

# Public Communications Guide

## California Gubernatorial Recall Election

September 14, 2021



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OFFICE OF  
**ASSESSOR-COUNTY CLERK-  
RECORDER & ELECTIONS**  
COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

**MARK CHURCH**  
CHIEF ELECTIONS OFFICER &  
ASSESSOR-COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER

Dear Election Partners:

It is my pleasure to present our Public Communications Guide for the September 14, 2021 California gubernatorial Recall Election.

This guide is created to recognize our unprecedented circumstances of administering an election during a global pandemic. We respond to a variety of questions and comments from voters, candidates, interest groups, community organizations, the media and others about the safety, access, and logistics of voting this September. We aim to equip our election partners with a comprehensive communications toolkit, ensuring a unified message to our voters that voting in San Mateo County is safe, secure and convenient.

To help you understand and provide information about election rules, procedures, dates and activities, and to do so with uniformity among all the members and volunteers within your organization, we have put together this reference guide. We ask you to share this guide with each one of your associates who will be communicating with voters.

The Public Communications Guide contains:

1. Election Messaging during COVID-19
2. Important Dates and Deadlines
3. The Mechanics of the All-Mailed Ballot - Vote Center Election
4. Frequently Asked Questions
5. Tools and Resources

My staff will field many calls and inquiries, but many voters will call you as a trusted and familiar source of information. Please don't hesitate to refer people to our office for assistance or additional information at 650.312.5222 or [registrar@smcacre.org](mailto:registrar@smcacre.org). Our election website, [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org), is also a great resource for you and the public.

Please direct questions related to this document to our Elections Supervisors, Michael Lui at 650.312.5238 or [MLui@smcacre.org](mailto:MLui@smcacre.org) and Martin McTaggart at 650.312.5316 or [mmctaggart@smcacre.org](mailto:mmctaggart@smcacre.org).

Sincerely,

Mark Church

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## Important Dates and Deadlines

See Elections Website Calendar: <https://www.smcacre.org/post/september-14-2021-election-calendar>

## Elections Messaging During COVID-19

### Safe, Secure and Convenient Voting Options

Ballots for the September 14, 2021 California Gubernatorial Recall Election will be mailed to all registered voters in mid August. As a leader in California Vote-by-Mail Elections, San Mateo County has established the highest standards of excellence for Vote-by-Mail Elections. Voting by mail is safe, secure and convenient in this COVID-19 environment. Voters may vote from the safety and convenience of their homes, vote in person at one of our 20 Vote Centers or use our new Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail Ballot system.

## Mechanics of the All-Mailed Ballot – Vote Center Election

### All-Mailed Ballot – Vote Center Election

San Mateo County will conduct the September 14, 2021 California Gubernatorial Recall Election as an All-Mailed Ballot – Vote Center Election.

In the middle of August, every voter in the County will be mailed an Official Ballot, postage-paid return envelope and voting instructions. Delivery of the official ballots by the U.S. Postal Service to an individual voter will depend on the voter's local mail service. Many voters will vote as soon as they get the official ballot.

Voters may return the ballot through the mail using the postage-paid return envelope. Returned ballots postmarked on or before September 14 will be accepted provided the ballots are received by September 21.

Voters can also return their official ballots in-person at a Vote Center or Ballot Drop Box.

In order for a ballot to be counted:

1. The ballot **MUST** be received on time.
2. The voter's signature on the return envelope **MUST** match the signature in the voter's registration record. (This signature may be from their driver's license or state id.)

### Ballot Drop Box Locations & Hours of Operation

42 accessible Ballot Drop Box Locations will be available beginning 29 days before Election Day\*\*. Outdoor Ballot Drop Boxes will be open 24/7 until 8 p.m. on Election Day. Indoor Ballot Drop Boxes are open during the building hours of operation of each location. Locations for all boxes are listed on our website here: [www.smcacre.org/ballot-drop-box-locations](http://www.smcacre.org/ballot-drop-box-locations) or go to [smcvote.org](http://smcvote.org) and click Ballot Drop Box Locations.

\* Note: City Hall Ballot Drop Box Locations are open during regular city hall business hours including on Election Day. City Hall hours may vary.

+ Under California Elections Code Section 4005, “a vote center that includes an exterior ballot drop box counts only as a single ballot drop location.”

