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California State Senate

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Dear Friend,

Congratulations on becoming a United States citizen, and if you are new to California, welcome!

California has a lot to offer you. This guide contains basic information to help you get settled and find what you and your family need for everyday life. If you have a question or need help with government services or want to share your ideas, please contact my District Office. Also, search the State of California's website at **www.ca.gov** for many services and online forms. You can also find internet access and assistance at the local library. Your local telephone book lists many community organizations and resources that are available to assist you.

Answering your questions and finding you the help you need are just two of the many ways my office can assist you. Congratulations again and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,
Dr. Richard Pan, Senator
6th Senate District





The Public Library

Your local public library is a great resource for finding answers to your questions. Public libraries in California are free, open to everyone and are located in practically every community. The library staff can help you find information on almost any topic and can give you a library card that allows you to borrow items, such as books, DVDs, and e-readers, free of charge. Most libraries also have newspapers for you to read and computers for your use. The phone number for your local library can be found in the City and County Government section of your telephone book. You can also access a list of all California libraries, their addresses, phone numbers and schedules at **www.publiclibraries.com**

The telephone book

Your local telephone book contains phone numbers and important information about federal, state, and community services. It also contains sections for federal, state, county, and city government listings. The phone book has emergency information, local maps, and information about how to get phone service.

The Internet

The Internet can link you to many sources of information, including the websites of federal, state, and local government agencies, and your legislative representatives:

California State Senate: **www.senate.ca.gov**

California State Assembly: **www.assembly.ca.gov**.

You can use the Internet to search for jobs, get government forms online, find housing, learn about schools for your children or yourself, find medical care, and locate local community organizations and resources that can help you.

Do you need help finding housing, health services, or child care?

Just pick up the phone and dial **211** from anywhere in California for help finding services. The call is FREE and confidential, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and trained specialists can provide assistance in more than 150 languages.

211 California can connect you to a variety of services in your community.

Visit **www.211california.org**.



Are you looking for a job?

Your local newspaper's Help Wanted section is a good place to start looking for employment.

The **California Employment Development Department** (EDD) can also help you explore career options, prepare applications and resumes, and improve your interview skills. Free assistance for Job Seekers and Employers can be found by exploring EDD's website, www.edd.ca.gov.

EDD has Job Service locations in over 100 different California cities. They can be found by searching the website or writing to the EDD main office.

Employment Development Department

P.O. Box 826880, MIC 83
Sacramento, CA 94280

The **California Department of Social Services** is also a helpful employment resource.

www.dss.cahwnet.gov

Do you need a place to live?

One very good statewide housing resource is the **California Housing Finance Agency** (CalHFA).

For over 30 years, CalHFA has supported the needs of low-income renters and first-time homebuyers by providing financing and programs that create safe, decent and affordable housing opportunities for individuals within specified income ranges.

If you'd like to contact a CalHFA Homeownership Representative for apartment rental or other information, call, write, or visit www.calhfa.ca.gov.

California Housing Finance Agency

Sacramento Headquarters
500 Capitol Mall, Suite 1400
Sacramento, CA 95814
877-922-5432

Do you need to find a doctor or dentist or health insurance?

If you or your family need health care, the **California Department of Health Care Services** (DHCS) is a great resource. DHCS can provide important information on a variety of health conditions and services.

www.dhcs.ca.gov/services

California Department of Health Care Services

P.O. Box 997413

Sacramento, CA 96899

916-445-4171

Information on health plans can be found on the **Department of Managed Health Care's** website.

www.dmhc.ca.gov

California Department of Social Services (DSS)

DSS is another excellent resource for health services and community resources.

www.dss.cahwnet.gov

800-952-5253

Covered California provides the tools for you to shop for health insurance and help you determine if you qualify for assistance programs.

www.coveredcalifornia.com





Access for Infants and Mothers (AIM)

AIM assists with low-cost health insurance for pregnant women and infants.

www.aim.ca.gov

800-433-2611

Healthy Families Program and Medi-Cal for Families

Healthy Families assists with low-cost and no-cost health insurance for California kids.

www.healthyfamilies.ca.gov

888-747-1222

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

WIC provides nutritional information and certain food vouchers for women and children.

www.fns.usda.gov/wic or www.wicworks.ca.gov

888-WIC-WORKS (888-942-9675)

Do you have children?

