

SLO County

**A Citizen's Guide to Voting
in the
November 3, 2020 General Election**

¹¹ *SLO County Supervisors Reject New Voting System.* <https://www.kcbx.org/post/slo-county-supervisors-reject-new-voting-system-2020-election-stream/0>

¹² *California rejected 100K mail-in ballots because of mistakes.* Jul 14, 2020. <https://www.ksby.com/news/election-2020/california-rejected-100k-mail-in-ballots-because-of-mistakes>

¹³ Election Summary Report March 3, 2020 Presidential Primary Election https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/Forms-Documents/Elections-and-Voting/Past-Elections/Primary-Elections/2020-03-03-Presidential-Primary/Reports-and-Results/ElectionSummaryReportRPT-2020-03-25-FINAL_OFFICIAL.aspx

¹⁴ SLO Clerk/Recorder update to County Supervisors 7/7/2020. See Item #27. <https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/meeting/Details/1279>

¹⁵ California Assembly Bill AB 860. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB860

¹⁶ *California's 2020 all-mail election, explained.* <https://calmatters.org/explainers/california-all-mail-election-explained-november-2020/#85483992-c49c-4aef-b16a-b213aff4178c>

¹⁷ CA Sec of State RAVBM FAQ <https://votingsystems.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vendors/ravbm-faq2.pdf>



How to Vote

Developing the capability, knowledge, and habits to be an informed, competent voter - a civic skill.

Specific to: San Luis Obispo County, CA

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Rev: 2020-08-09A

Download a PDF at <http://CivicSkills.org>

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Introduction.

The purpose of this guide is to provide knowledge, methods, and tools to enable citizens to become more effective voters.

U.S. citizens, with a few exceptions, have the right and privilege to vote. Historically this right has been hard-fought and retaining it will be subject to continuous pressures. However, [U.S. Voting and Election Laws](#) and the [California Voter's Bill of Rights](#)¹ offer a wide range of rights and protections.

California is committed to raising the voter registration and voting rate. And partly due to the California New Motor Voter (CNMV) program enacted in 2018, nearly 80% of eligible voters are registered. However:

- In each statewide election in California since 1972, less than 60% of eligible voters have voted.
- Approximately 20% of eligible voters in California are not registered to vote.
- In a number of California counties, less than 70% of eligible voters are registered to vote.
- In the 2014 California General Election, only 52% of eligible youth were registered to vote and only 8% of eligible youth, ages 18 to 24, cast a ballot.²
- In the 2018 California General Election, only 39.9% of eligible Cal Poly - San Luis Obispo students cast a ballot.³
- In the 2018 California General Election, only 36.1% of eligible Cuesta College students cast a ballot.⁴

Most of the information related to voting focuses on registering to vote and encouraging people to vote. Very little material exists to help people understand how to vote, i.e. register; gather and organize issue and candidate information; evaluate the information; make voting decisions; determine where, when, and how to vote; vote; track your vote and make sure it was counted; and monitor the election processes and outcome.

If this looks a little bit like a project, well it is. The supposition is that voting skills and habits can be improved over time if voting is treated as an important project, rather than an event.

Fair Elections During a Crisis: Urgent Recommendations in Law, Media, Politics, and Tech to Advance the Legitimacy of, and the Public's Confidence in, the November 2020 U.S. Elections. April 2020.
<https://www.law.uci.edu/faculty/full-time/hasen/2020ElectionReport.pdf> (report)
<https://www.law.uci.edu/faculty/full-time/hasen/election-recommendations/> (presentation)

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End Notes

¹ Section 1: Ensuring and Protecting the Rights of Every Voter
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voting-resources/voting-california/help-strengthen-our-democracy/poll-worker-info/poll-worker-training-standards/section-one/>

² AB-1036 Elections: civic outreach and voter engagement. (2019-2020). See Text in Section 1 of AB-1036. https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1036

³ The September 2019 Cal Poly-SLO Report from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Provided by Cal Poly Institutional Research 8/4/2020.

