

Washington State Online Voter Registration

Secretary of State Sam Reed



“People already enjoy conducting most of their personal business online. For example, banking, filing taxes, renewing car tabs and driver’s licenses, making travel arrangements, and handling stock transactions.

The public expects these services to be online.

Giving citizens the option to register electronically brings voter registration into the digital age.”

- Sam Reed
Secretary of State



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Frequently Asked Questions: Registering Online

What is online voter registration?

Online voter registration allows Washington citizens to register to vote or transfer a registration to a new address through a secure internet site—just as that person would pay a bill online or renew car tabs. All that is needed is a Washington State driver’s license or Washington State ID card number.

How does online voter registration work?

An applicant enters his or her driver’s license or state ID card number, date of birth and name exactly as it appears on that license or ID card to gain access to the online voter registration system. The applicant then provides the same information as if filling out a paper voter registration form. The applicant must agree to the use of the license or state ID card signature as the voter registration signature. And, just as with the paper voter registration form, the applicant must affirm via oath that the information provided is true and accurate.

How did online registration come about?

In 2006, Secretary of State Sam Reed formally requested that the Washington State Legislature pass a law authorizing online voter registration to both increase and simplify voter registrations. The Legislature passed the law in 2007 and it took effect January 1, 2008.

THE PURPOSE

Our goal is to make the process user-friendly, while protecting the integrity of the voter registration list.

Is online voter registration secure?

Yes. The online voter registration system uses the same technology that banks and retailers use to encrypt and protect a customer’s personal information. In addition, a randomly generated security number is

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MyVote: Personalized Voter Information

In 2008, Washington state jumped to the next level of voter education by promoting an online one-stop, customized voter information feature called MyVote.

The free service is available 24/7 at the Secretary of State's website at www.vote.wa.gov.

MyVote gives personalized, specific information to each voter who logs on by name and birthday. This information includes voter registration status, a personalized voters' pamphlet, ballot dropbox sites, voting history and contact information for that voter's federal, state, local and judicial elected officials.

Citizens can also use MyVote to update a mailing address.

"MyVote is a very exciting advance for us in Washington, and something that is already drawing national attention," said Secretary of State Sam Reed.



Washington State Legislation

HOUSE BILL 1528, now codified as Revised Code of Washington 29A.08.123

Passed Legislature - 2007 Regular Session

AN ACT Relating to electronic voter registration; adding a new section to chapter 29A.08 RCW; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

NEW SECTION. Sec. 1. A new section is added to chapter 29A.08 RCW to read as follows:

- (1) A person who has a valid Washington state driver's license or state identification card may submit a voter registration application electronically on the secretary of state's web site.
- (2) The applicant must attest to the truth of the information provided on the application by affirmatively accepting the information as true.
- (3) The applicant must affirmatively assent to use of his or her driver's license or state identification card signature for voter registration purposes.
- (4) A voter registration application submitted electronically is otherwise considered a registration by mail.
- (5) For each electronic application, the secretary of state must obtain a digital copy of the applicant's driver's license or state identification card signature from the department of licensing.
- (6) The secretary of state may employ additional security measures to ensure the accuracy and integrity of voter registration application submitted electronically.

NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. This act takes effect January 1, 2008.

—END—

Agency Regulations

Washington Administrative Code 434-324-031

Electronic voter registration.

- (1) The secretary of state's electronic voter registration web page must have the capability to:
 - (a) Reject applicants without a Washington state driver's license or state identification card;
 - (b) Require the applicant to affirmatively assent to the use of his or her driver's license or state identification card signature for voter registration purposes;
 - (c) Require the applicant to attest to the truth of the information provided on the application;
 - (d) Retrieve a digital copy of each applicant's driver's license or state identification card signature from the department of licensing and include it with the other information required for each applicant's voter registration; and
 - (e) Electronically transfer all information required for each applicant's voter registration to his or her county auditor for entry into the statewide voter registration data base through the county election management system.
- (2) Once election registration information is entered into county election management systems, the same timelines and processes used for registration by mail apply to electronic registration.