### Vote Centers Locations & Hours of Operation

A complete list of Vote Centers and their hours of operation can be found on our website here: [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org) and click Vote Center Locations. An interactable Vote Center search/locator can be found on our website here: [www.smcacre.org/vote/all](http://www.smcacre.org/vote/all)

Voters may drop off ballots, get a new ballot or vote independently and privately on a ballot marking tablet at any Vote Center. All Vote Centers are accessible, and personnel will be on site to help voters requesting assistance.

All Covid-19 safety recommendations will be followed (masks, hand sanitizer, single use pens, etc.)

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Election Specific:** <https://www.smcacre.org/post/september-14-2021-california-gubernatorial-recall-election-faqs>

**Overview:** <https://www.smcacre.org/elections-faqs>

## Tools and Resources

### Community and Voter Outreach Materials

The San Mateo County Registration & Elections Division is conducting a comprehensive outreach program which is described on our website [www.smcacre.org/california-voters-choice-act](http://www.smcacre.org/california-voters-choice-act).

There you can view our:

- Community & Voter Outreach Plan details how we will use technology, traditional media, direct-to-voter mailings, and community engagement to increase voter participation in the All-Mailed Ballot – Vote Center Election.
- Community Partners
- Download the [Voter Education and Outreach Toolkit](#)

### Shuttle Services

Since there will be fewer polling places during this all-mailed ballot election, voters may want to plan transportation to and from the Vote Centers and City or Town Halls. We have alerted San Mateo County Paratransit to this need. If a voter is certified to use Redi-Wheels, they should call the number on their card at least one day in advance or call the SamTrans customer service center at 1.800.660.4287.

### Online Voter Registration

Voters may now register to vote online at [www.registertovote.ca.gov](http://www.registertovote.ca.gov). The deadline to register for this election is 11:59 p.m. on August 30, 2021. See our website [www.smcacre.org/register-vote](http://www.smcacre.org/register-vote) for more information about registering to vote.

### Personalized Voter Information and Resources

Voters can receive personalized voting information on our website at [www.smcacre.org/my-election-info](http://www.smcacre.org/my-election-info).

This convenient tool allows voters to access information at every stage of the election process. By entering his or her house number, zip code, and birth date (mmddyyy) into the form, the voter will be able to:

- Confirm their voter registration status
- Find Vote Center information for this election
- View and/or Print the Sample Ballot & Official Voter Information Pamphlet
- Request a replacement Vote by Mail ballot
- Track & confirm the dates the ballot was mailed to the voter and received by the Elections Office

## Important Websites

- San Mateo County Registration & Elections Division  
[www.smcacre.org](http://www.smcacre.org) and [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org)  
Twitter & Instagram @SMCvote, YouTube - smcvote
- California Secretary of State  
[www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)  
@CASOSvote
- League of Women Voters  
[votersedge.org](http://votersedge.org) and [easyvoterguide.org](http://easyvoterguide.org)

## Sample Articles for Community News

We have drafted samples of articles you may like to use in newsletters or other venues to give your community more information about the September 14, 2021 California Gubernatorial Recall Election. Feel free to copy, paste and send.

### **A. Approximately 150 words**

Need-to-Knows about September's All-Mailed – Vote Center Ballot Election:

#### **WHEN?**

- Watch for your ballot in the mail in mid August.
- Voter Registration closes on August 30, 2021. Pick up a paper voter registration card or go online [registertovote.ca.gov](http://registertovote.ca.gov) by 11:59 p.m. August 30. Postmarks count.
- Voters not registered can still vote. Stop by at a Vote Center in the County, register and vote.
- Return your ballot by Election Day, September 14, 2021. Postmarks count.

#### **WHERE?**

- At home, at work, or on the go! Cast a Vote by Mail ballot starting mid August
- 20 Vote Centers and 42 Ballot Drop Box locations

#### **HOW?**

- Vote-by-Mail: US Postal Service. Return or postmark your ballot by September 14
- Drop Off Voted Mail Ballot at any Vote Center or Ballot Drop Box Locations in San Mateo County starting August 16 through 8 p.m. on Election Day
- Vote in Person at a Vote Center starting August 16

#### **WHAT?**

- [www.smcacre.org/current-election](http://www.smcacre.org/current-election) shows what is up for election
- [www.smcacre.org/my-election-info](http://www.smcacre.org/my-election-info) shows what is on YOUR ballot

**B. Approximately 250 words**

Starting in mid August, all registered voters will be mailed an Official Ballot with a postage-paid return envelope for the September 14, 2021 California Gubernatorial Recall Election. Voting by Mail is safe, secure and convenient. Voters may return their ballot in the mail, to a Ballot Drop Box or at a Vote Center. New to this election, voters can use “Where’s my ballot?”, a new feature enabling voters to track their ballots from the moment they are mailed by our office to the time they are returned. Sign up at [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org) to receive text alerts, email notifications, and updates. If voters haven’t received their ballot by August 26, contact the Registration & Elections Division at 650.312.5222 or registrar@smcacre.org.