⁴ The September 2019 Cuesta College Report from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Provided by Cuesta College Institutional Research 9/27/2019.

⁵ Super Consolidated Polling Place with Vote Center-like Features. A Super Consolidated Polling Place with Vote Center-like Features serves voters regardless of the address of their voter registration. This option is allowed under Executive Order N-67-20 and enables non-Voter's Choice Act counties to provide services in a manner resembling Vote Centers. <https://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/statewide-elections/2020-general/county-survey-july.pdf>

⁶ News Literacy Toolkit is made possible through a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, and in partnership with the Pacific Library Partnership.

⁷ *What is Design Thinking and Why Is It So Popular?* By Rikke Dam and Teo Siang. <https://www.interaction-design.org/literature/article/what-is-design-thinking-and-why-is-it-so-popular>

⁸ *Wicked problems, workable solutions: lessons from a public life.* By Daniel Yankelovich. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

⁹ Values-based Decision Making and Value-based Decision Making are different, but somewhat related. Value-based decision making assumes that choices are made via the maximization of some objective function, e.g. a computed expected value.

¹⁰ Kahneman, Daniel. *Thinking, Fast and Slow.* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

San Luis Obispo County voter statistics. Voter Registration by SOS District Voter Registration Counts, Last Updated 7/3/2020. <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/Forms-Documents/Elections-and-Voting/Non-Election-Specific/Reports/Report-of-Registration-Secretary-of-State.aspx> (4 August 2020).

League of Women’s Voters of CA Education Fund. *Voter Registration*. N.d. <https://cavotes.org/vote/how-vote/voter-registration> (4 August 2020).

Voter’s Edge California. Find in-depth information about what’s on your ballot. N.d. [MapLight](#) and the [League of Women Voters of California Education Fund](#) collaborated to empower voters to access the information they need to vote with confidence. Their partnership marries Smart Voter’s authoritative coverage of election contests, candidates, and ballot measures with MapLight’s deep expertise in public data and technology. The result is Voter’s Edge California, which provides top-to-bottom ballot and campaign finance information in one easy-to-use site, giving voters instant access to political information of unparalleled depth and transparency. <http://votersedge.org/ca> (4 August 2020).

Easy Voter Guide. *The Easy Voter Guide*. N.d. The Easy Voter Guide is a collaboration of the League of Women Voters® of California Education Fund and the California State Library. [The November 2020 *Easy Voter Guide* will be available to download on September 4, 2020. <http://www.easyvoterguide.org>]. (7 August 2020)

Vote411.org. Launched by the League of Women Voters Education Fund (LWVEF) in October of 2006, VOTE411.org is a "one-stop-shop" for election related information. <https://www.vote411.org/> (4 August 2020)

California AB-700 Pupil instruction: voter education. (2013-2014). Passed. Mandates that voter education be included in high school American government and civics classes. Schools must teach students about the importance of voting, how to register to vote and how to understand voter information handbooks and other materials in order to “become an informed voter.” http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billNavClient.xhtml?bill_id=201320140AB700

California AB-773 Voter education: high school pupils. (2019-2020). Passed, but vetoed. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB773 (12 December 2019).

California AB-1913 Voter education: high school pupils. (2019-2020). Pending. California Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez reintroduced the bill (AB-773) this session as AB-1913. http://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB1913

Lehrer, Jonah. *How We Decide*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009.

Rubin, Theodore Isaac. *Overcoming indecisiveness: the eight stages of effective decision making*. New York: Harper & Row, c1985.

Benson, Buster. *Why Are We Yelling?: The Art of Productive Disagreement*. New York: Portfolio/Penguin, 2019

Nisbett, Richard E. *Mindware: Tools for Smart Thinking*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.

