drop Box.*

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- How many Ballot Drop Boxes is Santa Clara County required to have?

*The number of Ballot Drop Boxes is determined by the number of registered voters in the County 88 days before Election Day. Based on projections for the March 2020 election, there will be approximately 79 Drop Boxes throughout Santa Clara County which is about 1 for every 15,000 registered voters. This includes one drive-thru/walk-up Ballot Drop Box located in front of the Registrar of Voters' Office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112.*

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- Will the Ballot Drop Boxes be secure?

*Inside Ballot Drop Boxes are secured, locked, and in full view of a person. The County has one large 24 hour drive-thru/walk-up Ballot Drop Box that is metal, locked, and bolted to the ground located outside the Registrar of Voters' Office.*

*Ballot Drop Boxes are made of durable material to withstand vandalism, removal and inclement weather. Ballots are retrieved on a regular schedule by election staff.*

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- How does the County select Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box locations?

*The County is working with the community to take suggestions and input on Vote Center and Ballot Drop Box locations. You can email [ROV-PrecinctOps@rov.sccgov.org](mailto:ROV-PrecinctOps@rov.sccgov.org) with suggestions for possible locations. Before use, all locations will be surveyed by the Registrar of Voters' Office to ensure they are accessible to voters with disabilities. Once a location is surveyed, our office will work directly with the site to confirm availability for the required timeframe in Elections Code 4005.*

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- What are the criteria that are considered for selecting Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box locations?

*California Elections Code 4005 refers to different criteria that must be considered when selecting Vote Centers and Ballot Drop Box locations. These include:*

- *Proximity to public transportation*
- *Communities with historically low Vote by Mail usage*
- *Population centers*
- *Language minority communities*
- *Voters with disabilities*
- *Communities with low rates of household vehicle ownership*
- *Low-income communities*
- *Communities of eligible voters who are not registered to vote and may need access to same day voter registration*
- *Geographically isolated populations*

*In addition, we must consider:*

- *Access to accessible and free parking at Vote Centers and Drop Box locations*
- *The distance and time a voter must travel by car or public transportation to a Vote Center and Drop Box location*
- *Ability for voters with disabilities to cast an independent private ballot*
- *Traffic patterns near Vote Centers and Drop Box locations*
- *The need for mobile Vote Centers in addition to the number of Vote Centers established.*
- *The need to open additional Vote Centers for a shorter period of time*
- *Facility availability and commitment to serve the voters*
- *Public input and suggestions*

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- I have a location that might serve as a Vote Center or Ballot Drop Box location, how do I let you know?

*We are always looking for potential Vote Center or Ballot Drop Box locations to serve the community! All potential locations must be surveyed by the Elections Office to ensure accessibility requirements are met. To recommend a location or obtain more information about the requirements for serving as a Vote Center, please contact us by email at ROV-PrecinctOps@rov.sccgov.org or Phone 408-299-7655.*

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- How do I become an election worker?

*You can find information on becoming an election worker using the following link: [Become an Election Worker](#).*

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- Does the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters' Office offer any apps for voters to use?  
*Yes, the SCCVOTE Mobile App, available for free download to mobile devices. Some of the features provided are:*
  - *A quick and easy access to register to vote online*
  - *Verifying your voter registration status*
  - *Finding the closest Vote Center and Ballot Drop Box location to you 30 days before an election*

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## 2. Standard FAQ: Voter Registration

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- [Why am I receiving multiple Jury Duty Summons?](#)

## ANSWERS TO FAQ'S ON VOTER REGISTRATION

- What are the requirements to register to vote?

*You may register to vote if:*

- *You are a United States citizen*
- *You are a resident of California*
- *You are at least 18 years of age (or will be by the date of the next election)*
- *You may pre-register to vote if you are 16 or 17 years old. You will automatically be registered to vote on your 18th birthday.*
- *You have not been found mentally incompetent by a court of law*
- *You are not:*
  - *Currently in a state or federal prison for a felony conviction*
  - *On parole for a felony conviction*

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- Can I pre-register to vote?

