Nebraska

State Rank: 19
Overall Score: MEDIUM

Index 1: Voter Registration - Confidence level - MEDIUM
Nebraska closes voter registration 11 days before Election Day if registering in person; 18 days before if registering online or by mail. There is no same-day nor automatic voter registration. There is a two-year waiting period after completion of probation for the restoration of voting rights for those with felony convictions. The state does not purge voting lists no matter how many years of nonvoting. There was a low number of purges conducted in 2020. Very few Nebraska voters contacted the 1-866-OUR-VOTE legal hotline in 2020 during the last week of the election with concerns about voter registration.

Index 2: Voter Identification - Confidence level - HIGH
Nebraska requires no photo ID to vote. The state is NOT a member of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) which helps states improve accuracy of voter rolls. Restrictive state legislation was pending in early 2022.

Index 3: Early Voting - Confidence level - HIGH
Nebraska offers early in-person voting beginning 30 days before Election Day, ending the day before. No-excuse required absentee voting is available, while some counties may conduct optional vote-by-mail.

Index 4: Safe Voting - Confidence level - MEDIUM
In 2021, Nebraska codified no-excuse absentee ballot voting and limited access to drop boxes. There is no proactive mailing of ballots applications to voters without request nor prepaid postage to return the ballot. The state provides accessible electronic absentee ballots to voters with disabilities and places no restrictions on who can return an absentee ballot for a voter in need.

Learn more about how to vote and voting rights in Nebraska: VOTE411
Learn about voting laws recently passed or enacted in Nebraska: State Voting Rights Tracker by Voting Rights Lab
If you or anyone you know encounters problems while voting, call the Election Protection Hotline at 866-OUR-VOTE or 866-687-8683
Learn how to take action to protect voting rights in Nebraska: DemocracyMovement.us
Nebraska had a high percentage of mail-in ballots returned in 2020, with a low rejection rate. There is a statewide ballot tracking program, but it is not strong nor statutorily required. The state does not have a signature verification program nor a codified process for voters to correct for ballot discrepancies. All ballots must be received by close of polls on Election Day.

Nebraska allows employees to take up to 2 hours paid leave to vote. The state provides high quality accessible voting machine options, allows curbside voting, and moves disabled and/or elderly voters to the front of the line. State law addresses the needs of voters experiencing housing instability. There were very few reports from voters with concerns about access and safety issues at polling sites in 2020. Nebraska had a moderate ratio of poll workers to polling sites in 2020. It was ranked among the top third of states that invested in the 2020 election to improve processes while being cost effective.

Nebraska has a statewide verified paper audit trail. All voting centers use hand marked paper ballots and offer Ballot Marking Devices for voters with accessibility needs. Nebraska does not require equipment testing according to federal standards. Its election security systems received good overall ratings in 2018. The state uses traditional audit methods to double-check for machine recording errors during the election process and the statutorily required post-election period.
Index 8: Independent Election Administration - Confidence level - HIGH
Although Nebraska has established the constitutional right to a secret ballot, it does not prohibit election interference by the legislature. No laws were passed in 2021 on this topic, but legislation pending in early 2022 could penalize election officials for their decisions and prohibit private funding of election administration.

Index 9: External Interference in Voting - Confidence Level - MEDIUM
Public opinion surveys showed that Nebraska voters had no trust in the 2020 election news coverage, while political scientists gave the state very low media integrity ratings. Nebraska voters were targeted with robocalls to stay home and not vote. State law authorizes law enforcement to be present only by request or on official business and requires that all poll workers be trained.

Index 10: The Role of Government and Politics – No rating given, informational only
Nebraska has a nonpartisan unicameral legislature that has a Republican trifecta, as well as a triplex - the governor, attorney general, and secretary of state are from the same political party. Based on the last two presidential elections, Nebraska is a solid Republican state, with an average GOP voting margin of 22.5% compared to the national average Democratic voting margin of 3%. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the state’s population grew by 7.4%, which is the same rate as the country as a whole. Nebraska is among the least racially diverse states in the nation. Nebraska saw its white population drop from 82% in 2010 to 76% in 2020. With the U.S. Census results, the state will neither gain nor lose any representatives in Congress.

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