

Local Election Officials Survey 2025

Methodology

- The Brennan Center Research Department administered the survey between April 15 and May 17, 2025, and 858 local election officials responded to the survey.
- The Brennan Center sent email invitations to participate in the online survey to a list of 8,491 local election officials, created with the assistance of the U.S. Vote Foundation.
- Data was weighted on region and jurisdiction size to ensure it represents the universe of local election officials. The weighting for the question on slide 26 was adjusted to address additional missingness.
- The margin of error is $\pm 3\%$ for the full sample. The margin of error is higher among subgroups. Percentage totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- The 2024 surveys of local election officials reached 735 local election officials, and the margin of error is $\pm 3\%$. We reweighted the 2024 data to address an error and ensure comparability with this year's weighting strategy, which shifted 2024 results by 4 percentage points or fewer.

Key takeaways

1. Local election officials are concerned about federal cuts to election security services.

- 60 percent are concerned about federal cuts to election security services, and 61 percent are specifically concerned about cuts to services provided by the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency.

2. Local election officials need more resources from state and local government for day-to-day administration and security needs.

- 87 percent say it is important for state and local government to provide additional resources to make up for the cut funds and support.
- 75 percent say their annual budget needs to grow in the next five years to meet administration and security needs; officials would be most likely to spend additional funds on voting equipment, new poll workers, and the physical security of offices and polling places.

3. A majority of local election officials are worried about political leaders interfering in election administration.

- 59 percent worry about political leaders interfering with how election officials do their jobs.
- 81 percent are concerned about false information about elections spreading on social media.
- 46 percent are concerned about politically motivated investigations of election officials.

4. Reports of threats, harassment, and abuse among local election officials remain high.

- 38 percent report experiencing threats, harassment, or abuse because of their job. 63 percent of those threatened were threatened in person.
- 52 percent are concerned about the safety of their colleagues and staff, and 26 percent are concerned about their family or loved ones being threatened or harassed.

5. While the use of artificial intelligence in election administration remains low, the number of local election officials seeking guidance on using AI in their work increased.

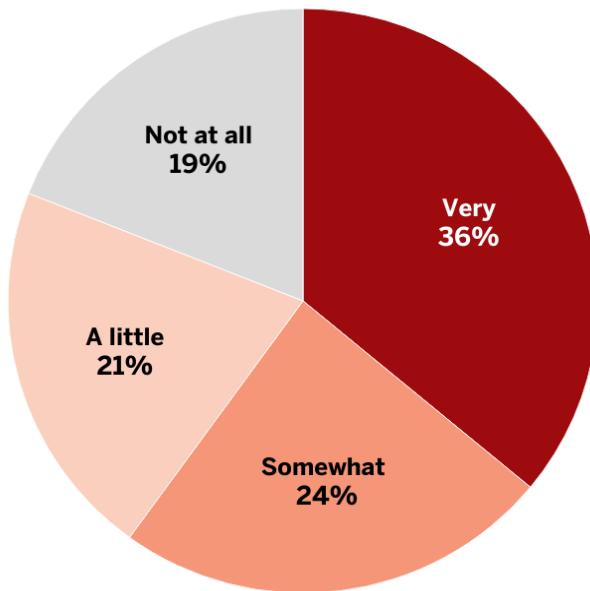
- 8 percent report using AI in their work, most commonly to draft social media content and create graphics.
- 15 percent have been approached by vendors who sell products that use AI.
- 40 percent want guidance from government agencies about using AI in election administration, up from 31 percent in 2024.

Concerns about federal cutbacks

3 in 5

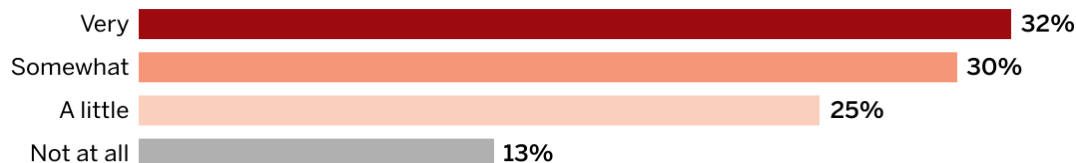
local election officials are
very or somewhat
concerned about federal
cuts to election security
services

Please indicate how concerned you are, if at all, about federal cuts to election security services.