For in-person voting, voters may visit any one of 20 Vote Centers in San Mateo County. All Vote Centers will comply with County Health Department and CDC COVID-19 safety standards. Voters must wear masks and adhere to all social distancing practices. Three Vote Centers will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from August 16 to September 3 (weekdays only). 8 Vote Centers will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from September 4 to September 10. 20 Vote Centers will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from September 11 to September 12. All 20 Vote Centers will be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on September 14 (Election Day). At a Vote Center, voters can drop off their voted ballot at our Curbside Ballot Drop-Off, get a new or replacement ballot or vote on a ballot marking tablet. Check the Sample Ballot & Voter Information Pamphlet or [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org) for location details.

### **C. Approximately 370 words**

Dear Voter,

As the September 14, 2021 California Gubernatorial Recall Election approaches, we are providing you information on how you can vote safely, securely, and conveniently this election during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting in mid August, all registered voters will be mailed an Official Ballot with a postage-paid return envelope for the September 14, 2021 California Gubernatorial Recall Election. Voting by Mail is safe, secure and convenient. Return your ballot in the mail, to a Ballot Drop Box or at a Vote Center.

New to this election, you can use “Where’s my ballot?”, a new feature enabling voters to track their ballots from the moment they are mailed by our office to the time they are returned. Sign up at [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org) to receive text alerts, email notifications, and updates. If you haven’t received your ballot by August 26, contact the Registration & Elections Division at 650.312.5222 or [registrar@smcacre.org](mailto:registrar@smcacre.org).

For in-person voting, you may visit any one of 20 Vote Centers in San Mateo County. All Vote Centers will comply with County Health Department and CDC COVID-19 safety standards. Voters must wear masks and adhere to all social distancing practices. Three Vote Centers will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from August 16 to September 3 (weekdays only). 8 Vote Centers will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from September 4 to September 10. 20 Vote Centers will be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from September 11 to September 12. All 20 Vote Centers will be open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on September 14 (Election Day). At a Vote Center, voters can drop off their voted ballot at our Curbside Ballot Drop-Off, get a new or replacement ballot or vote on a ballot marking tablet. Check your Sample Ballot & Voter Information Pamphlet or [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org) for location details.

If you would like to learn more, please visit [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org) where you can find in-depth information on this upcoming election, including Ballot Drop Box and Vote Center locations and hours of operation.

Let’s go vote!

Regards,

Your name

## Suggested Hashtags

### Specific to September 14, 2021 California Gubernatorial Recall Election

- MoreDaysMoreWays
- #DontDelayVoteToday
- #SeptemberRecallElection
- #CaliforniaRecallElection
- #smcVote2021
- #smcvote

## Links and Website Buttons

- California Voter's Choice Act: SB 450 [www.smcacre.org/california-voters-choice-act](http://www.smcacre.org/california-voters-choice-act)
- Register to Vote: [registertovote.ca.gov/](http://registertovote.ca.gov/)
- Election Overview Splash Page: [www.smcvote.org](http://www.smcvote.org)
- My Info: <https://www.smcacre.org/VoterLookup>
- Twitter @smcvote: [twitter.com/smcvote](https://twitter.com/smcvote)
- Instagram @smcvote: <https://www.instagram.com/smcvote/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/CountyofSanMateo>
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/user/democracylive](http://www.youtube.com/user/democracylive)
- Go Green!: [www.smcacre.org/go-green](http://www.smcacre.org/go-green)
- Subscribe to Our Mailing List: [service.govdelivery.com/accounts/CASMATEO/subscriber/new](http://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/CASMATEO/subscriber/new)
- Inscribirse para Votar: [registertovote.ca.gov/zh/](http://registertovote.ca.gov/zh/)
- 登記投票: [registertovote.ca.gov/zh/](http://registertovote.ca.gov/zh/)
- [Voter Registration](#)
- [Voting Options](#)
- [Candidates & Campaigns](#)
- [Elections](#)
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