

# Central Coast organizations partner up to get more Latinos to vote



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The 2020 Census cast a light on the impact Latino voters can have at the polls.

“The Latino vote is often underrepresented, and it’s incredibly important that we teach our young people at an early age, the importance of civic engagement and that includes voting,” said Gloria Soto, Future Leaders of America Santa Maria’s Executive Director, who is also running for reelection to the Santa Maria City Council.

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<https://www.ksby.com/news/local-news/central-coast-organizations-partner-up-to-get-more-latinos-to-vote>

According to Pew Research compared to the last midterm elections, Latinos are the fastest-growing racial and ethnic group in the US that is eligible to vote and 26% of them live here in California.

“Unfortunately, in communities like Santa Maria, so many residents are struggling and are living day by day, which makes it quite challenging for them to be civically engaged,” added Soto.

A report by Pew Research found that 34.5 million Hispanic Americans will be eligible to vote in the midterm elections; that's a nearly 5 million increase if compared to 2018.

“Future Leaders has a long-standing history of empowering Latinos especially young Latinos to register and get out to vote,” said Soto. “Currently, we are partnering with two organizations Power California and UCLA through their Chicano Studies Research Center.

Future Leaders of America in Santa Maria is stopping by events such as Downtown Fridays, organizing forums to get the community engaged, and spreading the word through social media.

“But also expand the voting population by supporting permanent residents who may be eligible to become US citizens,” said Soto.

Pew Research found that the median age of Latino eligible voters is 39 years old whereas the overall eligible voting median age in the US is 48.

In an effort to get more Latinx millennials to vote, the organization Voto Latino or Latino Vote and the dating app Chispa translated as Spark are partnering up again.

“Give them the tools to take that next step to register and after they register to really attend to the polls and make their voices heard,” explained Julia Estacolchic, Chispa’s Head of Brand and Marketing.

Estacolchic said about 80% of Chispa’s users are 18 to 34 years old.

In the app, singles can add a *My Vote Counts* sticker to their profile and a new feature allows them to show a list of issues important to them.

“Immigration, employment, economy, healthcare, climate change, etc.,” said Estacolchic. “That will be added to their profile, whatever they feel is the top choice, and they will be able to see if they share that priority with other singles as well to hopefully engage in meaningful conversations.”

Based on your geographic location, a curated election menu will guide you in these Midterm Elections.

“People are going to be able to not only check their registration status if they registered in the past whether that’s current or not, they will be able to register to vote, but they’ll also be able to get some really key information in terms of deadlines, how to vote by mail, how to get the ballots, where to vote, how to vote early,” added Estacolchic.

The features in the Chispa App are available for all users not only people new to the app. You can add the sticker and topics on your profile or you can skip that section and add it later.

Future Leaders of America is hosting a forum for the community to learn more about the candidates running for Santa Maria-Bonita’s School Board.

The event will take place on Oct. 19 at 6:30 pm at the Ethel Pope Auditorium at Santa Maria High School.