*Yes, if you are at least 16 years old and meet all other eligibility requirements. If you pre-register you will automatically be registered to vote on your 18th birthday. To pre-register to vote, see How do I register to vote question below.*

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- How do I register to vote?

*You have several options, you may:*

- *Register online using the following link: [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov)*
- *Complete a Voter Registration Form (available at most government offices, public libraries, and post offices)*
- *Request a Voter Registration Form be mailed to you by calling the Registrar of Voters' Office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683.*

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- Can I use my P.O. Box or Mail Drop Address as my address when I register?*No, you may use your P.O. Box or mail drop box address as your mailing address only. A residence address is required to determine your voting districts.*

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- I am homeless. How do I register?

*A residence address is required to determine your voting districts:*

- *A homeless person may register to vote at a location they state is the place where they spend most of their time. The person must provide a description of the location that is clear enough (such as cross streets) for the Registrar of Voters to establish that person's right to vote in a particular precinct. This ensures accurate election materials can be provided to this voter. In these instances, a mailing address needs to be provided for the voter to receive election materials.*

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- What identification is required to register?

*In most cases, a California voter is not required to show identification. However, if you are voting for the first time after registering to vote by mail and did not provide your California Driver's License number, California identification number or the last four digits of your Social Security Number on your registration form, you may be asked to show a form of identification when you go to the Vote Center.*

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- How do I check my registration status?

*You can check to see if you are registered to vote at [www.sccvote.org](http://www.sccvote.org) or [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov). You may also call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683.*

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- How do I check my voter registration status?

*You can check to see if you are registered using the following link: [Voter Registration Lookup tool](#) or call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683.*

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- When is it necessary to re-register?

*You must re-register whenever you change your:*

- *Name*
- *Political party*

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- Why is it important to keep my voter registration current?

*Your voter registration should have your current residence and mailing address to ensure that you receive the correct ballot material. Election mail is not forwarded.*

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

*In general, you do not need to re-register because you are registered to vote for as long as you remain at the same address To check your registration status, visit our website at [www.sccvote.org](http://www.sccvote.org) or call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683.*

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- I missed the registration deadline (15 days before Election Day), can I still vote?  
*Yes, you can take advantage of the new Conditional Voter Registration options, available 14 days before, up to, and on Election Day. Conditional Voter Registration is offered at the Registrar of Voters' Office and Vote Centers.*

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- What is Conditional Voter Registration?  
*If you did not register to vote by the 15-day voter registration deadline, you may conditionally register to vote and cast a provisional ballot by visiting the Registrar of Voters' Office or a vote center, during the period of 14 days prior to, and including, Election Day.*

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- When did Conditional Voter Registration go into effect?  
*Conditional Voter Registration became operative January 1, 2017, after the legislation was approved in 2016.*

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- Where do I need to go to register as a conditional voter?  
*You can register as a conditional voter at the Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112 or at any Vote Center as early as 10 days before an election through Election Day. You may also register to vote online; however, in order to cast a ballot for the election, you must come into the Registrar of Voter's Office or a Vote Center.*

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- Will my Conditional Voter Registration be treated the same as all other registrations?  
*Yes, your Conditional Voter Registration will be treated and processed the same as all other provisional ballots.*

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- What do I need to do to conditionally register and vote?  
*You need to complete a Voter Registration Form and then cast your ballot at the Registrar of Voters' Office or any Vote Center within the County. Please note, the Conditional Voter Registration ballot cannot be taken from the premises and returned at a later date.*

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- What is a Conditional Voter Registration ballot?  
*A Conditional Voter Registration ballot is a provisional ballot that will be processed upon verification of your Conditional Voter Registration.*

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- Can a Conditional Voter Registration ballot be mailed to me?  
*No, a Conditional Voter Registration ballot can only be issued in person at the County Registrar of Voters' Office (14 days before an election through Election Day) or at the Vote Centers.*

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- Will I be able to check whether or not my Conditional Voter Registration ballot has been counted?

