Beyond the numbers

Illinois increased its overall EPI average by nearly 10 percentage points, more than twice the national average increase and the ninth-largest jump in the country.

The state had zero out of a possible two online voting information lookup tools in 2008, but by 2012 it had added three of a possible five.

Additionally, the rate of nonvoting due to disability- or illness-related reasons had the sixth-largest drop from 2008 to 2012.
Room for improvement

Despite its strong gains, Illinois still has room for improvement in conducting elections. The state had the 10th-highest rate of provisional ballots rejected out of total ballots cast in 2012 even though it did not issue a large number of these ballots. Provisional ballots can be rejected for many reasons, but an unusually high rate may indicate a larger administrative problem. More research is needed to help understand why these rejections were occurring at higher rates and what solutions are available.

Illinois’ data completeness rate was the fourth-lowest in the country, at 63.9 percent in 2008. By 2012, it had improved by 18 percentage points, a larger-than-average increase, but at 82.2 percent, it was still the fifth-lowest. The state can work with local election officials to establish or improve collection and reporting of key performance data.

In 2013, the state passed legislation allowing online voter registration with a rollout deadline of July 2014. This will improve Illinois’ performance on the online registration indicator and could also have a positive impact on other indicators, including registration rate, wait time, nonvoting due to registration and absentee ballot problems, and provisional ballots cast.

Upgrading voter registration lists by participating in data-sharing agreements, such as the Electronic Registration Information Center, can also help address these issues, allowing states to get more up-to-date information on voters who move and reduce the rate of provisional ballot use.1

Improving data collection, adding online voter registration, and participating in data-sharing agreements are also recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration.

Endnote


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

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