

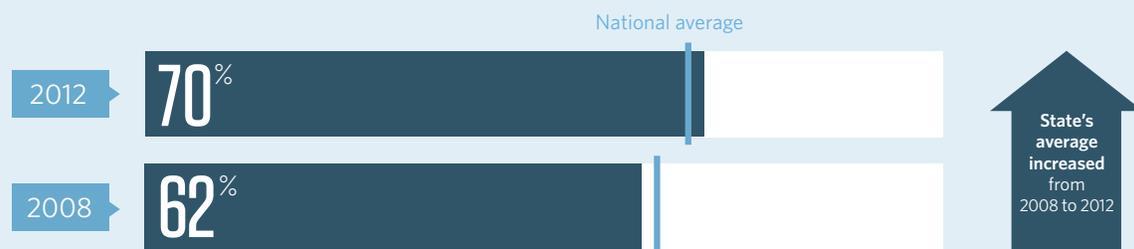


Massachusetts

Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Massachusetts 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	66.7%	99.99%
Disability- or illness-related voting problems	22.3%	20.3%
Mail ballots rejected out of all ballots cast	0.1%	0.1%
Military and overseas ballots rejected	7.4%	0.5%
Residual vote rate	0.7%	0.5%

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

Beyond the numbers

Massachusetts' overall average increased by 8 percentage points between 2008 and 2012, which was twice the national average increase.

This improvement was driven by a combination of consistency in areas of strength and marked improvement on some of its weaker measures:

- Massachusetts historically rejects very few mail ballots. In 2008, only 1,980 absentee ballots were rejected, less than 1 percent of absentee ballots returned and less than 0.1 percent of all ballots cast. In 2012, the state had the same low rate.
- Elections in Massachusetts, as in most other New England states, are administered at the town level.

Therefore data must be collected from 351 jurisdictions. The state made significant gains in overcoming this challenge after performing poorly (66.7 percent) on the data completeness indicator in 2008. For 2012, Massachusetts had 99.99 percent data completeness, the third-largest increase in the country.

- Massachusetts also decreased its residual vote rate—the discrepancy between the number of ballots cast and the number of votes counted for an office—to one of the lowest in the country in 2012.
- Although the state’s average wait time to vote increased by about three minutes between 2008 and 2012, it remained below the national average.

Room for improvement

The state could further improve its overall performance by adding online voter registration. Not only would this raise the state’s score for the online registration indicator, but it also could have a positive impact on other metrics, including the voter registration rate and nonvoting due to registration and absentee ballot problems.

The state could also require a postelection audit of voting equipment to ensure that vote totals match the votes cast and that any problems related to machinery are discovered and reported.

Adding online voter registration and requiring postelection audits are both among the recommendations of the [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#).

For further information, please visit:

pewstates.org/epi

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