



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

JESSE WHITE • Secretary of State

SECRETARY OF STATE ORGAN/TISSUE DONOR REGISTRY

There is a tremendous need across the United States for more organ/tissue donors. Nearly 120,000 people are waiting for a transplant.

Presently, Illinois has one of the most successful state registries in the country with more than 6 million participants. More than 50 percent of those who visit a Driver Services facility join the Illinois Organ/Tissue Donor Registry.

In 2006, Illinois implemented a “legal consent” organ/tissue donor registry, which ensures an individual’s decision to donate will be carried out following his/her death. Previously, the decision was not considered legally binding and remained with the person's family. As a result, nearly 20 percent of consenting donors had their decisions overturned by family members. With the current registry, it is estimated that 100 additional lives are saved each year and countless others are impacted. But there is still a need for more donors. On average, every 10 minutes a new person is added to the national waiting list. Sadly, many of those people will die waiting for organs. In 2015, more than 8,000 died waiting for a transplant in the United States. Each day, 22 people on the waiting list die. An estimated one in 20 Americans will need some type of medical tissue transplant during their lifetime. The list continues to grow because transplantation is a viable and successful treatment for organ failure in many individuals.

Currently, 4,700 people in Illinois are on the waiting list for an organ/tissue transplant. More than 300 Illinoisans die each year waiting for an organ transplant. More than 80 percent of people are waiting for a kidney and 12 percent are waiting for a liver. Other organs that are needed include the heart, lungs, pancreas and small intestine. Tissues that are needed include corneas, saphenous veins, heart valves, bones and skin. Up to 25 people can benefit from a single donor.

The Illinois Donor Registry is confidential. Information contained in the registry is released to authorized personnel after all efforts to save a person have failed and death has been declared.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Organ/Tissue Donor Registry:

How do I register as an organ and tissue donor?

There are several options:

- Visit www.LifeGoesOn.com.
- Call the Secretary of State's Organ/Tissue Donor Program at 800-210-2106.
- Send a request to the Secretary of State's Organ and Tissue Donor Program, Rm. 451 Howlett, Springfield, IL, 62756, and express that you wish to become a donor. Please include your valid Illinois driver's license or state ID card number.
- Visit any Driver Services facility throughout the state.

What information do I need to provide to the donor registry?

- A valid state of Illinois driver's license or ID card;
- Full name and home address.

Frequent Barriers to Organ/Tissue Donation:

Race:

- African-Americans and Hispanics are overrepresented on waiting lists, but underrepresented as potential donors.
- A close genetic match may contribute to increased success in transplants.
- In Illinois, the percentage of African-Americans signing up as organ/tissue donors is half that of the general population.
- More than 60 percent of the transplant candidates waiting for organs in Illinois are minorities.

Religion:

- Some believe their religious views do not support organ/tissue donation. In fact, all major Western and Eastern religions support organ/tissue donation.

Age:

- Older Americans are the most supportive of the concept of organ donation, but the least likely to register as donors. They believe they are too old; however, 40 percent of Illinois organ donors in 2015 were over age 50. The oldest cornea recipient was 107 years old, and the oldest organ donor was 85 years old and successfully donated a kidney.

Medical care:

- Organ donation only occurs when the person is diagnosed as legally brain dead.
- Organ donation does not occur until all efforts to save a person have failed.