

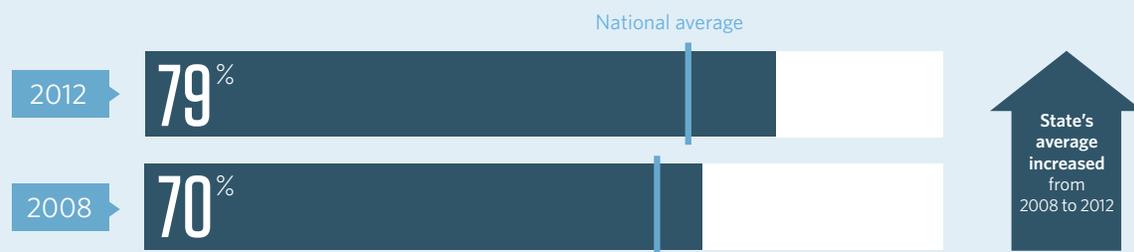


Colorado

Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Colorado that emerged from the 2012 update to The Pew Charitable Trusts' Elections Performance Index, or EPI. The EPI analyzes 17 key indicators of election administration and scores each state's performance by indicator and overall. For more information and to view the full interactive index, visit www.pewstates.org/epi.

Overall EPI Average*



Key indicators	2008	2012
Data completeness	94%	100%
Disability- or illness-related voting problems	11.9%	9.2%
Mail ballots rejected out of all ballots cast	0.3%	0.6%
Online registration available	No	Yes
Voter registration rate	84%	87.8%

*The overall EPI average is a simple average of all 17 indicators.

Beyond the numbers

Colorado was one of seven states with an overall EPI average in the top 25 percent in 2008, 2010, and 2012, and one of 12 that increased their scores by 9 percentage points or more from 2008 to 2012.

Strong performance on several indicators drove this notable improvement:

- Colorado was one of 11 states to add online voter registration between 2008 and 2012.
- The state added three online voting information lookup tools. It had one of two in 2008 and four of five in 2012, offering tools for finding a polling place, registration status, absentee ballot status, and provisional ballot status.

- Colorado’s rate of nonvoting due to disability or illness also dropped from 11.9 percent in 2008, already one of the 10 lowest in the country, to 9.2 percent, the third-lowest, in 2012.
- The average wait time to vote dropped by half, from 12.6 minutes in 2008 to 6.3 minutes in 2012.

Colorado has also adopted all of the recommendations common between the 2012 release of the Elections Performance Index and the [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#), including implementing online voter registration, participating in data-sharing agreements, such as the Electronic Registration Information Center, ensuring the collecting of more and better elections data, and requiring postelection audits.

Room for improvement

Colorado’s rate of mail ballots rejected doubled from 0.3 percent in 2008 to 0.6 percent, the third-highest rate in the country, in 2012. Colorado has permanent mail voting—any registered voter can choose to receive mail ballots for all future elections—and mail voting is increasingly popular. In 2012, 1.9 million ballots, or 72 percent of Colorado’s total, were cast by mail, and more than 16,000 were rejected. By comparison, in 2008, 1.5 million, or 63 percent of all ballots, were cast by mail, and just over 8,000 were rejected. Mail ballots unreturned increased slightly, from 9.0 percent to 12.5 percent.

The state should look into the reasons for increasing rates of mail ballots rejected and unreturned. Colorado law now requires that all registered voters be sent mail ballots, so officials must be aware that these rates could increase further.

Colorado also had the ninth-largest increase in the residual vote rate—the discrepancy between the number of ballots cast and the number of votes counted for an office—from less than 0.9 percent to more than 1.0 percent. The residual vote rate is a good indication of voting technology accuracy, so more research should be done in Colorado to see whether this change is an anomaly; a problem with one county or municipality; a product of an increased use of mail ballots, which don’t provide a second chance to correct any errors; or a more systemic product of poorly functioning or outdated voting technology.

For further information, please visit:

pewstates.org/epi

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