



Michigan.gov

Michigan Voting Dashboard

Improving Election Transparency in Michigan

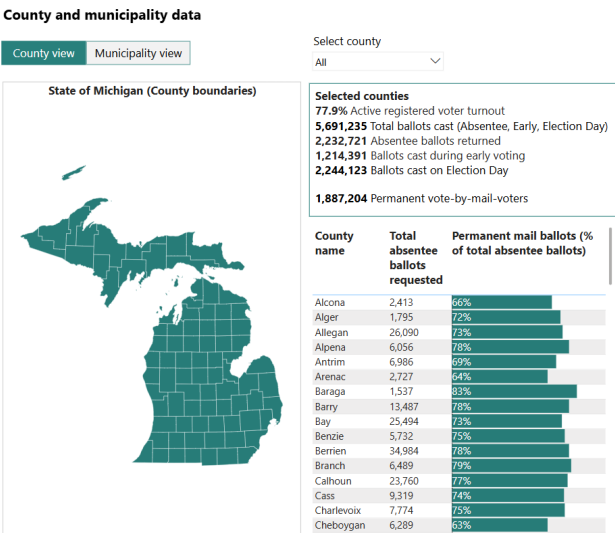
Award:	National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) State IT Recognition Awards
Category:	Data Management, Analytics & Visualization
State:	Michigan
Project Start:	February 2024
Project End:	March 2025
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In October 2024, the Michigan Department of State (MDOS) released an innovative interactive dashboard on its elections website to provide in-context detailed daily voter participation information (particularly early voting and absentee ballot voting) for the media, the public, election officials, and local clerks during the 2024 election season.

The Michigan Voting Dashboard, took several months of close collaboration between multiple cross agency and cross-organizational teams, and a contracted design team to develop and make public. It was initially released in time to show absentee ballot and early voter participation results as planned.

It met its objectives to provide election transparency, giving the press, public, and local election offices easy access to high quality, digestible information that was refreshed daily during the election cycle. The easily available and understandable data eliminated the need for information seekers to file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests for displayed data and greatly reduced the number of inquires made to the MDOS Bureau of Elections (BoE) during the voting season. Potential users were queried during the development process, helping the project team to meet real needs by end users. The Power BI dashboard was well received and widely reported on in the press.



IDEA

What problems or opportunity does the project address?

Providing voting information historically has been a chargeable manual process requiring FOIA requests from the public and time-consuming individual responses from MDOS BoE staff. Often, the data was dated by the time it was provided and difficult to understand. The MDOS concept for a voting dashboard was brought to the Michigan Department of Technology, Management & Budget (DTMB) Agency Services and the DTMB Center for Shared Solutions (CSS) Enterprise Information Services and Business Intelligence (EISBI) team a few months prior to the 2024 election cycle with the following goals:

- ✓ Make voting information easily available and user friendly.
- ✓ Make voting information understandable by sharing data and context clearly.
- ✓ Provide current data including data at the state, county, and municipality levels.
- ✓ Create a one-stop shop for data research.
- ✓ Use design and maps to help tell the story using interactive visuals.
- ✓ Eliminate the need for interested parties to submit a FOIA request for data.
- ✓ Educate voters regarding election terminology and processes.

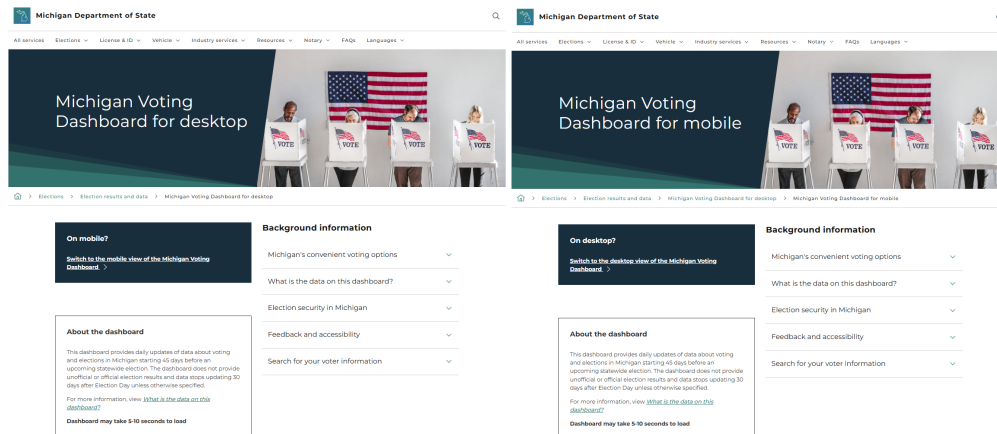
Why does it matter?