—END—



IMPLEMENTATION LESSONS LEARNED

1. Keep the user experience front and center when developing the interface; and balance safeguards and security measures to protect the integrity of the voter registration system.
2. Negotiate contracts early with voter registration system vendors.
3. Draw on existing relationships with the state licensing agency.
4. Involve county partners early.
5. Develop a thorough testing plan and leave sufficient time to follow that plan.





Online Registration & MyVote by the numbers

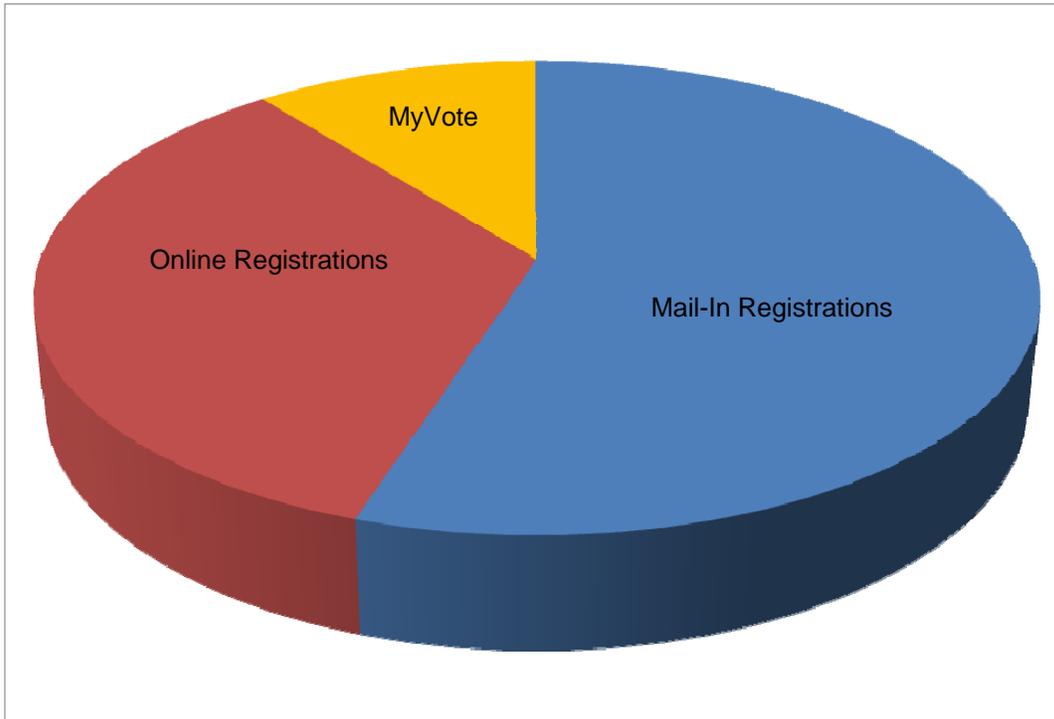
2008	Mail-In Forms	Online	MyVote Address Changes
January	21,339	17,999	5,933
February	28,123	20,261	3,338
March	14,269	3,566	397
April	11,880	4,066	405
May	16,742	3,268	178
June	15,606	3,657	0*
July	17,729	6,515	1,459
August	18,281	12,459	5,238
September	49,304	22,125	6,344
October	54,314	62,909	19,999
November	3,742	802	5,837
December	2,235	659	220
TOTALS	253,564	158,286	49,348

Above are the number of voter registration transactions, separated by type, for the 2008 election year. Washington State held a Presidential Primary in February, a State Primary in August, and the General Election in November.

