



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO OFFICE OF THE CLERK-RECORDER

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General Election 2026 Fact Sheet for Cal Poly & Cuesta Students

What do I need to know about registering to vote?

What contests appear on your ballot are determined by what you consider **home**. Because you currently live in SLO County, you are eligible to vote here as long as you are at least 18 and a U.S. citizen.

The specific contests on your ballot will be determined by what you report on your voter registration as your *residence address* (also called “domicile”). If you are from *outside* of San Luis Obispo and still consider that city/county/state your home, you might want to register there (or remain registered there). It is up to you where you are registered, but you can only be registered to vote in one location at a time.

How do I register to vote?

You can register to vote by filling out and returning a paper registration form—which is available from ASI and in downtown SLO at the Clerk-Recorder’s Office, as well as at libraries and post offices, among other places—or you can register online at **RegisterToVote.ca.gov**. Registering takes just a few minutes.

However you register to vote, you’ll be asked to provide a California driver’s license **or** CA ID number **or** the last four digits of your social security number. Any one of these three forms of ID will be sufficient. The online form asks for BOTH a CA driver’s license/ID AND the last four digits of your SSN, but as with the paper form it is okay to provide one or the other. And while you *can* submit your registration without any of these forms of ID, if you do, you will be required to show ID and proof of residency when you actually vote. (Note: As of now, this would be the only case in which you would be asked for ID in order to vote in California.)

When registering to vote, you will also need to provide a **residence address**—which can be tricky for students, who sometimes don’t know the physical address of their dorm, apartment, or house. Making sure that you have this info before you attempt to register will be helpful. For on-campus students, their physical address will be their dorm name (e.g., Poly Canyon Village or Yakitutu Hall). You’ll *also* provide a **mailing address**, which is where your official vote-by-mail ballot will be sent once your registration has been processed.

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How do I return my ballot once I've voted?

When you receive your ballot in the mail, you can vote and return it as soon as you want. The return envelope is pre-paid; all you need to do is sign it before mailing it, putting it in an official drop box, or delivering it to the Elections Office. It's always a great idea to vote as soon as you're able and then track your ballot's progress through BallotTrax: You can sign up for that at WheresMyBallot@sos.ca.gov.

In order to be counted, your ballot **MUST** be dropped in an official drop box or at a polling place (there will be one on campus at the PAC) **by 8pm on Election Day, November 3**. Or, if you mail it, the postmark **MUST** be on or before November 3. **We recommend mailing at least a week prior just to be safe**, since mail in this county goes to a USPS hub more than 75 miles away to be postmarked, meaning it often gets marked the day **after** you put it in an outgoing mailbox.

What is the deadline to register to vote?

The deadline to register online or by mail is October 19.

After October 19, you can register (and then immediately vote) in person at any Elections Office during business hours and through 8pm on Election Day, November 3.

In SLO, the Elections Office is at 1055 Monterey Street and open M-F from 8am-5pm; in Atascadero, the office is on the 2nd floor of the library at 6565 Capistrano Avenue and open 8:30-4pm (beginning October 26).

How does living on campus or off campus affect my ability to vote?

Once you are registered to vote, you will automatically be mailed a vote-by-mail ballot, which you can fill out and return by pre-paid mail, official drop box (including one in the Cal Poly UU), or in person at any polling location or Elections Office in the state of California.

As mentioned above, what contests are on your ballot will be determined by your *residence* address. You will have a different ballot if you live on campus than if you live in off-campus housing.

In either case, your vote-by-mail ballot will include the address of your assigned polling location in case you prefer to vote in person on Election Day.

Is Cal Poly part of the City of SLO?

No, and this is one reason your ballot would be different if you live on campus versus off campus. Off-campus students who live in SLO will have the contests for city council and mayor on their ballot, for instance, which on-campus students will not.

Do I need to re-register if I previously registered in another county or state?

You can still vote if you are registered back home, but you will need to make sure that you contact your hometown's local Elections Office to request that they mail your ballot to your SLO County mailing address.

If you would like to vote on local contests relevant to San Luis Obispo County and you are currently registered elsewhere, you will need to re-register. (You also need to re-register anytime you change

your name, address, or party affiliation.) If you re-register here in SLO County, you should contact your hometown's local Elections Office to cancel your previous registration.

What will be on my ballot?

As mentioned above, local contests on your ballot will be determined by the residence address listed on your voter registration. **All** SLO County General Election ballots will include U.S. Representative, State Senator, State Assembly, and state propositions. Note that your party affiliation—or status as a No Party Preference voter—will **not** impact what is on your General Election ballot; the only time party affiliation affects ballots is during a Presidential Primary.

If you register to vote prior to October 19 (or in person anytime before 8pm on Election Day), you will receive a voter information guide, which includes personal statements from candidates who appear on your ballot. You will also find a California State Voter Information Guide and more information online at SloVote.gov/November2026.

Can I go vote on Election Day if I haven't already registered?

Yes, but it will be a little different than if you had registered prior to October 19.

If you go to a polling place without previously registering, you will vote **provisionally**. What this means is that you will essentially be completing the voter registration form there on site and voting the ballot for that particular polling location (remember, what is on each ballot is determined by residence addresses, and polling locations are tied to specific address areas). After you vote, your ballot will be placed into a special provisional envelope, and it will be counted once the Elections Office has confirmed your eligibility to vote, and on which contests. As long as you are eligible, your vote will be counted.

Just like when you register ahead of time, you will be asked to provide a CA driver's license or ID or the last four digits of your SSN, as well as a residence and mailing address, so if you head to the polls wanting to vote provisionally, be sure to have this information handy.

Do I need to register/re-register for each election?

No, once you are registered, your registration will remain active as long as you vote regularly. However, if you change your name, address, or party affiliation, you will need to re-register.

Also, if you change your residence address but remain within SLO County, you should update your registration to reflect this so that your next ballot includes all contests on which you are eligible to vote. You can update a change of mailing address *within the county* by emailing the Elections Office at elections@co.slo.ca.us.

Where can I find more information or ask questions?

You can always access SLO County's official election website at SloVote.gov, or you can call the Elections Office at (805) 781-5228 or email elections@co.slo.ca.us.