
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF THE **AUDITOR GENERAL** FACT SHEET



Pennsylvania Motor Voter Process Performance Audit Fact Sheet

Background

The [Pennsylvania Motor Voter process](#) is one way a U.S. citizen can apply to register to vote when they get or renew their driver's license or ID card at a Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) Photo License center. It is operated through PennDOT and IT support is provided by the Governor's Office of Administration (OA).

[The Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General conducted a performance audit of PennDOT and OA](#) to find out if the Motor Voter process complies with state and federal laws and applicable guidelines, policies and procedures, and if the files PennDOT sent to the Pennsylvania Department of State (DOS) from the Motor Voter system properly excluded non-citizens. The audit period was January 1 to June 30, 2024.

There are four ways a U.S. citizen can [apply to register to vote](#) or update their existing voter registration in Pennsylvania: online; through the mail; in-person at the individual's county election office; or at PennDOT locations and other government agencies.

What did the audit find?

PennDOT's Motor Voter process works as intended and follows state and federal Law. However, the processes and security controls around it must improve. Auditors that PennDOT improperly allowed one non-U.S. citizen's application to register to vote to be sent to DOS because of human error. Auditors also found that PennDOT and OA failed to implement the appropriate internal controls regarding employee user access to the Motor Voter system. [Read the Motor Voter process performance audit.](#)

What did the auditors recommend to fix these issues?

Auditors provided eight recommendations to PennDOT and OA to help improve the Motor Voter process in Pennsylvania. Auditors offered three recommendations to PennDOT to strengthen safeguards against errors and coordinate with DOS to ensure that the non-citizen was not registered to vote. They also offered three recommendations to PennDOT and two recommendations to OA to strengthen policies and procedures governing employee access of the system.

Does Motor Voter automatically register people to vote?

No, the Motor Voter process does not automatically register people to vote. The Motor Voter process allows U.S. citizens the opportunity to apply to register to vote at a PennDOT Photo License Center.

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Why did the auditors look at 6 months of data?

During the audit period, more than 200,000 voter registration applications were sent from the Motor Voter system to DOS. Our auditors determined this was enough data to determine if the system was working as intended and if PennDOT properly excluded non-U.S. citizen data from being sent to DOS.

What is a performance audit?

A [performance audit](#) looks at whether state-funded programs and activities are meeting their goals and objectives, and if tax dollars are being spent efficiently and effectively.

Where can I see the full audit report?

[Access the full audit report on our website.](#)

Where can I find more information about the audits you perform and how to read an audit?

Learn more about this audit and the types of audits we perform on the [Be Audit Smart page on our website.](#)