

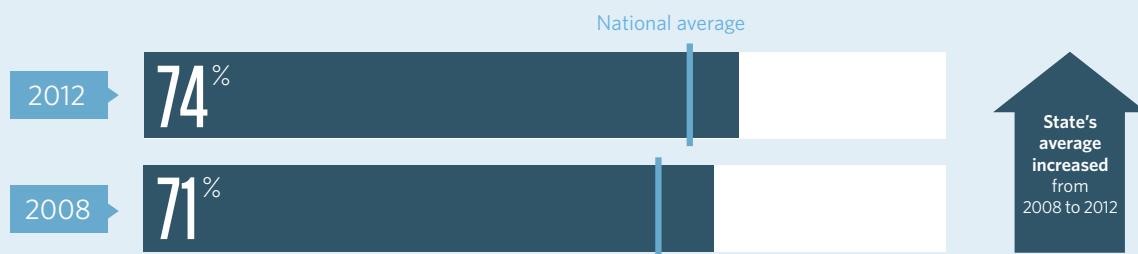


Delaware

Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Delaware 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
Disability- or illness-related voting problems	21.3%	18.1%
Military and overseas ballots rejected	7.4%	9.8%
Registrations rejected	24.6%	4.1%
Residual vote rate	0.3%	0.9%
Voting wait time	12.2 minutes	4.9 minutes

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

Beyond the numbers

Delaware was one of seven states to have an overall EPI score in the top 25 percent of all states in 2008, 2010, and 2012. This consistently high performance reflects ongoing improvement efforts in the state, with strong gains on three indicators leading the way in 2012:

- The average wait time to vote fell by more than half, to 4.9 minutes, giving the state one of the 10 shortest waits in the nation in 2012.
- Delaware's rate of rejected voter registration applications also declined, dropping by more than 20 percentage points from 2008 when it was the second-highest rate in the nation. The [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#) recently recognized the state for its innovative eSignature system that electronically links voter registration rolls to the "Motor Voter" process in the department of motor vehicles.¹ This system ensures that all

residents seeking licensing services at the DMV are offered the opportunity to register to vote or update their voter registration. It also means that the elections office no longer processes registrations from the DMV by hand, saving resources and reducing clerical errors. The commission recommended that states use Delaware as an example in crafting their own systems for motor vehicle agencies and elections offices to share data.

- The state's rate of nonvoting due to disability or illness also decreased in 2012. The decline was the third-largest in the nation.

Room for improvement

Although Delaware has one of the nation's most robust motor voter processes, it could still improve its registration system by fully implementing online voter registration, a policy recommended by the presidential commission. The state currently requires new registrants not using the DMV system to print, sign, and mail their registration forms rather than being able to submit them electronically from any computer.

In 2012, the state also had one of the highest rates of rejected military and overseas ballots at nearly 10 percent. These ballots can be rejected for many valid reasons, but high rates may indicate a systemic problem and research may help identify the cause.

Delaware's residual vote rate—the discrepancy between the number of ballots cast and the number of votes counted for an office—nearly tripled from 2008 to 2012. Residual vote rate is a good indication of voting technology accuracy, so more research should be conducted in the state to see whether this change is an anomaly, a problem with one county or municipality, or a more systemic product of poorly functioning or outdated voting technology.

Endnote

- 1 Presidential Commission on Election Administration, *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration* (January 2014), 30–31, <https://www.supportthevoter.gov/files/2014/01/Amer-Voting-Exper-final-draft-01-09-14-508.pdf>.

For further information, please visit:
pewstates.org/epi

Contact: Stephanie Bosh, officer, communications

Email: sbosh@pewtrusts.org

Project website: pewstates.org/elections