

Voter Registration: List Accuracy and Enhanced Capacity

PCEA Recommendation	Best Practice(s)	Current Nebraska Policy
States should adopt online voter registration.	Online registration tools can facilitate registration through web portals from other agencies and outside groups.	The SOS in conjunction with the DMV has developed and implemented a registration application process which may be used statewide to register to vote and update voter registration records electronically using the SOS's website. An applicant who has a valid Nebraska motor vehicle operator's license or state identification card may use the application process to register to vote or to update his or her voter registration record with changes in his or her personal information or other information related to his or her eligibility to vote. §32-304
Interstate exchanges of voter registration information should be expanded.	States should join interstate programs that share data and synchronize voter lists so that states, on their own initiative, come as close as possible to creating an accurate database of all eligible voters.	Nebraska is currently a member of the Interstate Voter Registration Crosscheck Program (IVRC).
States should seamlessly integrate voter data acquired through Departments of Motor Vehicles with their statewide voter registration lists.	States should adopt procedures that lead to the seamless integration of data between DMV's and election offices.	By January 1, 2016, the SOS's office and the DMV shall enter into an agreement to match information in the computerized statewide voter registration list with information in the data base of the DMV to verify the accuracy of the information provided on applications for voter registration. Then, the DMV, with assistance of SOS, shall prescribe a voter registration application which may be used to register to vote or change his or her address for voting purposes at the same time an elector applies for an original or renewal motor vehicle operator's license, an original or renewal state ID card, or a replacement thereof. Next, the DMV will develop a process to electronically transfer application information received through this process. §32-308

Improved Management of Polling Place

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Schools should be used as polling places; to address any related security concerns, Election Day should be an in-service day.	<p>(1) Polling places should be located close to voters and designed to have sufficient space and parking, accessibility for voters with disabilities, and adequate infrastructure.</p> <p>(2) Local officials should maintain a diagram of every polling place used in the jurisdiction that provides room dimensions, location of power outlets, the proposed positioning of voting and voter processing equipment, the entry and exit routes, and signage required by the Americans with Disabilities Act.</p> <p>(3) The diagrams should be maintained in the clerk's office, provided to the election official responsible for the polling location on Election Day, and updated before every election.</p>	Currently schools in Nebraska are used as polling places. Under §32-905 political subdivisions that receive federal or state dollars are required to make themselves available for use as a polling place at no cost to the counties. Nebraska public schools fall under this statute. Individual school boards set their own schedules in regard to the academic calendar and in-service days.

<p>States should consider establishing vote centers to achieve economies of scale in polling place management while also facilitating voting at convenient locations.</p>	<p>Vote Centers (A polling place at which any registered voter in the political subdivision holding the election may vote, regardless of the precinct in which the voter resides) should be located on commonly traveled routes in places of convenience</p>	<p>Nebraska only allows for the consolidation of polling locations, wherein multiple precincts polling places may be housed in a single building. §32-903(3), §32-904. These consolidated sites must clearly mark the separation of the precincts and have separate receiving boards.</p>
<p>Jurisdictions should develop models and tools to assist them in effectively allocating resources across polling places.</p>	<p>(1) Employ line walkers to address potential problems among voters before reach check-in; (2) Provide internet feed from individual polling places, (3) Use "queueing theory" to oversee flow of voters at points of service, (4) Accurately estimate turnout using data from 3 months preceding election, (5) Pretest length of time to fill out ballot to accurately estimate necessary resources, (6) Sample ballot along with polling location and time should be available to voters no later than the beginning of in-person voting. (6) Reduce length and complexity of the ballot in Presidential election year</p>	<p>No statutory provision contains such a model for the allocation of resources across polling places. Two statutory provisions address minimum ratios and what must be provided by election official to polling site. Minimum 1 voting booth for every 100 registered voters with some discretion in non-statewide elections. §32-906(1). Minimum 1 electronic voting machine for every 500 registered voters. §32-903(3). Election officials are required to provide the above resources in the appropriate amount as well as a ballot box, ballot box lock and key, and those supplies necessary to ensure the convenience of voting. §32-906(1). Each county election official makes their own determination of quantity and allocation of resources according to own rubric. Sample ballots are required to be published no more than 15 days in advance of an election, but may be printed earlier at the discretion of the county election official. §32-804</p>
<p>Jurisdictions should transition to electronic poll books.</p>		<p>Current Nebraska practice is to use paper pollbooks. The voter registrar includes a upc code and every county office is equipped with a scanner to electronically log each voter that voted at their polling place on Election Day.</p>
<p>Jurisdictions should recruit public and private sector employees, as well as high school and college students, to become poll workers.</p>	<p>(1) Utilize the many recommendations made available in the relevant EAC report "Successful Practices for Poll Workers Recruitment, Training and Retention"; (2) State-developed programs should be implemented that recognize employers for supporting their employees who wish to work on Election Day</p>	<p>Nebraska allows for the appointment of election workers by the county election officer. §32-235. County officials may opt to recruit volunteers as election workers. The Secretary of State operates the "Youth Election Service" (YES) program, a volunteer program for high school youth 16-18 to serve on receiving boards.</p>
<p>States should institute poll worker training standards.</p>	<p>Different equipment used in different counties necessitates different training programs, but states must still achieve uniform application of their legal standards</p>	<p>No current statute directs the Secretary of State to create poll worker training standards. Current law requires only that the Secretary of State provide training for election commissioners, county clerks, and other election officials in the conduct of elections, not standardize training. 32-202(2).</p>
<p>Election authorities should establish advisory groups for voters with disabilities and for those with limited English proficiency.</p>	<p>Election authorities utilize their own websites and traditional communication outlets, including non-English language media, to reach voters</p>	<p>No statutory provision currently exists that requires the Secretary of State nor a county election official to create an advisory group. The SOS may employ such personnel as necessary to efficiently carry out his powers and duties in the Election Act. 32-203(2). This statute may be sufficient authority for the SOS to create such an advisory board.</p>

States and localities must adopt comprehensive management practices to assure accessible polling places.	(1) A check-list ensuring that each polling place is accessible that is kept by the election official for each election and kept on file to prepare for the next election; (2) Available chairs for elderly and voters with disabilities to utilize while waiting and when voting; (3) Video guides on how to set up accessible polling place and educating poll workers on voters with disabilities	Secretary of State provides information on a secure website for county election officials. Representatives of the disability community have expressed concern poll workers are not adequately trained to interact with disabled voters.
States should survey and audit polling places to determine their accessibility.		No current statute requires a survey and audit as recommended. Current surveys and audits are conducted, in a limited capacity, by non-profit organizations including Disability Rights Nebraska and Nebraskans for Civic Reform.
Jurisdictions should provide bilingual poll workers to any polling place with a significant number of voters who do not speak English.		Under federal law only Colfax, Dakota and Dawson counties are required to promulgate voting materials in Spanish. The Voting Rights Act requires only written translation and requires only minimal oral assistance in their native language. There is no requirement for poll workers to be bilingual and no set policy to actively recruit or place bilingual election workers at precincts with large minority populations.
Jurisdictions should test all election materials for plain language and usability.		No statute addresses the issue of plain language nor usability. Statutes that address required content of election materials either focus solely on formatting or dictate the specific wording to be used. §32-810 to §32-816; §32-902. These statutes concern ballot language and voting instructions.

Voting Before Election Day

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States should expand opportunities to vote before Election Day.	States should not simultaneously expand early voting and excessively reduce the resources available for Election Day. States should adopt safeguards for mail balloting, including online tracking of absentee ballots so voters can verify the status of their ballot.	Any registered voter may cast a ballot in person 30 days prior to an election. §32-942(1)

Military and Overseas Voters

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States should provide ballots and registration materials to military and overseas voters via their websites.	Both the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot and the Federal Post Card Application should be considered as valid voter registration applications. However they may transmit their ballot, overseas and military voters would benefit from a system that allows them to create on their attached printer a ballot with a barcode that can be read by the local election administrator.	The Federal Post Card Application can be used to register to vote and request an absentee ballot for all elections in a calendar year, per §32-939. The Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot may be used to cast an absentee ballot and is considered to be a voter registration application, per §32-939.02. The Secretary of State is required to develop a process for a military or overseas voter to check the status of their ballot over the Internet or a toll-free telephone call, per §32-939.02.

Growing Challenges with Election Equipment and Voting Technology

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The standard-setting and certification process for voting machines must be reformed.	N/A	§32-1041 (2008) states that "Any new voting or counting system shall be approved by the Secretary of State prior to use by an election commissioner or county clerk." Nebraska is one of 20 states that has not adopted the federal Voluntary Voting System Guidelines developed by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission.
Audits of voting equipment must be conducted after each election, as part of a comprehensive audit program, and data concerning machine performance must be publicly disclosed in a common data format.	N/A	According to §32-1041, Nebraska uses optical scan paper ballot systems statewide, where voters mark paper ballots which are scanned by a machine. In a 2007 survey from the National Association of Secretaries of State, Nebraska indicated that it does not require any type of post-election audit, and did not anticipate one being required within the next year. In a 2009 press release, Secretary of State John Gale released the results of an audit he ordered of election results in 17 randomly-selected precincts. Results from the November 2008 general election were hand-counted, and the election machines were found to be extremely accurate. An audit was performed again following the November 2012 general election, and following the 2014 primary election. These election audits are not codified into any statute.

Collection and Distribution of Election Data

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Local jurisdictions should gather and report voting-related transaction data for the purpose of improving the voter experience.	(1) State creates a model for election data-gathering program, (2) Voting machine manufacturers should add functionality to their machines to help gather data, which jurisdictions should widely disseminate in a standard data format.	Currently no Nebraska policy is codified in statute or administrative code that expressly states what data should be gathered. County election officials have remarked that they have received instructions from ES&S on testing tabulation machines for accuracy, but since Nebraska uses paper ballot voting machines are only used by those unable to fill out a paper ballot. Any data would need to be collected by individual election offices and poll workers.