

High School Voter Registration Toolkit



A comprehensive guide on how to hold a successful voter registration drive in a high school.

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Things you need to know.

Here are some answers to some of the many common questions that arise when talking about registering people to vote.

Why should I register to vote?

Voting means that your voice goes directly to those who represent you in government. If you don't like what you see in our government, this is your chance to change it. If you do like what you see, this is your way to reinforce it. Every single vote matters.

I am not old enough to vote. Why pre-register?

Pre-registering allows you to vote as soon the day you turn 18. Pre-registering at 16 or 17 engages you in the political process even before you can vote.

Who can register to vote in California?

California residents who are United States citizens age 18 or older may register to vote. California residents who are United States age 16 or 17 are eligible to preregister. You cannot register if you are in prison or on parole for a felony.

What do I need to register or pre-register to vote?

You are required to list one of three things to prove your identity. Either your California Driver's License number, California I.D. number, or the last four digits of your Social Security Number.

I may already be registered. How can I check?

You can check your registration status on registertovote.ca.gov. You will need to provide identification. If you can't track your status online, you can always re-register without penalty.

I am going to college in a different state. Where should I register?

If you register to vote by mail, your ballot will be sent your address in California and a parent or guardian can forward the ballot to you. This way you can vote in all California elections from anywhere in the world. If you want to register at your college address, check the state's voting requirements. You may need to establish residency for a certain amount of time before you can vote in that state.

I don't speak English. Can I register in another language?

California voter registration forms are available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese. These are accessible online or at a county registrar's office.

What do I do if I change my name, address, or political affiliation?

If any of these things change, re-registering is super easy. You can do it online at registertovote.ca.gov or just fill out a new form. Forms are available at county registrars' offices, as well as most government buildings including post offices and libraries.

Do I need to pick a party when I register to vote?

No. If you want to register without a political party preference, check the box that states so. The box will say something along the lines of "no party preference." This is what most people call "independent." Note that in a presidential primary, you can only vote for the party in which you are registered, but in California, you may vote in state and local primaries irrespective of your party-affiliation.

Can I be registered to vote in more than one place?

No. If you change your address you can re-register and your registration status will be for the most recent submission. You can always re-register again with a different address if you move.

If I register to vote, will I be chosen for jury duty?

Registering to vote does not make you more likely to be summoned for jury duty.

Step One: Setting Up the Drive.

Before registering students on campus, you will need to get permission from the administration.

Who to Contact:

1. Talk to the principal. Submit a request for a meeting and talk to him or her about the importance of getting students involved in politics. In the meantime:
2. Reach out to your student body leaders. For most schools, this will be your ASB. Ask them if they want to sponsor the voter registration drive and help you with publicity. You will need to make announcements and put up posters, so ASB approval will be important. ASB members will also likely offer to volunteer and help you, so ask them.
3. Talk to teachers, especially history and government teachers. These are the most likely teachers to help sponsor a voter registration drive. They know about the importance of civic engagement and are likely to encourage their students to register.

Next:

Once you get permission, you will have to work with your principal to pick a date. Choose a date without any other activities such as assemblies, field trips, or big games. Thursdays are a good choice because it gives you Friday to collect missing information and the weekend to organize the forms. The completed forms must be delivered to a registrar's office the following Monday. Completed forms must be submitted to the registrar's office within three business days, so having the drive on Thursday allows you the weekend to sort everything out.

Step Two: Advertising

How to advertise:

1. Hang up posters around school, template attached
2. Hand out flyers around campus, template attached
3. Make announcements over the PA system
"Hey (student body, i.e. Yankees or Bears), your voice matters to our government. If you don't like what you see, you have the power to help change it. On (date of drive) we will be hosting a voter registration drive on the (location) at (time). Everyone 16 and older is eligible to pre-register or register to vote. Make sure you come prepared with your California ID number, Driver's License number, or last four digits of your Social Security Number. See you there!"
4. Have your principal make a robocall to the parents
"Good evening parents and students. On (date of drive), (school) will be hosting a voter registration drive. This is an opportunity for all students aged 16 or older to pre-register or register to vote. We suggest everyone register now because this is a midterm/Congressional election year, and the primary is June 5th. Please have your child come to school on (date of drive) prepared to register with either their California Driver's License number, California Identification Card number, or the last four digits of their Social Security Number. We encourage you to discuss the importance of voting with your student. If you have any questions, have your student speak with (teacher/ASB sponsor). Thank you."
5. Make announcements in class
"Hey everyone, on (date of drive) we will be hosting a voter registration drive in (time frame). In California, all citizens 16 and older are eligible to pre-register or register to vote. Make sure you come prepared with your California ID number, Driver's License number, or last four digits of your Social Security Number. The drive will be held on the (location) at (time). It only takes a few minutes to register so I hope to see you all there! Any questions? Thank you!"