Providing voting data that is easily accessible, digestible, friendly, current, and accurate cultivates confidence in the voting process in Michigan.

“Democracy works best with an informed and engaged electorate, and I’m very excited today to announce our latest effort to make government more transparent and accessible to the people we serve.”

Jocelyn Benson, Secretary of State

In addition, it is important for the public to understand what they are looking at without needing to search for definitions and meanings. The dashboard serves as a useful fact checker and source of truth.

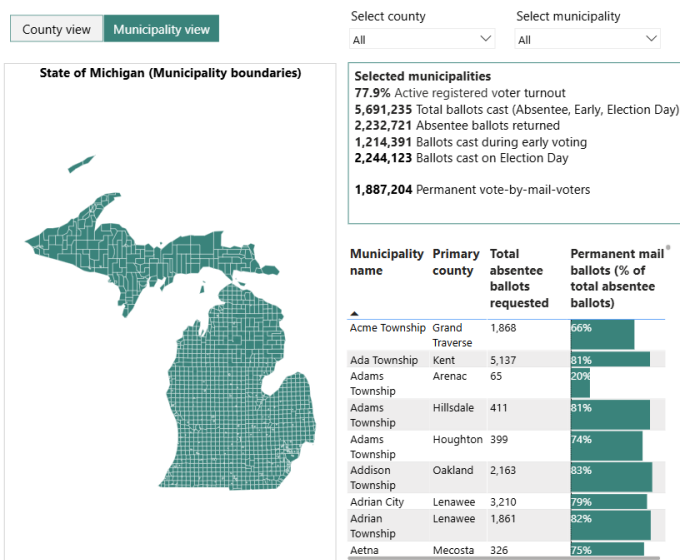


On the heels of the passage of voter led Proposal 22-2, also known as Prop 2, Governor Gretchen Whitmer signed bipartisan legislation expanding voting rights. The launch of the dashboard allowed for even more transparency of early voting information, its first usage during a federal election.

What makes it different?

Many states and localities provide users with voting data information. What makes the Michigan Voting Dashboard different is it provides fresh data in context and includes features that tell a story over time regarding how voters choose to vote. Its educational component quickly gives those using the dashboard an understanding of what they are viewing, while giving local election officers the ability to analyze and plan for future elections.

County and municipality data



“Today’s release of the elections data dashboard puts Michigan at the forefront of election data transparency and innovation.”

Whitney Quesenbery, Director of the Center for Civic Design

What makes it universal?

Voter education and voting data visibility is something all states are concerned with. During election cycles, the media nationwide, even worldwide, is eager to report on voting data. The voting dashboard meets this need while limiting the need for data inquiries and FOIA requests and reduces the number of requests government staff need to address. The dashboard is available on demand to anyone with an internet or mobile hot spot connection, either via desktop or on a mobile device. Using Microsoft Power BI and content management system technologies, it is easily reproducible and does not require a large infrastructure investment. Data from the Qualified Voter File (QVF) database is generated using a view and imported into Power BI report daily.

IMPLEMENTATION

How does this project fit into an enterprise view?

This project fits into an enterprise view by providing a centralized, data-driven platform for monitoring voter participation across key channels such as absentee voting, in-person voting, and ballot returns. By aggregating this information into a single report, it supports data transparency and enables leadership or external parties to make informed decisions around resource allocation and outreach strategies. It aligns with broader organizational goals of engagement, operational efficiency, and public accountability, which can be scaled and used for other enterprise requirements. The dashboard promotes cross-departmental collaboration through shared access to real-time insights and statewide data helpful for analysis down to the municipality level. Overall, it enhances the enterprise's ability to track performance, which is a common requirement in many enterprise efforts that require a public facing report.

What was the roadmap?

The interagency project team took a hybrid approach throughout the project lifecycle. From conception to requirement documentation and information gathering, the roadmap was driven by frequent collaboration sessions to review and revise project plans until the dashboard was determined ready for user acceptance testing and a digital accessibility ADA compliance review. Along the way, feedback was sought and provided by MDOS managers and executives, at least one local election official, a member of the advocacy community, and a representative from the media. In addition, where and how the dashboard was to be presented was determined and a customized website page for the dashboard built to include in the MDOS elections website. Prior to publication, the data in the dashboard was carefully validated against the raw data provided from QVF. Upon launch, a press conference was held to introduce the dashboard to the public. A second release was developed and deployed following the



election to provide additional detail. A successful launch was to be determined by dashboard usage and inquiries made to BoE.

Who was involved?

