

Masonry is the world's first and largest fraternal organization, and is based on the belief that each man has a responsibility to help make the world a better place. Through our culture of philanthropy, we make a profound difference for our brothers, our families, our communities, and our future.

There are more than 60,000 Masons in California. Our members represent the entire spectrum of diversity. We welcome men of all faiths, nationalities and cultures.

Mission

The mission of Freemasonry in California is brotherhood, community involvement, and self-improvement through education, family values, moral standards, and charity. We invest in children, our neighborhoods, and our future. Our mission is guided by the enduring and relevant tenets of our fraternity: brotherly love, relief, and truth.

Membership

California Masonic membership is open to men age 18 or older who meet the qualifications and standards of character and intention, and who believe in a Supreme Being. One of Masonry's customs is not to solicit members; men must seek membership on their own through a Mason they know or a local lodge.

For more information, visit [FREEMASON.ORG/DISCOVERMASONRY/APPLYING.HTM](https://freemason.org/discovermasonry/applying.htm).

**What Do
Masons Do?**

The Masons of California are committed to personal growth and making a profound difference in the lives of others. For members: We are committed to engaging and retaining members and their families through an enhanced, sustaining, and relevant membership experience. Fellowship, family, and lifelong learning are important to us. Leadership development and Masonic education are offered in a variety of formats to assist members in their continuous pursuit of knowledge, helping them excel both inside and outside the fraternity. For California public education: Masons have been at the forefront of American public education for more than a century. Today, we continue to be leaders in statewide support of public schools through targeted, relevant initiatives that reach the most vulnerable children and families in our state. For those in need: Relief is one of our enduring and relevant values. We take responsibility for the well-being of our brothers, our families, and our communities. Our philanthropic causes are supported entirely by our members' generous contributions, and include the Masonic Homes (residential communities for seniors), Masonic Outreach Services (statewide outreach and critical services for seniors and families in need), and the Masonic Center for Youth and Families (innovative, integrated help for youth who struggle with behavioral or mental health issues). Learn more about California Masonry at [FREEMASON.ORG](https://freemason.org).

The Masonic Homes of California have been committed to fraternal care for more than a century. Established in 1898, the Homes provide housing and health care to Masons and their wives or widows at campuses in Union City and Covina. Masonic Senior Outreach provides ongoing care management and financial support to help older members stay healthy and safe in their homes or in retirement facilities in their home communities. Masonic Family Outreach offers services and programs to California Masons and their families who need help dealing with today's complex issues, such as the impact of divorce, the stresses of a special needs child, and other significant life challenges.

Allied Organizations

Freemasonry is made up of many organizations, each with a special social, educational, or philanthropic focus. After a man has been awarded the three degrees of Masonry, he may join any of the other affiliated organizations. The best known in the United States are the Shrine, Scottish Rite, and York Rite. There are allied Masonic organizations for women and others that admit both men and women. Eastern Star is the largest coed fraternal society in the world. Youth orders include DeMolay for young men and Rainbow for Girls and Job's Daughters for young women.

Contact Information

Phone 800/831-8170

Email: COMMUNICATIONS@FREEMASON.ORG

Media questions should be directed to Emily Limón, Director of Communications,
ELIMON@FREEMASON.ORG.

How Freemasonry Began

In the Middle Ages, the term “freemason” was awarded to highly skilled stonemasons hired as free agents to build castles and cathedrals in England and Scotland. Because of the inherent danger of their work, stonemasons formed local organizations, called lodges, to take care of sick and injured members as well as the widows and orphans of those killed on the job. Lodge members met in temporary buildings, built next to the cathedrals, to receive their pay, plan their work, train new apprentices, and socialize.

The first grand lodge was established in 1717 in London. In 1718 English Freemasonry spread to France and Spain, and after 1729, to India, Italy, Poland, Sweden, other parts of Europe, and eventually the American colonies. In 1733 the first American lodge was established in Boston under the authority of the Grand Lodge of England. Of the 39 men who signed the U.S. Constitution, 13 were Masons.

Freemasonry In California

Freemasonry has been an integral part of California for more than 150 years. During the gold rush of 1849, thousands of settlers came to California in search of fortune. Those who were Masons brought their rich traditions with them, soon establishing some of California’s first Masonic lodges in the mining towns of the Gold Country. In 1850 — the same year that California became a state — the Grand Lodge of California was established in Sacramento. Within 10 years, the number of Masonic lodges had grown from 11 to 130, while membership soared from 258 to more than 5,000. Over the years, the Masons have played a key role in shaping the history of California. To date, 19 California governors have been Masons and at least four California Masons have been elected to the U.S. Senate. Today, the Grand Lodge of California has more than 60,000 members and about 340 lodges located throughout the state, making it one of the largest jurisdictions in the world.

A Legacy of Philanthropy

Throughout their 150-year history, California Masons have remained steadfast in their commitment to helping others and serving the California communities. Among the fraternity’s first charitable activities was helping victims of the great cholera outbreak in Sacramento in 1850. Roughly 300 California Masons raised more than \$32,000 within 10 months to help build and maintain a hospital at Sutter’s Fort. Today, our members volunteer hundreds of thousands of hours and donate millions of dollars to provide a wide range of critical services to families statewide.

Learn more at FREEMASON.ORG.

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A Mason who recommends you for membership will assist with completing and submitting the application. After submitting the application, you will be interviewed by members of the lodge you wish to join so they can learn more about you and you can learn more about Freemasonry. If the interview is favorable, your application is presented to the lodge for a vote. If the vote is affirmative, you receive the Entered Apprentice degree - the first degree of Freemasonry. When you advance through the next two degrees, you are a Master Mason and a full member of the fraternity.

To locate a lodge, use the Lodge Locator on freemason.org or contact the Grand Lodge of California at 800/831-8170.

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In 1898, the spirit of Masonic charity and the need to assist the widows and orphans of Masons led to the creation of the Masonic Homes of California. Today, California Masonic Assistance continues to protect and nurture the most vulnerable members of our fraternal family through compassionate, values-based care, helping members age successfully at all stages of life.

Masonic Home at Union City

Founded in 1898 and located on 267 acres in the San Francisco Bay Area, our first residential community continues to provide independent living, assisted living, memory care, and skilled nursing care to about 300 senior residents.

Masonic Home at Covina

Originally established in 1909 as an orphanage, the 33-acre Masonic Home at Covina in Southern California provides independent and assisted living for about 80 seniors in a neighborhood setting.

Masonic Senior Outreach

Our senior outreach services connect eligible members of our California fraternal family with the services and resources they need to stay healthy and safe in their homes or in retirement facilities in their home communities.

Masonic Family Outreach

Our family outreach services help California Masonic families deal with a variety of complex life challenges including the impact of divorce and job loss. Broad, flexible services reach families in their home communities.

Learn more about the Masonic Homes and California Masonic Assistance by calling 888/466-3642, emailing MASONICASSISTANCE@MHCUC.ORG or visiting MASONICHOME.ORG.

Masonic Center for Youth and Families

Masonic Center for Youth and Families (MCYAF). MCYAF provides integrated psychological care for struggle with behavioral, academic, emotional or social difficulties. Services are available for Masonic families statewide. To learn more, visit MCYAF.ORG, call 877/488-6293 or email INFORMATION@MCYAF.ORG.

California Masonic Foundation

Formed in March 1969. California Masonic Foundation's mission is to make a profound difference through support for education. CMF invests in California's communities and its future with programs that touch the lives of thousands across the state each year. These programs include statewide support for early literacy, middle school math, and pathways to college or careers.

Acacia Creek

Acacia Creek opened April 2010 in Union City and is a continuing care retirement community for non-Masons and Masons, their wives and widows. Acacia Creek enriches the independence, well-being, and security of its residents through exceptional services and care based on Masonic values.

**California Masonic
Memorial Temple**

California Masonic Memorial Temple owns the building at the top of San Francisco's Nob Hill which houses the headquarters for the Grand Lodge and other affiliates along with administrative offices, a library and museum of Freemasonry, and an auditorium and public spaces. Since opening in 1958, CMMT has hosted concerts, entertainment, graduations, immigration proceedings, and private functions. It was formed in 1954.

**Nob Hill Masonic
Center, Inc.**

A California for-profit corporation, Nob Hill Masonic Center was formed in October 2006. NHMC operates a public parking garage located in the lower levels of the CMMT building.

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