What’s new this election.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the voting options and processes for the SLO County November 3, 2020 election will be somewhat different from the past. The net affect of several new Executive Orders by Governor Newsom, and related bills passed or pending by the California Legislature ([EO N-64-20](#), [EO N-67-20](#), [AB 860](#), [SB 423](#)) will be that:

- Every registered voter receives a ballot in the mail – a Mail-in-Ballot.
- A ballot tracking system, called *Where’s My Ballot?* from BallotTrax, utilizes Intelligent Mail Barcodes on envelopes to inform voters of the location and status of their ballot.
- 22 Voter Service Centers (VSC) will replace the 74 traditional polling places and will operate for 4 days - 3 days prior to and on election day.⁵ Voters can vote at any VSC.
- The County can begin processing early votes up to 29 days before Election Day, and count ballots they receive up to 17 days after the polls close — as long they are postmarked by Election Day, 11/3/2020.
- Health and safety protocols and PPE will be utilized to safeguard voters and poll workers at the Voter Service Centers.

Important dates.

Date	Description
September 24, 2020	California Voter Information Guide mailed to registered voters beginning on this date. PDF available online here .
October 5, 2020	Vote-by-Mail ballots, sent to every registered voter, in the mail. CA law: begin mailing no later than 10/5.
October 6, 2020	Ballot drop boxes open. From 10/6 - 11/3/2020.
October 19, 2020*	Last day to register to vote. May conditionally register 10/20 - 11/3/2020.
October 27, 2020	Last day that county election officials will accept any voter’s application for a Vote-by-Mail ballot to be MAILED. Vote-by-Mail ballots are still available after October 27 th , but only to voters who come to the SLO County Clerk-Recorder’s office.
October 31, 2020	All 22 Voter Service Centers open 10/31/2020 – 11/3/2020. The first 3 days of voting will be from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.
November 3, 2020	Election Day! California General Election (7:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m.)
November 20, 2020	Last day for SLO County Clerk-Recorder to receive a Vote-by-Mail ballot postmarked no later than 11/3/2020.

Elements of voting.

1 - Register

Have you already registered to vote? Check your voter registration status online at <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/> or <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/All-Services/Voter-Status-Lookup.aspx>

Register to vote. Register online at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/> or via a paper voter registration form available at a library or DMV.

- Make sure to understand the difference between registering with or without a party affiliation, and the effect on voting in a primary election. Note also that American Independent, Other, and No Party Preference are not equivalent. <https://calmatters.org/projects/california-2020-presidential-primary-voting-rules-register-democrat-republican-independent/> and <https://my.lwv.org/california/article/how-choose-political-party-when-registering-vote>
- * You can “conditionally” register to vote at your county elections office or Voter Service Center after the 10/19/2020 voter registration deadline. <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/same-day-reg/> You may be required to vote a Provisional Ballot. A Provisional Ballot is utilized when a voter's eligibility can't be determined, such as when their name doesn't appear in the voter roster. The voter is allowed to vote a ballot, which is placed into an envelope (instead of the ballot box). These ballots are evaluated during the canvass period. Once the voter's eligibility is determined to be valid, the voter's ballot is then counted during subsequent ballot counting.
- A recent bill ([SB 207](#)) makes it easier for voters who are already registered in their county to update their address or political party preference by completing an affidavit instead of a conditional voter registration application during the period 10/20 – 11/03/2020. Voters must appear in person and should bring their Vote-by-Mail ballot with them – if they were issued one.

Youth can pre-register. If you're 16 or 17, pre-register (at the Registration URL above) and your registration will be activated automatically when you turn 18.

https://www.eac.gov/sites/default/files/eac_assets/1/6/EMG_chapt_13_august_26_2010.pdf

