Index 1: Voter Registration - Confidence level - MEDIUM
Illinois offers automatic, online, and same-day (through Election Day) voter registration. Voting rights are automatically restored to those incarcerated for felonies upon release. 2021 state law bans prison gerrymandering and allows the Department of Corrections to participate in automatic voter registration. Illinois purges voters from lists after four years of nonvoting and no response to state notice of pending removal. There were zero total purges conducted in 2020. A low number of Illinois voters contacted the 1-866-OUR-VOTE legal hotline in 2020 during the last week of the election with concerns about voter registration and the handling of provisional ballots at the polling sites.

Index 2: Voter Identification - Confidence level - HIGH
Illinois requires no photo voter ID to vote. The state is a member of the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC) which helps states improve accuracy of voter rolls. A low number of voters in 2020 reported concerns about voter ID or not being on the voting list/database. Restrictive state legislation was pending in early 2022.

Index 3: Early Voting - Confidence level - HIGH
Illinois offers early in-person voting beginning 40 days before Election Day for temporary polling sites and 15 days before for permanent locations. There is Saturday and Sunday voting. No-excuse required absentee voting is available.
Index 5: Ballot Acceptance - Confidence level - MEDIUM

Illinois had a high percentage of mail-in ballots returned in 2020, with a moderate rejection rate. There are some county and city ballot tracking programs, but not a statewide statutorily required program. The state allows election administrators to preprocess returned ballots, has a signature verification program, and provides a codified process for voters to correct for ballot discrepancies. Voters have until 14 days after an election to resolve any issue presented to the county election authority. The ballot must be received within 14 days after an election if postmarked on or before Election Day.

Index 6: Logistical Barriers in Voting - Confidence level - MEDIUM

Election Day in Illinois is a state holiday, and state law allows employees to take up to 2 hours paid leave to vote. Illinois provides high quality accessible voting machine options and allows curbside voting. State law in 2021 requires more assistive technology for voters with disabilities and authorizes establishing temporary voting locations in county jails. There were a moderate number of reports from voters in 2020 with concerns about disability access and COVID-19 protocols, with a higher number about long lines, delayed openings and early closings of polling sites, mishandling of ballots, inadequate signage, ballot shortages, and voting equipment. The state has passed measures to address the residency challenges of voters experiencing housing instability. Illinois had a low ratio of poll workers to polling sites in 2020. It was ranked among the top five states that invested in the 2020 election to improve processes while being cost effective.
Index 7: Equipment, Security, and Auditing - Confidence level - MEDIUM
Illinois has a statewide verified paper audit trail. The state uses a combination of hand marked paper ballots, electronic voting machines, and Ballot Marking Devices to meet voter accessibility needs. Illinois tests the equipment according to federal standards and accreditation. Its election security systems received somewhat low overall ratings in 2018. The state uses traditional audit methods to double-check for machine recording errors before ballots are counted and during the statutorily required post-election period.

Index 8: Independent Election Administration - Confidence level - HIGH
Although Illinois 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 interfere with local election administrations.
Index 9: External Interference in Voting - Confidence Level - LOW
Public opinion surveys showed that Illinois voters had some trust in the 2020 election news coverage, while political scientists gave the state low media integrity ratings. The state had a high number of demonstrations and a few riots during the last week of the general elections. There was a moderate number of reports from voters with concerns about political intimidation online, disinformation, and election certification, and a high number about in-person intimidation, electioneering, poll worker misconduct, police presence, and physical safety at the polling sites. Illinois authorizes law enforcement to be present only by request or on official business. State law does not ban weapons, prohibit obstructing or hindering voters at polling sites, criminalize voter intimidation and false election speech, nor mandate training for all poll workers. Illinois passed media literacy laws requiring instruction or standards on how to evaluate trustworthy media services in public education.

Index 10: The Role of Government and Politics – No rating given, informational only
Illinois is one of 13 states that has a Democratic 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, Illinois is one of the 10 most Democratic states, with an average Democratic voting margin of 17.0% compared to the national average Democratic voting margin of 3%. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the state's population decreased by -0.1% (one of only three states with a negative population growth along with Mississippi and West Virginia) compared to the national average growth of 7.4%. Illinois is as racially diverse as the country as a whole. Illinois saw its Latino population increase from 14% in 2010 to 18% in 2020. With the U.S. Census results, Illinois is one of seven states to lose a representative in Congress.