



Pacifica Foundation Voter Guide

Thank you for reading!

This guide is intended to provide a little background history about the Pacifica Foundation governance election process, explain how choice voting works, and provide some tips to help you select the representatives you want.

Election information is always available on elections.pacifica.org and is updated in real time when a nationwide election is in process.

What We're Doing

The Pacifica Foundation is a 73 year old public radio network, the first and the original listener-sponsored public radio in the nation.



Happy 73rd^h birthday Pacifica!

Since 2003, the Pacifica Foundation has been committed to constituting its board of directors and governance structure from its listener-sponsors and staffers, and running regular democratic elections where the network's members choose its board leadership.

The way we do that is by holding national elections, currently scheduled every 2 of 3 years, to elect local delegates. These delegates serve on local boards in each of the five signal areas where we maintain radio station operations (Washington DC, New York, Houston, Los Angeles and the Bay Area), and they choose from among themselves a number of national board members to join the Pacifica National Board.

How We Got Here

The Pacifica Foundation has been innovating in public radio for seven decades.

Predating the later development of National Public Radio (NPR), Pacifica founder Lew Hill invented non-commercial listener-sponsored radio. The network, founded with a [pacifist mission statement](#), became famous for fighting McCarthyism and then the Vietnam War.

After the 1967 Public Broadcasting Act created National Public Radio, the Pacifica Foundation joined the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and became a partially government funded network in the 1980's, but always maintained its scrappy independent ethic.

In the 90's, tensions between the network's radical ethos and public radio trends towards smoother on-air sounds and careerist professionalism (described by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting as the "Healthy Station Project") led to a militant standoff and finally the replacement of the network's entire board of directors.



The democratic election of network governance from the organization's member and staff became a central mandate for the new post-1999 Pacifica Foundation, which has maintained and expanded its commitment to democratic accountability ever since.

While democratic governance has been far from perfect, and there is much discussion about changing the system in a variety of ways, what is certain is that Pacifica will never find it itself again in the position it was in circa 1999, when a vast majority of the network's sponsors wanted to remove the board of directors – and could not. Nowadays, the network's members pick them, and the network's members can dismiss them.

This guide will help you to exercise that precious right and responsibility.

How Governance Works

During each election process, each of the station's five signal areas across the country holds an election to select 12 delegates to its local board. This constitutes half of the local board, with the other half elected in alternate years.

Nine of the delegates are listener-sponsors and represent all of the people who have provided financial support to the station over the past year by becoming members with a \$25 or more donation to the station. Three of the delegates are staff-members and represent the employees and volunteer programmers at the stations.

Listener members and staff members vote in different classes, so each of these elections are separate and a person can only vote in one of them, not both.

The local boards are committees of the national board of directors and have specific responsibilities delegated to them which include:

- Evaluating the station's general manager and program director
- Reviewing the station's local budget before forwarding it to national
- Holding local town hall discussion sessions at least twice a year
- Assisting with off-air fundraising for the stations
- Reaching out to under-represented communities
- Making sure program evaluation and selection processes are fair, collaborative, respectful and quality-based.

In addition, the local boards each annually select 1/5 of the makeup of the national board of directors for the Pacifica Foundation 501(c)3 by choosing three listener representatives and one staff representative from their number to serve annual terms on the national board.

Local board members also participate in national board committees as they are willing and able to do so.

What is Choice Voting?

The Pacifica Foundation was one of the first national organizations to embrace proportional representation, a voting style which seeks to enhance diversity by rejecting winner take all election models.

Proportional representation, now used in a variety of governmental elections, including the Board of Supervisors and City Council elections in the cities of Oakland, Berkeley and San Francisco and in Minneapolis, Memphis and the State of Maine, allows voters to rank their candidates in order of preference so the value of their vote goes to the candidate remaining in the race they most prefer. This allows people to vote for the candidates they support regardless of whether they are likely to win.