*Yes, you may check the status of your provisional ballot 30 days after the election at [www.sccvote.org](http://www.sccvote.org) or <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/>. You may also call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683.*

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- I became a new citizen after the registration deadline, can I still register to vote?

*If you will become a U.S. citizen less than 15 days before the next election, you may still be able to register and vote. To do this, you must visit the Registrar of Voters' Office any time before the polls close on Election Day. You must present your Certificate of Naturalization and sign a form saying you are eligible to vote in California.*

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- How do I cancel my voter registration in Santa Clara County?

- *You can complete, sign and submit the Voter Action Request Form using the following link: [https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Documents/VARF\\_318.pdf](https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Documents/VARF_318.pdf). You may also call our office to request a form be mailed to you.*
- *You may also send a written request stating that you no longer want to be registered to vote in Santa Clara County along with your name, address, birth date and signature*
  - *Mail to Santa Clara County Registrar of Voters, 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112*
  - *Email as a scanned attachment to [voterinfo@rov.sccgov.org](mailto:voterinfo@rov.sccgov.org)*
  - *Fax the document to 408-998-7314*

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- How do I notify the Elections Office that a voter is deceased?

*The Registrar of Voters' Office receives monthly updates from the State and County of deaths within Santa Clara County. To request a voter's registration be cancelled, complete, sign and submit a Voter Action Request Form using the following link: [https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Documents/VARF\\_318.pdf](https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Register/Documents/VARF_318.pdf). You may also call our office to request a Voter Action Request Form be mailed to you.*

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- I believe I am registered, but can't find my record using the Voter Registration Lookup tool.

*When using the Voter Registration Lookup tool, enter your residence address and your date of birth in mm/dd/yyyy format. If you are still unable to locate your record, please call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683, for verification.*

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- May I sign a petition if I am not registered to vote?

*You may sign a petition; however, certain requirements must be met for your signature to be deemed valid during the verification process.*

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- I have been receiving political mail and phone calls at my home. Where are they getting my information?

*This information can be obtained from a variety of sources, including the voter registration list. Current law allows voter registration data to be provided to authorized persons or groups to be used for election, governmental, scholarly or political research purposes. If you would like to remove your phone number from your registration, please call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683 as it is not required for registration purposes.*

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- Why is Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) involved in voter registration?

*The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 permits persons conducting business at a DMV office to register to vote or update voter registration information.*

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

*Yes, Jury Duty Summons are pulled from the voter registration records as well as DMV records.*

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- Why am I receiving multiple Jury Duty Summons?

*If your name appears differently on your driver's license than your voter registration record, you may receive multiple notices. To remedy this situation, complete and return to the Registrar of Voters' Office a new Voter Registration Form with your name printed as it appears on your California Driver's License, or complete a new voter registration online at [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov). The Jury Commissioner may select jurors from lists provided by the DMV and the County Elections Office. Updating your voter record to match your California Driver's License or ID may eliminate multiple summons.*

### 3. Standard FAQ: Vote By Mail

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- [My son/daughter is away at school. Can I pick up their Vote by Mail ballot?](#)
- [I lost the envelope for my Vote by Mail ballot, how can I send in my ballot?](#)

#### ANSWERS TO FAQ'S ON VOTE BY MAIL

- When should I expect my Vote by Mail ballot to arrive?  
*Ballots are mailed beginning 29 days before an election. If you have not received your ballot two weeks before an election, please call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683.*

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- I am temporarily out of the county or state. Can I get my ballot mailed to a different address?  
*Yes, please call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683, and we will mail your ballot to your temporary address.*

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- How do I get a replacement ballot?  
*Please call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683, and we will mail you a replacement ballot. You may also pick up a replacement ballot from any Vote Center located in Santa Clara County, or at our office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112.*

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- Do I need postage to mail my ballot?  
*No, you do not need postage. All Vote By Mail ballots are mailed with the Return Envelope already postage paid by the County.*

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- How can I find the status of my Vote by Mail ballot?