The **California Department of Education (CDE)** is a good place to start for information on educational opportunities in California for you and your children, including the High School Exit Exam.

www.cde.ca.gov

California Department of Education

1430 N Street

Sacramento, CA 95814



California's **Head Start** program is also an excellent resource for early education for you and your children. Head Start offers education and special education services, health services, social services, and parent involvement and community partnerships throughout California to very low-income families.

To find a Head Start program near you, you can either call the main office in Sacramento or refer to the Head Start Agency Roster on the Head Start website.

caheadstart.org

916-444-7760

Do you know what to do in an emergency?

In the event of a health emergency, always call 911.

The California Governor's Office of Emergency Services offers many tips on preparing for and responding to an emergency. The CalOES website will give you the information you need to make a plan, pack emergency supplies, and be ready when a natural or human-caused disaster strikes.

www.caloes.ca.gov

Office of Emergency Services

3650 Schriever Avenue

Mather, CA 95655

916-845-8510

Would you like to improve your English or learn a new career or skill?

English-learning programs and career-building programs are offered throughout the state. You can find a program that fits your needs through the California State University, the University of California, the California Community Colleges or the California Department of Education (CDE) Adult Education programs. You can locate any of these institutions by looking in your local telephone book or by searching the Internet.

- California State Universities
www.calstate.edu
- Universities of California
www.universityofcalifornia.edu
- California Community Colleges
www.cccco.edu
- CDE Adult Education
www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ae

Do you want to learn more about California's history?

Do you wonder what the official state bird or the state flower is in California? You can find a great deal of historical information at your public library. You can also explore and learn about California and its history by searching the California State Library's "California History Links" on their website.

www.library.ca.gov.



Do you want to register to vote?

The **California Secretary of State** office will help you become a registered voter in California. You can learn more from the Secretary of State website or by calling or mailing your request.

www.sos.ca.gov

California Secretary of State

1500 11th Street

Sacramento, California 95814

916-653-6814



Would you like to visit the State Capitol?

The State Capitol is a working museum and is open to the public. You can observe the Legislature in action, take a guided tour of the historic Capitol building or enjoy the park with its many monuments, trees, gardens, and accessible walkways. Tours are conducted daily on an hourly basis from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

California State Capitol Museum

10th and L Street, State Capitol

Sacramento, CA 95814

866-240-4655

California State Parks provides information about all state parks.

www.parks.ca.gov



If you are new to California and have recently been granted U.S. citizenship, the following rights and privileges may be of interest to you:

- **Voting.** Only citizens can vote.
www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov
- **Becoming an elected official.** Many elected offices in this country require U.S. citizenship.
www.sos.ca.gov
- **Traveling with a U.S. passport.** A U.S. passport enables you to get assistance from the U.S. government when overseas, if necessary.
www.travel.state.gov
- **Becoming eligible for government jobs.** Certain jobs with government agencies require U.S. citizenship.
www.usa.gov or www.spb.ca.gov
- **Serving on a jury.** Only U.S. citizens can serve on a jury. Serving on a jury is an important responsibility for U.S. citizens.
www.courts.ca.gov
- **Bringing family members to the U.S.** U.S. citizens generally get priority when petitioning to bring family members permanently to this country.
www.uscis.gov
- **Obtaining citizenship for children born abroad.** In most cases, a child born abroad to a U.S. citizen is automatically a U.S. citizen.
www.uscis.gov
- **Keeping your residency.** A U.S. citizen's right to remain in the United States cannot be taken away.
www.uscis.gov
- **Becoming eligible for federal grants and scholarships.** Many financial aid grants, including college scholarships, are available only to U.S. citizens.
www.studentaid.ed.gov
- **Obtaining government benefits.** Some government benefits are available only to U.S. citizens.
www.benefits.gov



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