

# PA OVR Web API Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the PA OVR Web API?

The Pennsylvania Online Voter Registration Web Application Programming Interface (PA OVR Web API) is a programmatic interface to the Pennsylvania Department of State's Online Voter Registration System. This interface allows an organization conducting registration drives the ability to connect directly to the Online Voter Registration system to facilitate voter registration through the organization's application or website.

## What does API stand for?

API stands for Application Programming Interface. An API is a set of rules ('code') and specifications that software programs can follow to communicate with each other. It serves as an interface between different software programs and facilitates their interaction, similar to the way the user interface facilitates interaction between humans and computers.

## Who can use the PA OVR Web API?

Any organization or entity may register with the Pennsylvania Department of State (DOS) to request certification to use the PA OVR Web API as long as their application satisfies all testing requirements and meets security standards.

## How do I register?

Third parties may register with the Department of State by clicking on the "New User? [Register](#)" link available at <https://paovrwebapi.votespa.com/SUREWebAPIAdmin/>.

## What is the certification process?

In order to submit data, users must first have their application approved by the Department through a series of reviews of flow diagrams and captured screens. After registering with the Department, a representative will contact the person identified during the registration process. The requestor will be provided with the official agreement for review and acceptance. After the agreement has been signed, the requestor will be provided with the necessary information to connect to the Staging (testing) environment. Upon successful stage testing the requestor will be approved with the Department to use the PA OVR Web API and will be provided with the necessary information to connect to the Production environment. Once approved, the Department will assist in monitoring and troubleshooting, as resources are available.

### Are there specific fields of data that must be provided to the Department of State?

Yes. A list of data fields that, at a minimum, must be presented to the applicant can be found in the OVR Field Definition document provided on the PA OVR Web API informational site located at [www.dos.pa.gov/PAOVRWEBAPI](http://www.dos.pa.gov/PAOVRWEBAPI).

### Once an application is approved can it be provided to other entities for use?

Yes. An approved application can be provided to other entities for use so long as it meets the stipulations in the PA OVR Web API Terms and Conditions. Organizations that are hosting a certified application from another source will still need to pass all test criteria to ensure the application meets the Department of State's certification standards.

### Can I capture application data to be submitted later?

Yes. The PA OVR Web API has been built to support multiple modes of submission, including interactively, delayed, or in groups or batches. Although the method of submission will be determined by each organization, the important foundation of the interface is that every POST will contain one and only one application data submission. This means for group/batch processing, each submission will require a separate POST, independent of when the data associated was captured and subsequently submitted to the Department of State.

### Does the Department of State (DOS) provide the application to interested organizations?

No. The Department of State does not have an application to provide to interested organizations. The organization is responsible for developing an application to connect with PA's Online Voter Registration system. DOS will be available to help with any technical questions while the organization is developing their application.

### What if I forgot my username or password?

To reset your username or password, please visit <https://paovrwebapi.votespa.com/SUREWebAPIAdmin/> to verify some account information and answer your security question. Your username will be presented or a new password will be generated if you correctly verified your security question and account information.



## Are we required to support every language supported by PA's Online Voter Registration application?

No. As an organization conducting a registration drive, you are not required to offer all languages supported by PA's Online Voter Registration application. However, you are required to test each language that you are supporting through your application. For example, if you are offering English and Spanish languages to applicants, you must submit English and Spanish test applications when you are certifying your application.

## What if the Department of State (DOS) plans to enhance its online voter registration application in the future?

Organizations will be given at least a sixty (60) day notice before any enhancements are added to our online voter registration application. This will allow organizations the opportunity to update their application without interrupting voter registration drives.

## What if I make changes to my voter registration application in the future?

Organizations should submit their changes to the Department for review. In most cases, the application will be required to undergo testing again before continuing registration drives in the production environment.