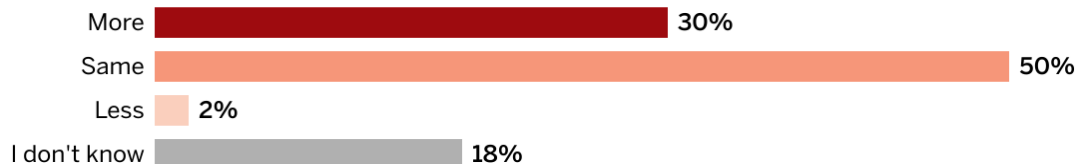


61 percent of local election officials are concerned about cuts to federal cybersecurity agency CISA; a broad majority say CISA should provide more support or the same amount of support as in 2024

Please indicate how concerned you are about the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) changing or cutting back its services to election officials.

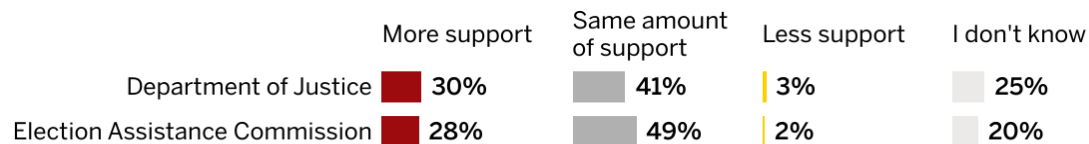


Please indicate whether you think the following agencies should provide more support, the same amount of support, or less support than they provided for election administration in 2024. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)



More than 2 in 3 local election officials want other federal agencies to provide at least as much support as they did in 2024

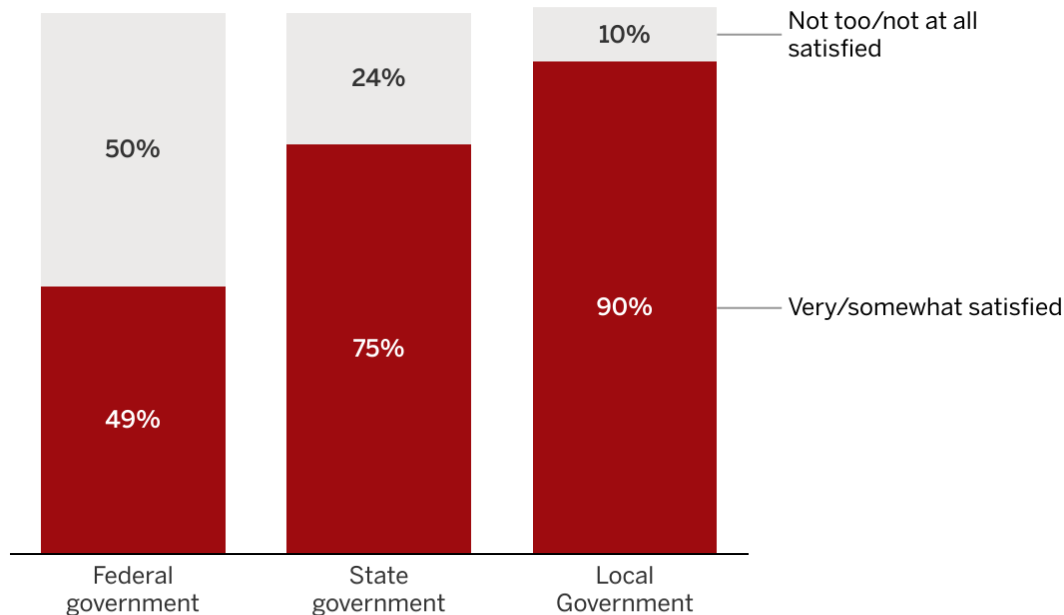
Please indicate whether you think the following agencies should provide more support, the same amount of support, or less support than they provided for election administration in 2024.