Step Three: Physically Organizing

Things you need to do:

1. Organize your volunteers
You are going to need student volunteers. These are the people who will go around and assist people in filling out their voter registration forms. The more volunteers you have, the more successful your voter registration drive will be. Try to have between 5 and 20 student volunteers who will have to attend a 20-30 minute training in advance of the drive.
2. Contact adult volunteers
You will also want some adult volunteers for credibility. Try contacting politically active parents, volunteers from local political clubs, or even teachers. I found it helpful to have one adult volunteer for every five to ten student volunteers. Adult volunteers will also need to pick up and deliver the forms.
3. Voter registration training
This is super important! You need to make sure that all of your volunteers have been properly briefed on how to fill out the voter registration forms. Please contact me at macybartlett@gmail.com for more information on training sessions.
4. Figuring out the setting
Where are you holding the drive? Do you need tables and chairs? Do you need access to a classroom? Make sure you work with your sponsor to figure out the best location. Try to focus in an area where the majority of students congregate. Registering people on the quad at lunch worked for me!
5. Get all your supplies
 - a. Clipboards (one per volunteer) — ask ASB or your PE department if you can use theirs
 - b. Black or blue pens (lots!)
 - c. Large manila folders for completed forms
 - d. You will also need to acquire registration forms from the [main county registrar's office](#). You will only get small amounts of forms (10ish) from other sites like branch offices, post offices or courthouses. You can order up to 500 at a time, and I suggest to pick up at least twice as many forms as you think you will need, this way each volunteer can have multiple forms. The Los Angeles County Registrar's Office is located in Norwalk at 2400 Imperial Hwy, Norwalk, CA 90650. It is open 8am to 5pm every weekday.

Step Four: A Quick Explanation of the most important information on the Voter Registration Form

This is based on order of the newest version of forms from the Secretary of State. The order may be different depending on the version of the forms you have but the information is the same.

1. Qualifications
Confirms citizenship status and age. If someone is unsure of their citizenship status, DO NOT HAVE THEM REGISTER. If they are not yet citizens, their status can be compromised. Tell them to register as soon as they are positive of their status. In addition, anyone convicted of a felony must complete their time (including parole) before registering to vote. If you are uncertain DOUBLE CHECK.
2. Legal Name
First, middle, and last name. Write legibly.
3. Identification
You only need to fill out one of the three numbers: California Driver's License Number, California ID Card number, or the last four digits of your social security number. The Driver's License number is an eight digit number that begins with a letter. It is also listed on a Driver's Permit. If they do not know this information, encourage them to register online at registertovote.ca.gov, tubovote.org, or other online registration sources.
4. Home Address
This is the address where you live. If you do not have a home, you can describe the area in which you spend the majority of your time, i.e. "under the overpass on National Blvd. and Robertson Blvd."
5. Mailing Address
Only fill out if your mailing address is different than your home address, i.e. a P.O. box.
6. Registration History
Only fill out if you are re-registering. In a high school, you will very rarely need to fill this out.
7. Vote by mail
Encourage them to check yes. Voting by mail is the best way to vote. Your ballot will be sent to your house directly and all you need to do is fill it out and send it back.

Postage is already paid for. If you still want to go to the polls, you can! Just bring identification. You can drop the vote-by-mail ballot at the polls you will be required to use a provisional ballot if you try to vote separately.