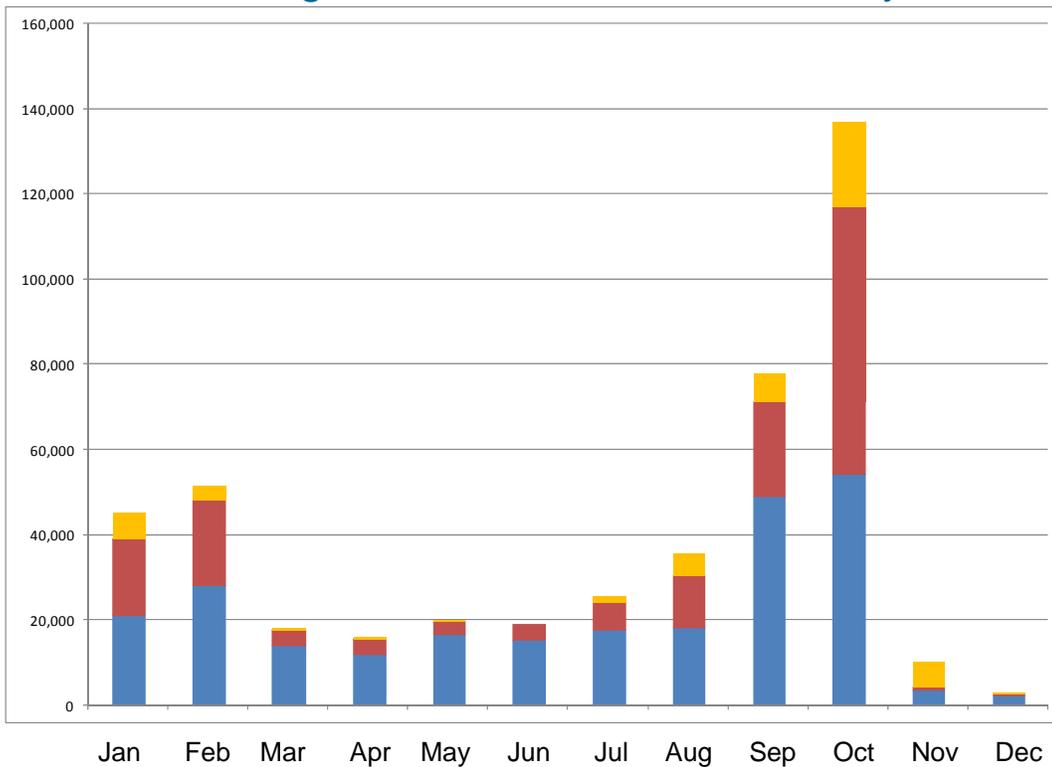
Online Voter Registration and MyVote allow voters the convenience of interacting with government on their time from the comfort of their own homes. Registering to vote and updating registration information becomes something that can be done in a matter of minutes.

*The online address change via MyVote was offline for the last week of May, all of June, and the first three weeks of July.