- Conditional registration. When a voter registers or re-registers within the 14-day period before an Election Day, they are conditionally registered and may cast a provisional ballot. The provisional ballot is not processed until their conditional registration is evaluated and becomes effective. <https://www.sos.ca.gov/administration/regulations/current-regulations/elections/conditional-voter-registration/>
- Curing or cure, or a notice to cure. A voter is notified of an issue with their ballot, such as an ambiguous signature, and given an opportunity to correct it.
- Provisional ballot. Ballot provided to individuals who claim they are registered and eligible to vote but whose eligibility or registration status cannot be confirmed when they present themselves to vote. Once voted, such ballots must be kept separate from other ballots and are not included in the tabulation until after the voter's eligibility is confirmed. In some jurisdictions this is called an affidavit ballot.
- Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM). Assembly Bill 860 permits any voter to cast a ballot using a certified remote accessible vote by mail system, regardless of whether the voter is a voter with disabilities or a military or overseas voter.¹⁷
- U.S. Elections Assistance Commission, Glossary of election terminology. <https://www.eac.gov/election-officials/glossaries-of-election-terminology>
- Ballotpedia, Glossary of election policy terms. https://ballotpedia.org/Glossary_of_election_policy_terms

Reference Information

U.S. Government. U.S. Voting and Election Laws. N.d. <https://www.usa.gov/voting-laws> (4 August 2020)

California Secretary of State. *Elections and Voter Information*. N.d. <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/> and <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/election-2020/> (4 August 2020).

San Luis Obispo County Clerk-Recorder. Registrar of Voters. *Elections and Voting*. N.d. <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/Elections-and-Voting.aspx> <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/All-Services/Elections-and-Voting/Elections-Conducted-by-County-of-San-Luis-Obispo/November-3,-2020-Presidential-General-Election.aspx> (4 August 2020).

day. See -- *The Official Canvass of the Vote*.

<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/official-canvass/>

- The deadline to cure a VBM issue is two days before the completion of the canvass.
- The deadline to complete canvass of election results is Tuesday, December 1, 5pm.

Tools

- TurboVote helps subscribers register to vote, find polling places, and research candidates and measures. The app was launched by Democracy Works and is used by many colleges, including Cal Poly. <https://turbovote.org/>
- Mailin2020.org provides Vote-by-Mail information for every state. <https://mailin2020.org>
- The Google Civic Information API lets developers build applications that display civic information to their users. <https://developers.google.com/civic-information/> and <https://developers.google.com/civic-information/docs/v2/>
- Decide Better Together by Nobl. <https://thedecider.app/side-by-side-comparison> and <https://thedecider.app>
- Gapminder provides free data visualization tools to dismantle misconceptions and promote a fact-based worldview. <https://www.gapminder.org/tools/-?chart-type=bubbles>
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/frequently-asked-questions/>
- Voting Law Compliance Handbook. A Voter's Guide to Safeguard California's Election Process, Updated January 2020. <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/publications-and-resources/voting-law-compliance-handbook/>
- Alternative voting systems (i.e. alternatives to the plurality or winner-take-all system we currently use). <https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/alternative-voting-systems.aspx>

Glossary.

- Canvass. Compilation of election returns and validation of the outcome that forms the basis of the official results by the County.

2 - Gather information

Acquire election and voter information from county and state election officials, as well as independent nonpartisan sources.

- California Presidential Primary Election Official Voter Information Guide. A PDF is available and the Guide will be mailed starting 9/24/2020. <https://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/>
- SLO County Voter Information Guide and a Ballot. This will be mailed starting 10/5/2020.
- Easy Voter Guide. <http://www.easyvoterguide.org/>
- Voter's Edge California. <http://votersedge.org/ca>
- Ballotpedia is the digital encyclopedia of American politics and elections. https://www.ballotpedia.org/Main_Page
- BallotReady. <https://www.ballotready.org/>
- Calmatters is a nonprofit, nonpartisan newsroom. <https://calmatters.org>

3 - Evaluate the information

- Web Literacy for Student Fact-checkers by Michael A. Caulfield. <https://webliteracy.pressbooks.com>
- News Literacy Toolkit (Pacific Library Partnership).⁶ <http://plpinfo.org/news-literacy-toolkit>
- Is This Source or Information Good (American Library Association)? <https://library.csuchico.edu/help/source-or-information-good>
- FactCheck.org (A Project of The Annenberg Public Policy Center). <https://www.factcheck.org/hot-topics/>
- Fake News, Propaganda, and Misinformation: Learning to Critically Evaluate Media Sources (Cornell University Library). http://guides.library.cornell.edu/evaluate_news
- Pros & Cons of Current Issues. <https://2020election.procon.org/>
- CA Secretary of State, Election Myths ([VoteSure Initiative](https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/election-2020/election-myths/)). <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/election-2020/election-myths/>