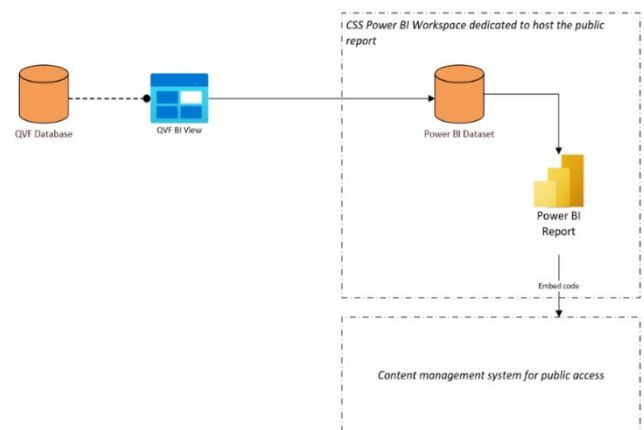
Many functional teams participated in this effort, each contributing critical components to deliver the solution. Bi-weekly meetings throughout the project included the following stakeholders:

- MDOS Executives - Provided the idea, vision, direction, content, acceptance testing, final approval for release, and worked with communications for public awareness.
- MDOS BoE - Determined data needs and worked with technical teams to provide data. Provided content, design feedback, website requirements, pre-approvals, and data validation.
- MDOS Communications – Provided web site design and development, press release, and press conference.
- DTMB CSS, EISBI – Provided design collaboration, data modeling, development, testing, data validation, requirements documentation, and project management.
- DTMB Agency Services – Provided data and data management and oversight.
- Center for Civic Design (CCD) – Non-profit partner specializing in elections related communications created the dashboard design and collaborated with the EISBI team to fit presentation with technical functionality.
- DTMB CSS eMichigan – Performed ADA compliance review and geospatial services for maps.

How did you do it?

End-to-end delivery of the Michigan Voting Dashboard required close collaboration and communication from many skill sets. From MDOS, vision, leadership, requirements, frequent feedback, and a Sitecore engineer. From DTMB, database manager, Power BI architect and developer, project manager, business analyst, business relationship manager, service delivery manager, resource manager, digital accessibility ADA reviewer, and geospatial engineer. From CCD, public design and artistic expertise.

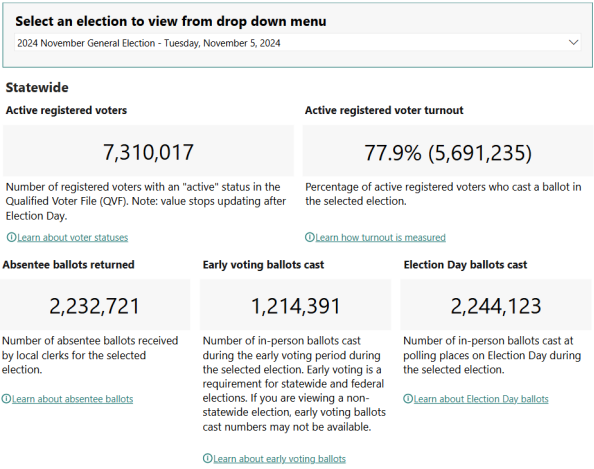
Given the importance of the data being displayed, the technical architecture needed to consider taking the provided dataset and putting it into a dashboard while protecting and preserving data integrity.



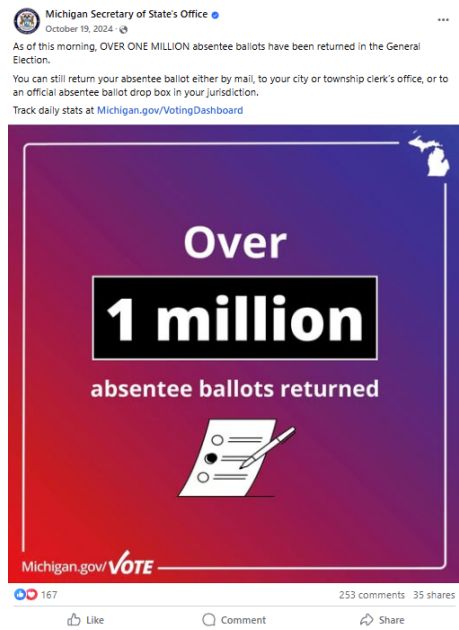
IMPACT

What did the project make better?

This project made voting data more available, accessible, and understandable to those seeking this information.



It made requested information more current. And it made it easier and faster for BoE staff to respond to inquiries that were received.