Voter Registration 2008

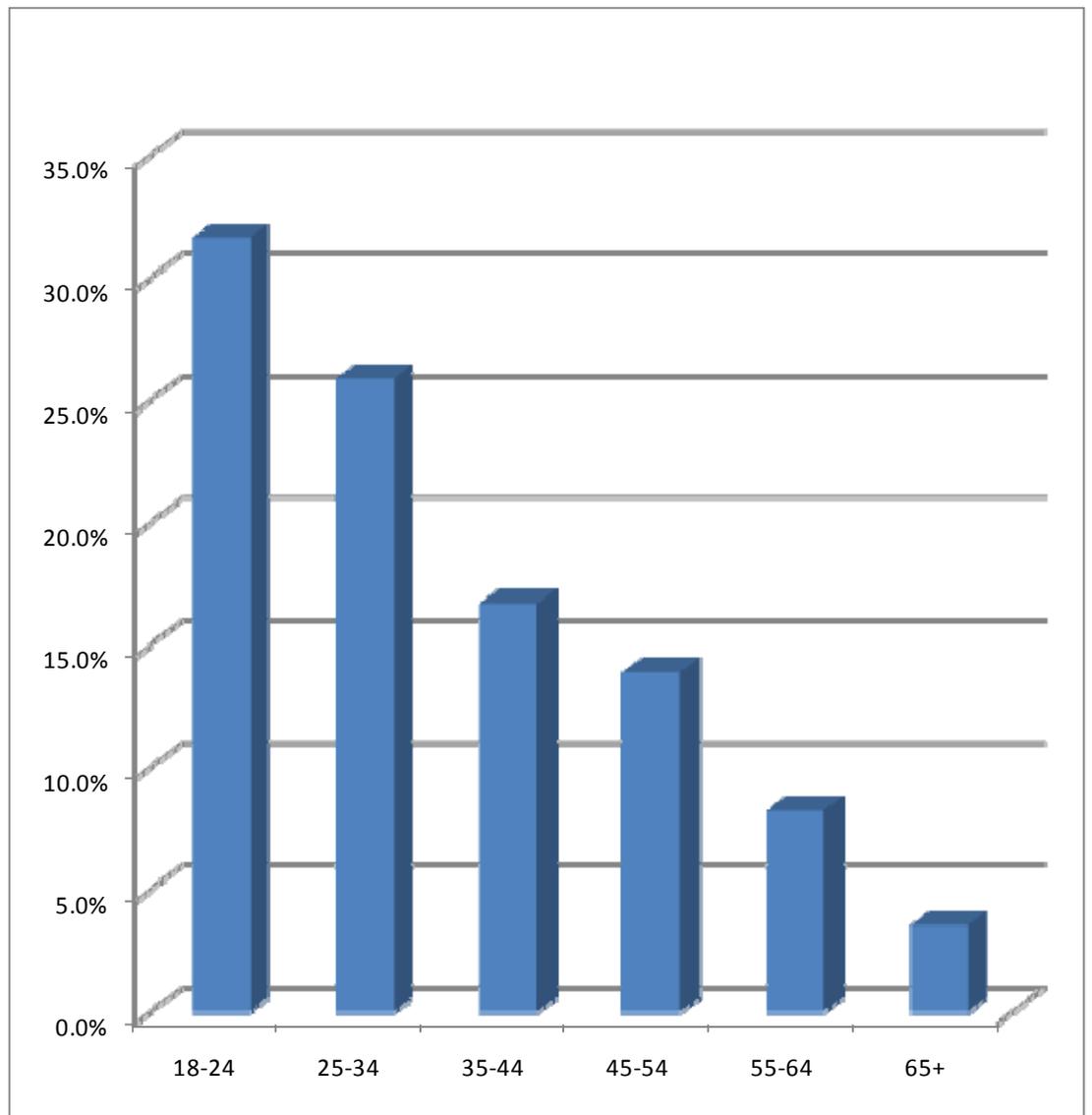


Voter Registration Transactions by Month

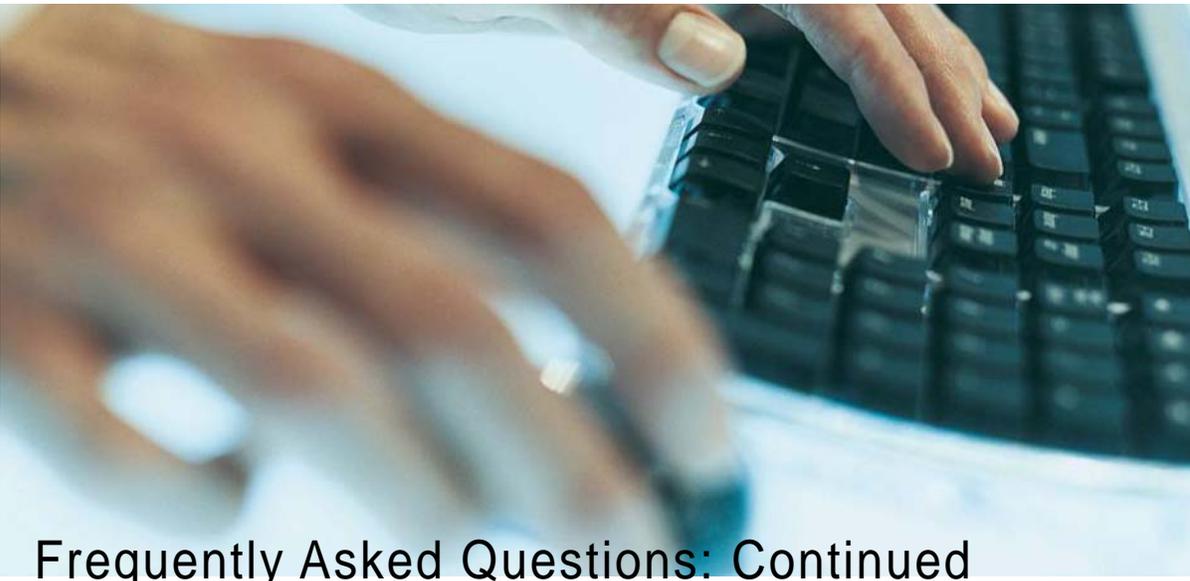


Who uses Online Registration & MyVote?