4 - Use an appropriate decision-making method

The League of Women Voters has outlined an evaluation process for candidates: *How to Judge a Candidate*. <https://www.lwv.org/blog/how-judge-candidate>

However, more and more of the items we're voting on in California are considered "wicked problems," meaning complex and tangled (not evil). A wicked

problem is a social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve for as many as four reasons: 1) incomplete or contradictory knowledge 2) the number of people and opinions involved 3) the large economic burden and 4) the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems.

Two methods that have proven to be effective on these types of problems are *design thinking* and *deliberative dialogue*. They may appear to be quite different, but are composed of the same basic elements (framing, trust, empathy, ideation, the exposure of assumptions, prototyping, action, etc.). And both utilize the perspective of others, gained through discussion.

Design Thinking revolves around an interest in gaining a deep understanding of the people for whom products or services are being designed - empathy. And it helps us in the process of questioning: questioning the problem, questioning the assumptions, and questioning the implications. It is useful in tackling problems that are ill-defined or for which there isn't a single, "correct" answer (e.g. weight of a cell phone), by re-framing the problem in human-centric ways, creating many ideas in brainstorming sessions, and adopting a hands-on approach in prototyping and testing. Design thinking also involves ongoing experimentation: sketching, prototyping, testing, and trying out concepts and ideas.⁷

Deliberative Dialogue is a mode of communication in which participants systematically consider the strengths and weaknesses of an issue in a climate of mutual respect:

- Deliberation may be defined as a process in which a wide range of competing arguments are given careful and systematic consideration in small-group discussions.
- Dialogue is a process of relationship building. It is an exchange of ideas characterized by 1) equality and the absence of coercive influences 2) listening with empathy 3) bringing assumptions into the open.⁸

5 - Name and Frame

When issues are named and framed in public terms, we can identify the problem that we need to talk about (naming) and the critical options and drawbacks for deciding what to do about that problem (framing).

healthy, secure, and safe ways to cast your ballot. [We Can Vote](#) provides information to make 2020 elections safe, secure and successful.

- The California Secretary of State and SLO County have invested in Cybersecurity systems and procedures.
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ovsta/security/> and <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/election-cybersecurity/>
- A Vote-by-Mail ballot must be postmarked by November 3rd and received no later than 11/20/2020. SLO County will begin to process Vote-by-Mail ballots before election day (29 days before, envelopes; 10 days before, ballots). This processing includes verifying the signature on the envelope, opening Vote-by-Mail ballot return envelopes, removing ballots, duplicating any damaged ballots, and preparing the ballots to be machine read, or machine reading them, including processing write-in votes so that they can be tallied by the machine, but under no circumstances may a vote count be accessed or released until 8 p.m. on the day of the election.¹⁵
- California has made efforts to create a voting system that is secure, easy, flexible, safe, and trusted; however, a consequence is that it can take up to 30 days to complete the vote count. In the 2018 primary election, 64% of the vote was counted within 3 days, but it took 28 days to complete the count. The main delays are in processing mail-in/absentee ballots and curing ballot issues.¹⁶
- The entire process of counting ballots, from the opening of the Vote-by-Mail ballot envelopes to the counting of ballots is open to the public (Elections Code §§ [15004](#), [15104](#)). Contact your local election official for more information on observing the process. Additionally, to test the accuracy of the counting machines prior to the official certification of election results, each county election official must conduct a public manual count of the ballots cast in one percent of the precincts or a two-part public manual count; the ballots counted are chosen at random by the election official (Elections Code § [15360](#)).
<https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/publications-and-resources/voting-law-compliance-handbook/>
<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/All-Services/Elections-and-Voting/Election-Observer-Poll-Watcher.aspx>
- The SLO County elections officials must complete the official canvass within 28 days of Election Day for a Presidential Election and submit a certified statement of the results of the election to the Secretary of State by the 31st

- San Luis Obispo County offers free Vote-by-Mail ballot tracking. Voters who sign up for *Where's My Ballot?* will receive automatic updates when:
 - The county elections office mails the voter's ballot
 - The county has received the voter's ballot
 - The county has counted the voter's ballot
 - If there are any issues with the voter's ballot that need to be "cured."
 Voters will also receive communications from the county elections office about important election deadlines and critical updates such as polling place changes. Sign up for *Where's My Ballot?* at <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ballot-status/wheres-my-ballot/>
- At <https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/> once you enter your personal identifying data, four sections of information will be displayed: Personal Information, Voting History, Upcoming Elections, and Election Material. Under Voting History, select one of the previous elections to see when your ballot was received by the county and that Ballot Status says "Accepted" or the reason that it wasn't. You'll want to check again after the November 3rd election (but select 11/3/2020 – 2020 Statewide General Election) to make sure your vote was counted.

12 - Election Processes and Outcomes

- Of the 176,343 voters registered for the March 3, 2020 election, only 111,239 (63%) cast a vote: 23,157 (13% of registered, 21% of actual voters) at a Polling place; and 88,082 (50% of registered, 79% of actual voters) Vote-by-Mail.¹³
- There were approximately 177,000 registered voters in SLO County as of July 2020.¹⁴ It is assumed that 20% or fewer of the registered voters (36,000) will vote over 4 days at one of the 22 Voter Service Centers. The extended voting period, number of voting sites, larger VSCs, and an extensive voter education and outreach program should keep lines short and enable social distancing.
- Pollworkers are needed since 46% of pollworkers from the previous election have cancelled due to COVID-19 concerns. [WorkElections](#) and [Power The Polls](#) are initiatives to recruit poll workers to ensure a safe, fair election for all voters. <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/All-Services/Elections-and-Voting/Precinct-Workers.aspx>
- Health and safety protocols and PPE will be utilized to safeguard voters and poll workers at the Voter Service Centers. [Healthy Voting](#) helps you find

Three key questions drive the development of a framework for public deliberation: 1) What concerns you about this issue? 2) Given those concerns, what would you do about it? 3) If that worked to ease your concern, what are the downsides or trade-offs you might then have to accept? See - Framing Public Issues by the FrameWorks Institute.

<http://www.frameworksinstitute.org/assets/files/PDF/FramingPublicIssuesfinal.pdf>

6 - Examine Your Assumptions, Biases, and Emotions

We all have biases and make assumptions about the world around us. The key to making good voting decisions is to examine those in light of your self-interest as well as your responsibility to the community. Something as simple as who won the football game yesterday can affect our emotions and influence how we vote on a bond issue today.

- Identify and examine the assumptions that are the basis of your views. <https://fee.org/articles/the-mistake-you-make-in-every-political-argument/>
- Avoiding Psychological Bias in Decision Making, How to Make Objective Decisions. <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/avoiding-psychological-bias.htm>
- Factfulness: Dramatic Instincts and Helpful Rules of Thumb. <https://www.gapminder.org/factfulness/>

7 - Discuss with others

We have a cultural habit of thought to view a discussion as a debate, where the goal is winning. Design thinking and deliberative dialogue both structure discussions to gather and examine various perspectives and their underlying assumptions.

- Sample Ground Rules for Deliberation & Dialogue Processes. <http://ncdd.org/rc/item/1505/>
- What is a Better Argument? <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/better-arguments-project-report-key-operating-principles/>
- The National Issues Forums offer a number of free issue guides at <https://www.nifi.org/en/issue-guides/issue-guides>
- Living Room Conversations. <https://www.livingroomconversations.org>
- Red Blue Dictionary. <https://redbluedictionary.org>
- Ask better questions with the Question Formulation Technique. <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct14/vol72/num02/The-Right-Questions.aspx>

[Recorder/All-Services/Polling-Place-Lookup.aspx](#) or text "Vote" to GOVOTE (468683).

8 - Decide and take action to support candidates & issues

An acknowledged decision method is to carefully weigh the positive and negative attributes associated with each alternative, and find a balance between them. Values are often heart-felt, so decisions with a values component may be best made by including both objective reasoning and your feelings.

- MeenyMo, a free online decision-making application using paired choices. <https://meenymo.com>
- Consider Values-based Decision Making.⁹ Voting is a formal expression of decisions we make regarding candidates, propositions, bonds, etc. The decisions are based on what we value and the priority we place on each of those factors. When we vote, we express who we are because we make use of our own priorities and values. https://opportunity.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk2741/files/inline-files/values-based-decision-making_1.pdf
- Utilize the forms and action list in *How to Judge a Candidate*. <https://www.lwv.org/blog/how-judge-candidate>
- Practice. Use a copy of the Ballot to make interim candidate and proposition choices, set it aside, and then revisit your draft one or more times before you actually vote. This will utilize both your subconscious and conscious mental capabilities (*Thinking, Fast and Slow*¹⁰). DO NOT mark the original Ballot with pencil, instead make a copy or download your ballot from the SLO County website, and use it to pre-mark a sample ballot.

9 - Determine where to vote

- Every registered voter will be mailed a Vote-by-Mail ballot. <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/All-Services/Vote-By-Mail.aspx>
- Remote Accessible Vote-by-Mail (RAVBM). Assembly Bill 860 permits ANY voter to cast a ballot using a certified remote accessible vote by mail system, regardless of whether the voter is a voter with disabilities or a military or overseas voter. Contact the County to request a RAVBM ballot, but no later than 10/27/2020.
- Alternatively, you can vote at ANY of the 22 Voter Service Centers (polling place). See [https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-](https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Clerk-Recorder/All-Services/Polling-Place-Lookup.aspx)

10 - Vote

SLO County decided not to use the Vote Center model authorized by the CA Voter's Choice Act of 2016, but the method selected for this election will be very similar. Every registered voter will receive a Vote-by-Mail ballot in the mail. Alternatively, you may go to ANY Voter Service Center during the 4-day period which includes election day (10/31/2020 - 11/3/2020).¹¹

- Return your completed Vote-by-Mail ballot by mail postage-free, deposit it in a Drop Box (10/6 – 11/3/2020), or submit it at ANY Voter Service Center. Vote in a timely manner, i.e. all relevant information should be public by now, you've made an evaluation, and your ballot can easily be received before election day. If you mail your ballot less than a week before the election, ask a postal clerk to stamp it with a postmark.
- Make sure your signature (the name you use) is the same as the one on your Voter Registration form/CA Driver's License. Sign where indicated on the envelope in black or blue pen. Note that Vote-by-Mail ballots may be rejected if they are: late, have no signature, or the signature doesn't match your registration.¹²
- Alternatively, go to ANY of the 22 Voter Service Centers to vote. Bring your unused Vote-by-Mail ballot if you have one.
- In most cases, you don't have to show ID to vote. However, if you didn't provide a CA ID number or the last four digits of your social security number when you registered, you may have to furnish an acceptable ID. For a list of acceptable IDs see <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/hava-id-standards/>
- At the Voter Service Center, voters will have the choice of a traditional paper ballot or the use of an accessible ballot marking device (BMD). SLO County uses ImageCast X (ICX) ADA equipment from Dominion Voting Systems. See <https://votingsystems.cdn.sos.ca.gov/vendors/dominion/icxinstruct.pdf> <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/ovsta/frequently-requested-information/voting-systems-used-counties/how-use-your-countys-voting-system/>

11 - Make sure your vote was counted; and check your ballot status

Check to see if your vote was counted and track your ballot: