



STRATEGIC PLAN

**2026**

**2030**



**CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE**

**SHIRLEY N. WEBER, PH.D. | [WWW.SOS.CA.GOV](http://WWW.SOS.CA.GOV)**

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# Message from the Secretary

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It is my honor to present the California Secretary of State's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan—a commitment to strengthening our democracy, expanding economic opportunity, and ensuring that every Californian can access the services and information they deserve.

The Secretary of State's office is powered by nearly 800 public servants dedicated to advancing transparency, equity, and accessibility across elections, business services, political reform, and the preservation of California's history.

As California's Secretary of State, I am responsible for ensuring our systems are transparent, our services are accessible, and our democracy works for everyone—regardless of background, language, or circumstance.

The Secretary of State's office is more than a repository of records—we are a gateway to participation. Whether a Californian is casting a ballot, starting a business, or seeking trusted public information, our responsibility is to ensure that access is clear, equitable, and meaningful.

This plan reflects our commitment to measurable progress, accountability, and continuous improvement. By strengthening our performance metrics and clarifying our priorities, we are better equipped to serve Californians with excellence, transparency, and integrity.

Democracy works best when people understand it, trust it, and can fully participate in it—and this plan ensures that every Californian has that opportunity.

I invite you to explore this plan and hold us accountable as we work to build a more inclusive, accessible, and trusted government for all Californians.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shirley N. Weber'.

**Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.**  
**California Secretary of State**



# Vision Statement

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We improve the lives of Californians and strengthen businesses by ensuring equitable access, fostering trust in democracy, preserving our shared history, and expanding economic opportunities for all.

# Mission Statement

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The California Secretary of State delivers trusted information, strengthens democracy, supports businesses, and protects individual rights and our state's history, while ensuring that all services are accessible, transparent, equitable, and responsive to the needs of Californians.

## Core Values

We are committed to:

### 1. Integrity

We uphold the highest ethical standards in all actions and decisions.

### 2. Innovation

We continuously improve how we serve Californians through creative and effective solutions.

### 3. Trust

We provide reliable, accurate, and transparent information and resources that Californians can depend on.

### 4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

We ensure equitable access to services and opportunities for all Californians.

### 5. Superior Service

We go above and beyond to deliver high-quality service that improves the lives of Californians.

### 6. Empowerment

We provide education, services, and opportunities that empower the public and SOS staff.

### 7. Teamwork

We collaborate with respect, professionalism, and a shared commitment to excellence.





# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility

The California Secretary of State has adopted the following definitions:

## Diversity:

The presence of people from different backgrounds, cultures, experiences, abilities, and perspectives.

## Equity:

Providing access to resources, information, and opportunities based on need, free of bias and discrimination.

## Accessibility:

Ensuring information, resources and services are reachable and usable for all, and that a person with disabilities can acquire information, engage in interactions, and enjoy services with the same effectiveness, equivalency and ease of use as a person without a disability.

## Inclusion:

The practice of proactively respecting, valuing, and involving all backgrounds, cultures, experiences, abilities, and perspectives in the work of the California Secretary of State.

## Belonging:

The feeling of being valued, accepted, supported, and connected with the workplace.

## Our Organization

The Secretary of State serves as California's Chief Elections Officer and carries out the following responsibilities:

1. Implementing electronic filing and internet disclosure of campaign and lobbyist financial information.
2. Maintaining business filings (for-profit and nonprofit entities).
3. Commissioning notaries public.
4. Operating the Safe at Home confidential address program.
5. Maintaining the Domestic Partners and Advance Health Care Directive registries.
6. Safeguarding the State Archives.
7. Serving as a trustee of the California Museum.

**These responsibilities ensure transparency, accountability, and access to critical services for all Californians.**



# Developing the Strategic Plan

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The California Secretary of State's 2026–2030 Strategic Plan was developed through a collaborative, multi-divisional effort led by the Executive Office and the Office of Policy, Planning, and Implementation (OPPI). To ensure this plan serves as a true reflection of our mission, the development team analyzed past performance metrics and identified critical areas where innovation and modernized service delivery could better meet the needs of the public.

## Stakeholder Outreach and Consultation

Central to the plan's creation was an extensive outreach process designed to place the Californian at the center of our strategy. We engaged with a diverse range of customers and stakeholders— including business leaders, voters, historical researchers, and county election officials— to understand their evolving needs and the barriers they face when interacting with state government. This feedback

directly informed our enterprise-wide strategies, ensuring our objectives are grounded in the real-world experiences of those starting businesses, casting ballots, and accessing state records.

## The Secretary's Vision and Equity Integration

This plan is anchored by Secretary Shirley N. Weber's personal vision of the Secretary of State's office as a "gateway to participation" for all Californians. Guided by this vision, the development team integrated Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) principles into every strategic goal and objective. By making DEI central to our agency's work culture and service delivery, this plan ensures that our programs—from voting rights to business support—are not only available but are accessible and equitable for every Californian, regardless of their background or circumstance.



# Strategic Goals

(2026-2030)



# Goal 1: Service Excellence & Accessibility

*Deliver high-quality, efficient, and accessible services that improve the experience of all Californians.*

We are the gateway to democracy and commerce in California. Whether a resident is starting a business or preparing to vote, their interaction with our office should be seamless, intuitive, and available in the language they speak. By centering our service model on the user, we ensure that state government is a partner in their success rather than a hurdle.

## Objective 1.1: Unified Communications

- Develop and implement a standardized and equitable communication protocol for internal and external stakeholders.
- Increase visibility and clarity by establishing a diverse stakeholder feedback system, ensuring feedback is collected and reviewed monthly, and communicated back to stakeholders.
- Improve delivery of customer-centered services by actively informing all stakeholders about services provided, tracking service time, and incorporating stakeholder feedback into our service delivery process.

## Impact Spotlight:

Apostille Pop-Up Shops To deliver on our commitment to accessibility, the Business Programs Division pioneered the Apostille Pop-Up Shop event series. By partnering with local County Clerks, we bring essential authentication services directly to Californians in their own communities, eliminating the need for long-distance travel to a regional office. This initiative embodies our shift toward a “customer-first” service model that meets Californians where they are.



# Goal 2: Security & Operational Resilience

*Strengthen security, modernize technology, and improve operational efficiency to ensure reliable and resilient services.*

As the keepers of the state’s most critical records and the overseers of our elections, our systems must be beyond reproach. We are committed to a “security-first” culture that leverages the latest technology and strongest partnerships to protect California’s data and democratic infrastructure from evolving threats.

## Objective 2.1: Cybersecurity Partnerships

- Enhance cybersecurity by establishing formal partnerships with state and federal law enforcement agencies and counties to share resources, intelligence, and best practices.

## Objective 2.2: Voting System Integrity

- Adopt and continuously enhance secure voting technology by implementing regular updates, conducting security audits, and incorporating diverse stakeholder feedback to ensure accessibility and inclusivity for all community members.
- Improve business processes by continuously seeking feedback through bi-annual surveys that include diverse perspectives and reviewing internal processes to ensure they promote equity and inclusion.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive succession planning program to ensure continuity of service delivery, including training, mentoring, and leadership development programs with a focus on fostering diverse talent.

## Impact Spotlight:

The Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment (OVSTA) Security is the foundation of public trust. Through OVSTA, the Secretary of State’s office employs a rigorous “security-first” testing protocol for every piece of voting equipment used in the state. By auditing for accuracy, reliability, and accessibility, we ensure that every vote is counted exactly as it was cast, protecting the integrity of the largest electoral jurisdiction in the nation.



# Goal 3: A High-Performing, Inclusive Workforce

*Strengthen our employee work culture to ensure an inclusive workforce that is engaged, innovative, and high performing to serve Californians with excellence.*

Our greatest asset is our staff. We aim to foster a culture where innovation is rewarded, diversity is celebrated as a strength, and every employee has a clear path for professional growth. By investing in our people, we ensure the agency remains resilient and capable of meeting California's future challenges.

## Objective 3.1: Employee Engagement

- Enhance employee engagement by providing targeted professional development trainings, implementing regular feedback mechanisms, and establishing a formal recognition program that celebrates diversity and inclusion.
- Embrace and invest in innovation by adopting advanced technology solutions, promoting creative problem-solving workshops, and allocating budget for innovative projects that support DEI initiatives.
- Expand workforce development by requiring staff to attend at least two growth opportunity trainings per year, including DEI and leadership development, to enhance skills and foster an inclusive work environment.
- Encourage and foster collaboration by establishing formal partnerships with diverse advocates, county election officials, business leaders, and other stakeholders to share best practices and achieve common goals.

## Impact Spotlight:

The CAL-ACCESS Replacement System (CARS) Project team and the Political Reform Division team, work collaboratively with our partners, to reflect our commitment to building a high-performing, inclusive workforce grounded in trust, transparency, and teamwork. The Political Reform Division solidifies these efforts through ongoing engagement with stakeholders and ensures both policy and procedures remain responsive to the needs of the public and regulated community. The Political Reform Division leadership team works with its staff to consistently recognize the value of diverse perspectives, experiences, educational backgrounds, and skillsets and incorporates that input to building the strong institutional trust and collaboration necessary to deliver transparent, effective, and people-centered services to the public.



# Goal 4: Civic Engagement & Historical Preservation

*Expand civic participation by increasing access to voting, information, and preserving California's historical record.*

Democracy thrives when people are informed and involved. Our mission is to lower the barriers to participation, whether that means making it easier to register to vote or providing digital access to the historical records that tell our state's diverse story. We are dedicated to ensuring that every Californian sees themselves reflected in our history and feels empowered to shape our future.

## Objective 4.1: Voter Education & Historical Preservation

- Promote participation in the electoral process by implementing targeted, robust statewide voter outreach and education efforts for all Californians, including underrepresented and marginalized communities.
- Expand access to electoral information for all voters, including those with disabilities, those needing language services, and other marginalized groups, by developing accessible platforms and materials.
- Collect, preserve, and provide access to California's rich history and civic engagement, highlighting the contributions of diverse communities through digital archives, public exhibitions, and educational programs.

### Impact Spotlight:

The Voter's Choice Act (VCA) The Voter's Choice Act is a primary driver of our goal to expand civic participation. By moving to an election model that offers "More Days and More Ways to Vote," we provide Californians with greater flexibility through expanded vote centers and secure ballot drop-off locations. This collaborative effort between state and county officials ensures that voting fits into the busy lives of modern Californians.

### Impact Spotlight:

The California State Archives is dedicated to ensuring that every Californian sees themselves reflected in our state's history. By relaunching the State Governmental Oral History Program with a focus on diverse voices, the Archives added 32 new oral histories between 2021 and 2024, capturing a more complete and representative historical record. This initiative is achieved through active collaborations with California university oral history programs located throughout the state and expands access to our state's collective and diverse history.

Beyond preservation, the State Archives works to connect Californians with their shared history fostering deeper connections between the public, the historical record, and California's evolving story. Public engagement remains a cornerstone of this work, with exhibitions, tours, collaborative events, and educational outreach designed to make California's documentary heritage more accessible and meaningful to diverse audiences. Each year, the State Archives participates in American Archives Month through the Sacramento Archives Crawl and develops commemorative programming tied to significant historical milestones, including the 60th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act and California's 175th anniversary of Statehood. Through these partnerships and community engagement initiatives, the State Archives continues to encourage civic understanding and historical exploration.



# Appendix:

## Divisions and Services



## Archives

The California State Archives serves as the permanent repository for the records of California's state government, ensuring their preservation, authenticity, and long term accessibility. Established in 1850 with the mandate to receive all public records relating to the political history of the state, the Archives fulfills a core governmental responsibility: safeguarding the documentary evidence that supports transparency, accountability, and the continuity of civic institutions. In carrying out this mandate, the State Archives acquires, appraises, preserves, and describes the permanent records of state agencies, the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the State Supreme Court and Courts of Appeal, as well as select records from local governments. We provide secure stewardship of these materials while enabling equitable public access for legal research, legislative history, policy development, historical scholarship, genealogy, education, and public engagement. Through professional archival practice, strategic partnerships, and a commitment to public service, the California State Archives ensures that the documentary heritage of the state is protected, discoverable, and usable for current and future generations.

## Business Programs

As the largest division within the agency, Business Programs Division serves as the gateway for commerce in California. The division registers business entities and trademarks, maintains millions of public records, and enables secured creditors to protect financial interests. The Business Programs Division processes millions of business filings and information requests each year. It also maintains records and provides information to the public relating to corporations, limited liability companies, limited partnerships, general partnerships, limited liability partnerships, and other business filings. The division provides oversight of the notary commissions within the State, authenticates the signatures of California public officials and notaries public, approves notary public education courses, notary seal manufacturers, and issues apostilles.

## Elections

The Secretary of State oversees all federal and state elections in California, ensuring they are secure, accessible, accurate, and transparent. In every statewide election, California prepares voter information pamphlets and other voter materials in 10 languages – English, Spanish, Chinese, Hindi, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Tagalog, Thai, and Vietnamese – for over 20 million registered voters. As the Chief Elections Officer for the largest state in the nation by providing guidance and training on election laws and procedures to county elections officials to ensure that every vote is counted as it was cast, prints and distributes voter registration cards, maintains a uniform, centralized, and interactive statewide voter registration database statewide database of all registered voters (VoteCal) to comply the Help America Vote Act (HAVA), compiles all statewide voter registration statistics, qualifies candidates for statewide and special elections, certifies the list of candidates for state offices, tracking and certifying ballot initiatives, printings and mailings a state voter information guide, administers a Voter Assistance Hotline for the entire State, receiving Election Day complaints from the public and coordinating the resolution of those complaints with all of California's 58 counties, coordinating the tabulation of votes from each county, certifying the election results, issuing nomination and election certificates to all victorious statewide candidates, educating California citizens about their voting rights, and promoting voter registration and participation. The Elections Division conducts outreach throughout the state, including tabling at events, providing resources and training for county outreach teams, and administering the Promote the Vote program by partnership with businesses to encourage civic participation among employees.

## Executive Office

The California Secretary of State's Executive Office provides strategic guidance, leadership and advisory support to ensure the effective operation of all divisions. The Executive Office encompasses the **Office of Constituent Affairs, Communications, Executive Outreach and Education, Legal Affairs, Legislative Affairs, the Office of Policy, Planning, Implementation, Office of Voting Systems Technology Assessment, and the Office of Risk Management, Audits and Investigations.** The Executive Office engages with the public and with policy partners to advance strategic outreach, provide policy guidance, and shape legislation, while serving as a key advisory body to the Secretary on critical issues.



## Fiscal Affairs Division

The Fiscal Affairs Division is the financial division of the Secretary of State and consists of the Accounting and Budget Sections. The Division provides oversight of the Agency's finances and is responsible for the effective management of the budget. The Accounting Section provides comprehensive accounting and reporting services to all Secretary of State programs, control agencies, and external customers, and maintains the Secretary of State's functions within the accounting system of record, the Financial Information System for California (FI\$Cal).

The Budget Section is responsible for the planning and preparation of the Secretary of State's annual budget and acts as the fiscal advisor to the Secretary. The Budget Section examines critical fiscal policies to identify and implement opportunities to improve accuracy, effectiveness, and transparency within the Secretary of State agency to maintain good stewardship of public resources. In addition, the Budget Section serves as liaison with the Department of Finance, the Legislative Analyst's Office, and the Legislature on fiscal and budget matters.

## Information Technology

The Information Technology Division (ITD) ensures that business and information systems are aligned with organizational priorities and the Secretary of State's core responsibilities through a coordinated structure of four essential branches. The Project Management Office (PMO) provides transparency, consistency, and disciplined governance across all technology initiatives; the Software Engineering and Application Development Branch (SEAB) identifies business needs, translates them into system requirements, and engineers application solutions that strengthen program effectiveness and mission delivery; the Infrastructure Administration Branch (IAB) maintains the secure, stable, and reliable technology infrastructure that underpins the delivery of high quality products and services; and the Cyber Security Branch (CSB) safeguards the agency's digital assets by proactively managing cyber risks, addressing vulnerabilities, and responding to security incidents to ensure a resilient and trusted digital environment.

## Management Services

The Secretary of State's Management Services Division (MSD), consisting of the Human Resources Bureau, Business Operations Bureau and Safe at Home, provides administrative infrastructure services.

The Human Resources Bureau (HRB) facilitates consulting and compliance services relating to payroll and benefits, performance management and labor relations, workforce development and succession planning, recruitment and upward mobility, and health, safety and wellness programs. HRB supports Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) process and engages in the investigatory process.

The Business Operations Bureau (BOB) manages facility use, mailroom and printing services, building security, and administers all Agency contracts and procurement services.

The Safe at Home program offers a substitute mailing address to receive first class, certified, and registered mail for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, child abduction, and elder or dependent adult abuse, as well as reproductive health care workers and public entity employees who are in fear for their safety. This address is accepted by California state, county, and city government agencies in lieu of a residential or other mailing address where a victim can be tracked down. Program participants can also register as a confidential voter to keep their voting information private.

## Political Reform

The Political Reform Division fosters trust in democracy by facilitating the transparent disclosure of campaign finance and lobbying activities. Most candidates for state office, ballot measure committees, and anyone who lobbies the State Legislature and state agencies must file detailed financial disclosure statements with the Secretary of State.





## Contact:

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