Transactions by Age



	July 5-19	Sept 27— Oct 4
18-24	32.6%	30.7%
25-34	23.0%	28.8%
35-44	14.8%	18.6%
45-54	14.7%	13.1%
55-64	9.9%	6.6%
65+	5.0%	2.1%



Frequently Asked Questions: Continued

Presented to each user to prevent an automated hacking program to fraudulently fill out voter registration applications via the website.

Since only people who have a driver's license or state ID card can register online, the applicant has already proven his or her identity in-person in a state office.

The Secretary of State's Office receives the applicant's signature from the driver's license or ID card for the voter registration record.

May a voter make an address change online too?

Yes, registered voters moving to a new address in the same county may submit address changes through "MyVote," a personalized voter information system.

Voters moving to a new county must use the online voter

Registration system and submit a new voter registration application.

May someone register another person to vote or change another voter's address by using online voter registration?

No, only a new applicant or an existing voter may agree to the use of that voter's signature on file with the Department of Licensing for voter registration purposes.

Submitting a fraudulent voter registration application is a felony in Washington State.

If a voter changes address or other information using online voter registration, is that voter's state driver's license or ID card record also updated?

No. Information is not transferred from the online voter registration system back to the Department of

Licensing. The voter will need to independently contact the Department of Licensing to make any changes to his or her driver's license or state ID records.

How does online registration address citizenship, age, and residency?

The first step in registering online requires applicants to indicate their eligibility to vote separately in each area of citizenship, age, residency, and felony convictions. Later in the process, applicants must accept the oath that reaffirms their eligibility.

This process fulfills all the requirements for registering to vote spelled out in state law, and reflects the same process applicants use when registering to vote with a paper voter registration form.

Nick Handy, Director of Elections



“Allowing citizens to register online and update voter information is convenient for both the voter and election administrators.

Election administrators no longer worry about transcription errors when transferring information from a paper form to the voter registration rolls.

The system also gives voters ownership of their own voter registration record.”

- Nick Handy
Director of Elections

Online Voter Registration: Fiscal Impact

The fiscal impact for the 2007 legislation to authorize online voter registration was originally projected at approximately \$86,000. Once the project was fully scoped, including a thorough review of Arizona's online voter registration system, and all the system requirements and features were fleshed out, the actual cost came to approximately \$279,000.

Microsoft was paid \$170,000 to develop the statewide voter registration database (VRDB) to accept and process online voter registrations and to create the user interface found on www.vote.wa.gov. Microsoft modified the statewide voter registration database to accept electronic applications from the four different types of voter registration systems operating in Washington.

The four voter registration system vendors were paid an additional \$109,000 to develop the software that would allow for the electronic transfer of voter registration information from each of Washington's 39 county voter registration systems to the statewide voter registration database. The vendors and the development cost are:

- DFM—\$12,000
- DIMS—\$59,000
- VOTEC—\$17,000
- ES&S—\$22,000

Cost Savings

From the date of implementation of online voter registration, to the October 4 voter registration cut-off for the 2008 General Election, the office had about 130,000 online voter registration transactions.

It costs approximately 25 cents to process and forward each paper voter registration form. Each applicant using a paper voter registration record must spend 42 cents for the stamp to mail it in. This means that online voter registration saved the state of Washington about \$32,500 before the November 2008 General Election. The postage savings to the electorate is calculated at \$54,600. The total combined savings equals \$87,100.

Previously it would cost 43 cents to process each motor voter transaction from the Department of Licensing. Moving to an electronic system will save the state \$45,000 in the next fiscal year.

Taking the savings into consideration, online voter registration paid for about 30 percent of the original cost to implement the program by October 2008.

Projected out further, the savings created by online voter registration will eventually pay for all implementation costs.