8. Political Party Preference

This is super important! You can NOT say anything partisan or sway someone's registration in any way. Make sure you understand each of the political parties so you can explain them in a non- partisan way. In the script I have provided a quick rundown of each party written by the party itself. If you want to register as an independent, check the box marked "No Party" or "No Party Preference." Make it clear that "American Independent" is not the same as "Independent". Let them know that in California there is a modified closed primary so you can only vote in your party in presidential primaries.

9. Optional Information

Fill out either phone number or email. This way, in case of an issue with your registration, you will be contacted and the issue will be fixed.

10. Affidavit

Sign and date in the box (MM/DD/YY). That's it! It's that easy!

Step Five: Finishing the job

Organize your forms

1. Collect all forms from your volunteers.
2. Double check that all the necessary boxes are filled out, the form is signed AND dated, etc.
3. If there is missing information DO NOT fill it out yourself, this is a legal document. Bring the forms back to school the next day and locate the student who missed writing the information.
4. Count up the number of completed forms so you can brag to your friends about how many people you registered and pre-registered.
5. Within three business days of completing the forms, deliver them to the county registrar's office.

Once a form is signed, it becomes your responsibility. If any completed forms are lost or turned in too late, you can be convicted for a felony on charges of mishandling legal documents. So please, please, please turn in your forms within three business days! You can bring them to registrar's office or mail them in.

Some Southern California Registrars

- Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder
12400 Imperial Highway
Norwalk, CA 90650
- Orange County Registrar of Voters
1300 South Grand Avenue, Building C
Santa Ana, CA 92705
- Ventura County Registrar of Voters
800 S Victoria Ave
Ventura, CA 93009

Step Six: Important Dates 2018.

Six dates you need to know.

May 21 Last day to register to vote for the 2018 primary election).
May 29 Last day to apply for vote-by-mail for the 2018 primary election).

June 5 2018 Primary Election

October 22 Last day to register to vote for the 2018 midterm election
October 30 Last day to apply for vote-by-mail for the 2018 midterm election

November 6 2018 Midterm/Congressional Election

Script for Volunteers

1. "Hi! Are you 16 years old or older?"
 - a. Yes— continue.
 - b. No— thank them and move on
2. "Would you like to register to vote?"
 - a. Yes— continue.
 - b. No— ask why. Have a conversation with them about the importance of voting.
DO NOT SAY ANYTHING PARTISAN!
3. "Great! It will only take a couple minutes."
4. "I have a series of questions I am required to ask you. Please just answer YES or NO."
 - a. Are you at least 16 years old?
 - b. Are you a US Citizen?
 - c. Are you a resident of California?
 - d. Are you currently on parole for a conviction for a felony?

If they answer YES, YES, YES, NO, continue with the form.

Any other answer makes them ineligible to register or pre-register to vote. If someone is unsure of their citizenship status, DO NOT HAVE THEM REGISTER. Tell them to register as soon as they are positive of their status. In addition, anyone convicted of a felony must complete their time (including parole) before registering to vote. If you are uncertain DOUBLE CHECK.

5. Assist them in filling out the form. Only register one person at a time so you can give them your full attention.
 - a. NO PARTY AFFILIATION = INDEPENDENT
 - b. Independents cannot vote in presidential primaries (2020)
6. Tear off the receipt and tell them how they can follow the progress of their form.
7. As soon as the form is filled out, put in DIRECTLY INTO THE ENVELOPE.
8. Thank them and congratulate them on their registration!

Political Party Descriptions

DEMOCRATIC PARTY

(Written by the Democratic Party) Since 1848, the Democratic National Committee has been the home of the Democratic Party, the oldest continuing party in the United States. Today we are millions of supporters strong, fighting for progress and helping elect Democrats across the country to state government, Congress, and the White House. There are several core beliefs that tie our party together: Democrats believe that we're greater together than we are on our own—that this country succeeds when everyone gets a fair shot, everyone does their fair share, and everyone plays by the same rules. Our party is focused on building an economy that lifts up all Americans, not just those at the top. That's why Democrats are working to make progress on issues like job creation, equal pay, education, health care, and clean energy.

REPUBLICAN PARTY

(Written by republicanviews.org) The Republican Party believes the best government for the people is one that is closest to the people, and therefore the government should not interfere unless they are needed. The strength of the nation lies within the individuals who live in the country, and therefore feel that the individual's freedom, dignity, and responsibility must come first and foremost in our government. Free enterprise and encouraging individual initiative are what has brought the country economic prosperity in the past, and what will continue to bring it prosperity today. The government must practice fiscal responsibility, and allow its people to keep the money that they work for. America should work to protect national freedom first, while working to spread peace, freedom, and human rights in the world.

GREEN PARTY

(Written by the Green Party) We are grassroots activists, environmentalists, advocates for social justice, nonviolent resisters and regular citizens who've had enough of corporate-dominated politics. Government must be part of the solution, but when it's controlled by the 1%, it's part of the problem. The longer we wait for change, the harder it gets. Don't stay home on election day. Everything we do is based on our four pillars: Our country's long wars and worldwide military presence are immoral and unsustainable. Our military budget must be cut dramatically. The human cost of climate change is too high. We need to get off fossil fuels and on to renewable energy. Falling wages and rising bills are hitting most of us, and the most vulnerable are hit the hardest. We demand a living wage and a real safety net. We demand public financing of elections, open debates, and more representative voting systems.

LIBERTARIAN PARTY

(Written by the Libertarian Party) Our slogan is that we are “The Party of Principle”, because we stand firmly on our principles. Libertarians strongly oppose any government interference into their personal, family, and business decisions. Essentially, we believe all Americans should be free to live their lives and pursue their interests as they see fit as long as they do no harm to another. Founded in 1971, we run many hundred of candidates every election cycle. These candidates seek positions ranging from City Council to President of the United States. Each of these candidates helps to give liberty a voice. We seek to substantially reduce the size and intrusiveness of government and cut and eliminate taxes at every opportunity. We believe that peaceful, honest people should be able to offer their goods and services to willing consumers without inappropriate interference from government. We believe that peaceful, honest people should decide for themselves how to live their lives, without fear of criminal or civil penalties. We believe that government’s only responsibility, if any, should be protecting people from force and fraud.

PEACE AND FREEDOM PARTY

(Written by the Peace and Freedom Party) The Peace and Freedom Party is committed to socialism, democracy, ecology, feminism and racial equality. We represent the working class, those without capital in a capitalist society. We organize toward a world where cooperation replaces competition, a world where all people are well fed, clothed and housed; where all women and men have equal status; where all individuals may freely endeavor to fulfill their own talents and desires; a world of freedom and peace where every community retains its cultural integrity and lives with all others in harmony.

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT PARTY

(Written by the American Independent Party) The American Independent Party gratefully acknowledges God as the Creator of all and appeals to Him for help in protecting all He has graciously given us. With all these gifts comes the right to use them justly. Hence all such rights are the gifts of God as affirmed in our Declaration of Independence. These include the right to life and liberty. God created Man with two great dimensions, individual and social. In so doing He gave us the right to associate with each other to take advantage of our rights and to fulfill our duties. The right to associate includes the right to choose one's associates, but does not include the right to force others to associate. God has imposed on men a duty to associate in governments to put a justified fear into the hearts of evildoers. These duties are given for the good of all, but not to deprive any of the rights they are designed to protect! Governments should never commit the crimes they are created to prevent! No association of men has any rights of itself, but only by reason of the rights contributed to it according to the covenant established among its members.

DO YOU WANT YOUR VOICE TO BE HEARD?

ARE YOU 16 YEARS OLD OR OLDER?

REGISTER TO VOTE!

ON _____

date

name of school

IS HOSTING A

VOTER REGISTRATION DRIVE

Who Can Pre-Register?

You can pre-register to vote in California if you are 16 or 17 years old and you are a United States citizen and resident of California. If you're going to be 18 by the next election (or already are) you'll be able to vote!

How Do I Register or Pre-Register?

Come to the quad at lunch on April 5th and talk to anyone at a table or with a clipboard. It only takes a few minutes.

Why Register Now Instead of When I'm 18?

Washington needs to hear what you want to see change in your country. You deserve a seat at the table. Claim it now.

What Do I Need to Register or Pre-Register to Vote?

Your California driver license or California identification card number or the last four digits of your social security number, and your date of birth.

**DON'T FORGET YOUR STATE ID, DRIVER'S LICENSE
or LAST 4 of YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER**