

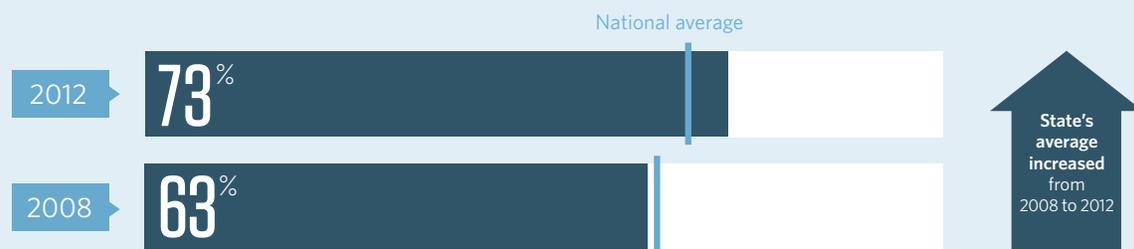


Montana

Elections Performance Index

This profile reports important trends for Montana 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
Military and overseas ballots rejected	6.7%	1.0%
Postelection audit required	No	Yes
Voter registration rate	80.2%	82.7%
Voting information lookup tools	0 of 2	4 of 5
Voting wait time	6.2 minutes	16.5 minutes

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

Beyond the numbers

Montana was one of only seven states to increase its overall EPI average by 10 percentage points or more. This increase put the state in the top 25 percent for 2012. Marked improvement on three indicators drove the state's strong overall performance. The state:

- Offered four out of five possible online voting information lookup tools in 2012 after having zero out of two in 2008.
- Added a postelection audit requirement before the 2012 election.
- Reduced its rate of military and overseas ballots rejected from nearly 7 percent in 2008 to 1 percent in 2012, the seventh-lowest rate in the nation.

Room for improvement

Montana's average wait time to vote increased more than 10 minutes—from 6.2 to 16.5 minutes—from 2008 to 2012. This was the second-largest jump, behind Florida. Such a significant hike may indicate an emerging systemic problem, and more research is needed to determine the causes and identify strategies to reduce wait times at the polls.

The [Presidential Commission on Election Administration](#) suggested that “long wait times at select polling places result from a combination of mismanagement, limited or misallocated resources, and long ballots” and that “jurisdictions can solve the problem of long lines through a combination of planning ... and the efficient allocation of resources.”¹

The state could 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 improve other metrics, including the voter registration rate, wait time, nonvoting due to registration and absentee ballot problems, and provisional ballots cast. Online registration is also strongly recommended by the Presidential Commission on Election Administration.

Endnote

- 1 Presidential Commission on Election Administration, *The American Voting Experience: Report and Recommendations of the Presidential Commission on Election Administration* (January 2014), i, 1, <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

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