

Online Voter Registration Factsheet

The 2008 Elections brought a record number of people registering to vote in states across the country. Offices of many election officials were overwhelmed by tens of thousands of registration forms to sort, verify, and data enter. Providing voters with the option to register to vote online using a secure website can help make this process easier and less expensive for election administrators, while also increasing accessibility for the voter.

This option has been implemented in Arizona and Washington. Arizona, the first state to utilize this service, has shown record numbers of increases in voter registrations in their state. As Arizona's Secretary of State Jan Brewer says, *"Today, over 50% of Arizonan's register to vote electronically, thus reducing errors, registering faster, and easier."*

Online registration would only be available for residents that have a signature stored in the driver's license database or the statewide voter registration database. The individual answers the same eligibility questions and will have the same ID requirements as found on a paper registration form. The following are some of the merits of this policy:

1. Saves time and money for county clerks and local election officials because it lessens data entry and administrative duties:
 - In Maricopa County, AZ (Phoenix), the data entry savings in 2006 were the equivalent to eight full time employees.
2. Prevents common mistakes made on paper forms due to either lack of legibility or missing information, thus creating a more accurate and efficient voter database:
 - The form will only successfully submit if the individual's personal information matches a record already in the voter database or the driver's license database.
 - The software will not successfully submit if the form is incomplete or if the appropriate check boxes are not checked.
3. Increases voter accessibility for many underrepresented demographics:
 - Young people and highly mobile populations: Changing an address and other information will be more convenient through an online application.
 - People with Disabilities: Many will find it easier to fill out a registration application in their home.
 - Rural voters: Rural County Clerk's offices are often not easily accessible.
4. Reduces the reliance on Voter Registration Drives.
5. Is a secure method of registering to vote or making changes to a voter record:
 - The WA Secretary of State has not seen a single instance of voter fraud with their online registration system.
 - If someone steals another's identity and attempts to fraudulently register to vote, the original signature from the legitimate voter's driver's license or registration form is used for signature verification on one's ballot. This creates a built-in safeguard to prevent voter fraud.
6. There is strong demand for this registration option:
 - In Arizona, over 70% of all voter registrations were done electronically in 2007.