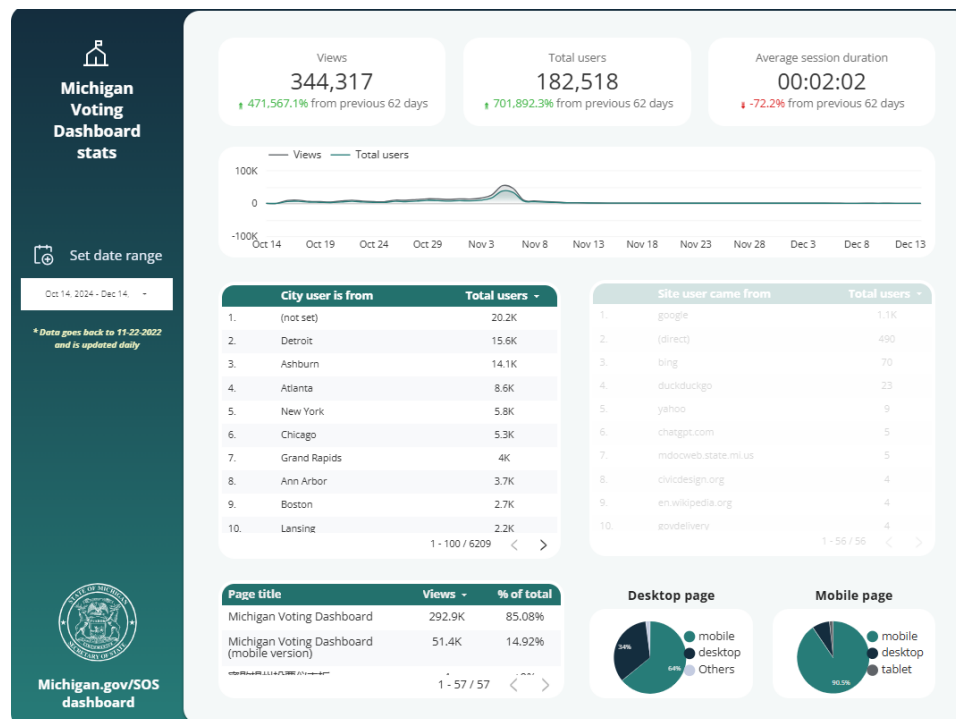


“The voter participation dashboard was the first needed step towards streamlining data requests for the state of Michigan’s elections. Implementation of the dashboard decreased the number of requests coming from various sources into BoE allowing us to focus on the refinement and accuracy of the data, as well as administering the election generating the data. The dashboard served both the public and internal stakeholders, which is rare for most deliverables. I’m looking forward to how we can continue to leverage this dashboard to shift manual work towards more efficient, timely and automated processes.”

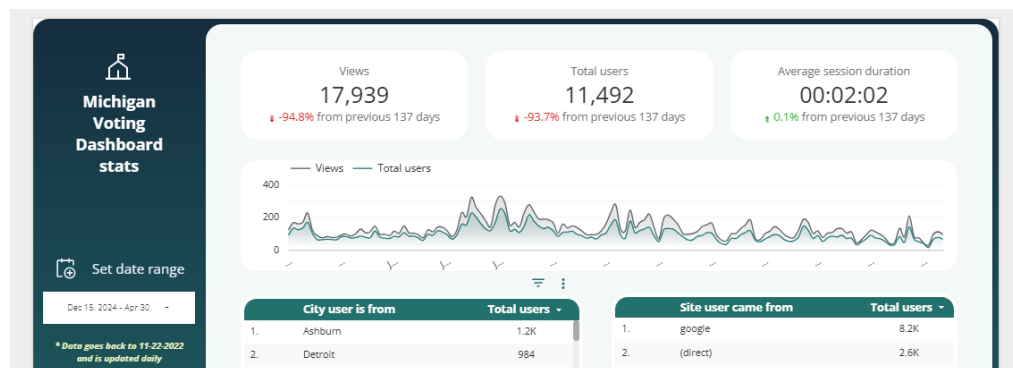
Shelly Belton, MDOS BoE, director of Election Operations

How do you know?

The Voting Dashboard received nearly 345,000 views between Oct. 14, 2024, and Dec. 14, 2024.



This report shows continued usage from Dec. 15, 2024, to April 30, 2025.



The dashboard also received widespread media attention after its launch. Many of the news articles and amplified social media posts cited the dashboard and provided screenshots of the data. Meanwhile, FOIA requests for early voting and absentee ballot voting to BoE were virtually eliminated.

What now?

MDOS will continue to expand and enhance the Michigan Voting Dashboard to satisfy both internal and external user needs. In the next several months, voter demographics, registration details, and election results are planned to be added. The dashboard is designed to include future elections providing ongoing information for consumers and a historical repository for research, analysis, planning and comparison.