In a multi-seat election, like those in Pacifica elections, what this means is that voters rank candidates by preference, basically assembling a staircase for where they would like their vote to go if their highest ranked candidate does not need their vote because

a) they already have enough votes to win their seat

or

b) they are eliminated from the race due to lack of votes.

By creating your voter staircase from your most preferred candidate on down through your selections for the total number of seats available, you make sure that your vote will be put to its most valuable use to get the candidates you prefer elected.

City Council						
Rank up to 6 candidates. Mark no more than 1 oval in each column.	First choice	Second choice	Third choice	Fourth choice	Fifth choice	Sixth choice
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Valarie Altman Orange Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
George Hovis Yellow Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Althea Sharp Purple Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Mary Tawa Lime Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Joe Li Tan Party	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Phil Wilkie Independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Candidates who reach a certain share of all the votes will be elected when they reach a threshold number of votes. A candidate who reaches the threshold is elected, and any excess votes over the threshold are then counted for the voters' second choices. Then, after excess votes are counted, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated. The voters who selected the defeated candidate as a first choice will then have their votes counted for their second choice. This process continues until all seats are filled.

You can read more about proportional representation and ranked choice voting [here](#).

Election Timeline

This is the schedule for the 2019 Pacifica elections

April-May - Election Preparation

June 1-June 30 Candidate Nomination Phase

June 30 Record Date for Membership

July 10 Candidate Certification

July 12-31 Candidate Debates

August 15 Voting Phase Begins

October 15 Voting Phase Closes

Nov 1 Results Announced

Running for the Board

One of your rights as a member of the Pacifica Foundation is to run for the local board at the station in your signal area. Pacifica stations are membership-run. If you think you have helpful skills and want to help guide your local station, then consider taking a run at it.

There are some things you ought to know in order to run:

- You need the signatures of 15 fellow members of the Pacifica Foundation in support of your candidacy. While you may be able to find them yourself just by asking around your friends, colleagues and family, there are also "signing" parties run by local groups to help you get these signatures. Usually these local groups want to provide signatures for candidates that are largely aligned with their positions on Pacifica issues (they go by the name of "slates") so it can be helpful to familiarize yourself with the candidate groupings and see where you might fit in best.
- You will need to write 500 word statement about yourself and what you feel you would have to contribute as a board member.

- You will need to comply with our fair election rules (see below). One of the most important rules is that you cannot appear on the radio as a guest to be interviewed or even to call in to a call in show once you declare yourself to be a local board candidate.
- You should expect to have to campaign during the balloting period. Campaigning can include the following actions: participating in a candidate forum, recording a candidate cart (recorded statement), soliciting endorsements for your candidacy, and handing out literature at Pacifica-sponsored events.

Fair Campaign Rules

Pacifica election staff (the election coordinator is called the National Election Supervisor) issue rules each year to keep the election fair for everyone. If you are a candidate, you will need to sign off on these rules before declaring your candidacy. Voters can view the rules at the [election website](#).

Among the most important rules is that listener-sponsor candidates cannot appear on the station's broadcast air once they declare themselves to be candidates. This includes being interviewed on a program and calling-in to a show that takes comments from listeners. The reason for this rule is to avoid providing an unequal platform for one candidate over the others.



Any voter who believes they have heard one of the candidates on-air, or that some other election rule has been broken, should file a notice of complaint on a form that will be available on the election website at elections.pacifica.org.

Consequences for violations of the fair campaign rules can include losing the ability to participate in candidate debates, suppression of the recorded candidate cart, and disqualification.

Getting Your Ballot

One of the most important election structures is called the date of record. The date of record defines the parameters of who gets to vote. To participate, you must meet all the requirements of being a member in good standing of the Pacifica Foundation and an eligible voter on the exact day that is set as the date of record. One day earlier and one day later aren't good enough.

For the Pacifica 2019 election, the date of record will be June 30, 2019.

What this means is that in order to vote in the election, you will have to have donated \$25 or more to your local Pacifica station between **July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019**. If you are not sure your membership is up to date and you would like to vote in the election, you might consider making a donation. The Pacifica stations will be in fund drive in May of 2019 and you can donate on-line at any time.