*The status of your Vote by Mail ballot will be available beginning 29 days before each election.*

*You may check the status of your Vote by Mail ballot using the following link:*

*<https://eservices.sccgov.org/rov/?tab=ab>*

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- I am a U.S. citizen living temporarily (military service, employment or study program) outside the United States. Am I eligible to vote?

*Yes, as long as you meet the voting requirements and complete a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and return it to our office. You may obtain an application at any of the options listed below:*

- *Registrar of Voters' Office*
- *Voting Assistance office of any military base*
- *American Embassy or Consulate*
- *The following link: <https://www.fvap.gov/uploads/FVAP/Forms/fpca2013.pdf>*
- *You must notify our office of any changes to your mailing address*

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- When are overseas ballots mailed?

*Overseas ballots can be mailed between 60 and 45 days before an election. As an overseas voter, you may receive your ballot one of three ways: an email link, by mail, or by fax.*

*If you are an overseas voter and have not received your ballot four (4) weeks before the election, please contact our office for a replacement. You may contact us by: Phone 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683, Fax 408-998-7314, and Email [votebymail@rov.sccgov.org](mailto:votebymail@rov.sccgov.org)*

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- When is the last day to return my Vote by Mail ballot?

*Voted ballots sent through the mail must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received by the Registrar of Voters' Office no later than three days after the election.*

*Drop your ballot off at any Santa Clara County Ballot Drop Box or Vote Center, or at our office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112, no later than 8:00 p.m. on Election Day.*

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- My son/daughter is away at school. Can I pick up their Vote by Mail ballot?

*A ballot will automatically be mailed to their mailing address. If you need to pick up a replacement ballot for them, you may do so with a signed request from your son or daughter authorizing you to do so.*

*They may call our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683, and we will mail a ballot to their address.*

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- I lost the envelope for my Vote by Mail ballot, how can I send in my ballot?

*You may pick up a new Vote by Mail envelope at our office at 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112 or call our toll free number 866-430-8683 or drop in at any Vote Center in Santa Clara County.*

*Also, you may use a replacement ballot envelope at any Ballot Drop Box in Santa Clara County. Every Ballot Drop Box location will have extra blank envelopes. Please fill in the requested information and sign where indicated.*

*Or*

*Use a plain envelope and include the following on the outside: your name, residence address, and signature. Write the following statement, "I declare under penalty of perjury that: I am a resident of the precinct in Santa Clara County, California, from which I am voting; I am the person whose name appears on this envelope; I have not applied for and do not intend to apply for a Vote by Mail ballot from any other jurisdiction for this election." Place and seal your voted ballot in the plain envelope with the information above, insert the voted ballot plain envelope into a separate outgoing envelope, place the appropriate postage stamp and mail to: Registrar of Voters' Office, 1555 Berger Drive, Building 2, San Jose, CA 95112.*

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## 4. Standard FAQ: Candidate Services

- [Who are my elected representatives?](#)
- [How can I run for an elected office?](#)
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- [How do I place a measure on the ballot?](#)
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### ANSWERS TO FAQ ON CANDIDATE SERVICES

- Who are my elected representatives?

*You can find information on your elected representatives by calling our office at 408-299-8683 or 866-430-8683, or using the following link:*

*<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Documents/Office-Holders-List.pdf>*

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- How can I run for an elected office?

*You can find information on how to run for an elected office at the following link:*

*<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Pages/CandidateINFO.aspx>*

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- Where can I find past election results?

*You can find past election results at the following link:*

*<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Pages/Registrar-of-Voters.aspx>*

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- How do I place a measure on the ballot?

*You can find information on measures using the following link:*

*[https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Documents/Candidates\\_Measures%20Packet.pdf](https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Documents/Candidates_Measures%20Packet.pdf)*

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- How do I recall an elected official?

*You can find information on recalls using the following link:*

*<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/rov/Info/Pages/Recalls.aspx>*

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