On-Line vs Paper Ballots

The Pacifica Foundation is committed to listener democracy and spends tens of thousands of dollars facilitating member participation in the governance of the organization. It's important, but it's not free.

But the Foundation also must be committed to solvency and mailing out thousands and thousands of ballots is very expensive. So the Foundation is transitioning to electronic balloting. We need your help in continuing that transition.

Our partners in election administration are Simply Voting and Honest Ballot, two election companies with significant in experience in running secure and reliable elections for associations, unions, local governments, cooperatives, political parties and nonprofits. You can read more about them on their websites: [Simply Voting](#), [Honest Ballot](#).

If you received an online ballot last year and have renewed your membership with a 2018-2019 donation of \$25 or more, you should be all set. Keep an eye out for your email ballot to arrive from Simply Voting on August 15th. Because the ballots are sent to lots and lots of people, sometimes your email program will send the ballot to a "spam" or "promotions" folder, so make sure you look there as well.

If not, here's how to make sure you are on the list to receive your ballot. If your station regularly sends you newsletters or announcements via e-mail, then the station has your email address. If not, take a moment to call your station before June 30, 2019 to verify that your membership is current and the station has your email address. You will hear carts on-air in May and June reminding you.

Both the trees and Pacifica's bank account will thank you for helping us in this way. We preserve democracy at Pacifica by making the process financially sustainable.

If you absolutely cannot vote electronically because you do not have an email address or cannot get online, then you can request a paper ballot from the national election supervisor and one will be mailed out to you.

Ballot Requests

Pacifica tries very hard to keep accurate membership lists, but like all understaffed nonprofits with thousands of members, sometimes there are mistakes. We are making a proactive attempt this year to start early with cleaning the membership lists in order to have as few problems as possible.

But it is inevitable that some quantity of people will find themselves dropped off of the lists due to human error. Nobody is perfect!

If it happens to you, the election website at elections.pacifica.org will have a form you can fill out to request a new or replacement ballot. Replacement ballot requests will be batch-processed and you will get a new ballot prior to the end of the voting period. Please fill out the form, so we can have records of all of the requests and their fulfillment. Taking the time to fill out the form makes sure everyone gets serviced promptly and your request will not get overlooked.

Election Committee

If you live in the Bay Area and want to help Pacifica have a successful 2019 election, consider joining the election committee. Since the election staff are based in the Bay Area, that will be the easiest way to join, but if you live elsewhere and can work remotely, it may also be possible to join.



The election committee will be focused on contacting Pacifica members who haven't provided the station with their email addresses to see if they want to vote and getting them lined up for an online ballot prior to the voting period.

You'll call members, introduce yourselves, tell them about Pacifica's upcoming election, and find out where they would like to receive their ballot. The election committee will start working in May.

Thank you in advance for your help and volunteer energy!

How To Decide Who To Vote For

Most of the stations will have more candidates running to be on the local boards than available seats, so voters will have to decide which candidates they want to support.

How do you do that?

Pacifica will be providing the following materials for each candidate that you can review in order to make your decision.

1. Each candidate will provide a 500 word statement about their qualifications, their vision for the future of the community radio network and what work they intend to do on the board. Some candidates may also provide answers to a supplementary questionnaire.
2. Each candidate will have the opportunity in July to participate in a 1 hour candidate debate and video recordings of those debates will be available to you on the elections website, on your station's website and on Youtube.
3. Each candidate will have the opportunity to prepare a brief video statement, which will be available to you on the elections website, on your station's website, on Youtube and linked to your online ballot.
4. You may also find that candidates will set up their own websites, flyers and/or mailers with supplementary information. Be warned that Pacifica cannot vouch for the accuracy of materials on non-Pacifica-operated websites or printed materials.

Thank you for your commitment to democracy and the preservation of listener-sponsored, independent, alternative, non-commercial community radio.

Happy voting!