About **half** of local election officials are satisfied with federal government support

In contrast, **9 in 10** are satisfied with local government support

As an election official, how satisfied are you with the level of support you are receiving from:



Local election officials overwhelmingly approve of security services provided by the government

How beneficial, if at all, is it for the government to provide the following services?
Very beneficial/Somewhat beneficial total

Public education on election security



Election security training



Best practices and guidance on emerging security threats



Cybersecurity vulnerability scanning and assessment



Incident response management assistance



Physical security assessments



Information sharing and analysis through EI-ISAC and other networks



".gov" management and transition assistance

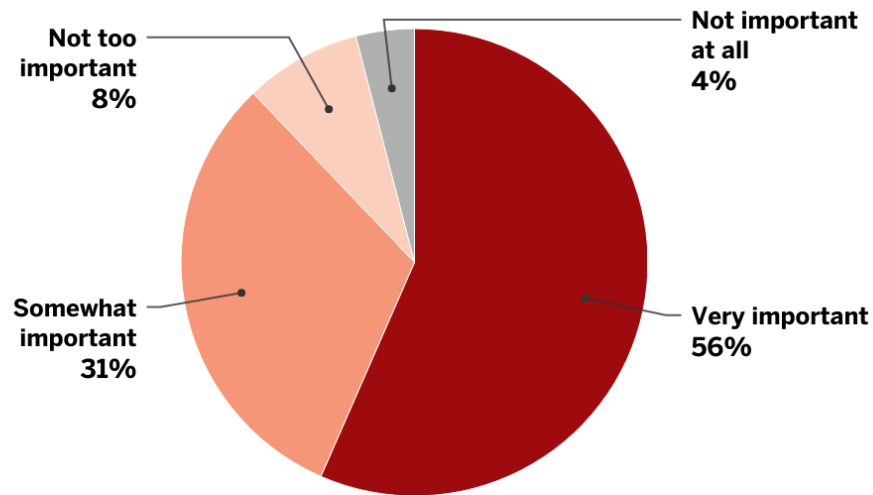


● Very beneficial ● Somewhat beneficial

Need for additional funding

87 percent of local election officials say it's very or somewhat important for local and state government to make up the funding gap left by federal cuts

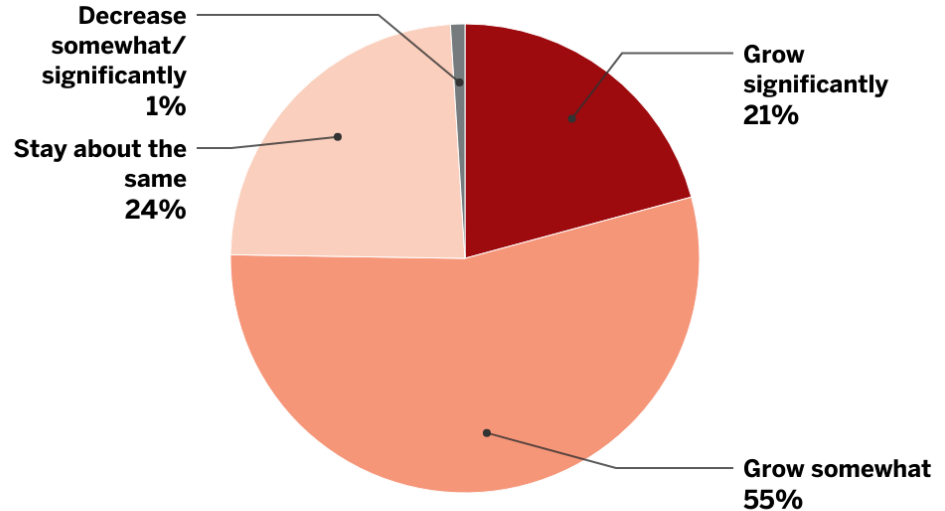
How important is it for state and local government to provide additional resources to make up for the cut funds and support?



3 in 4

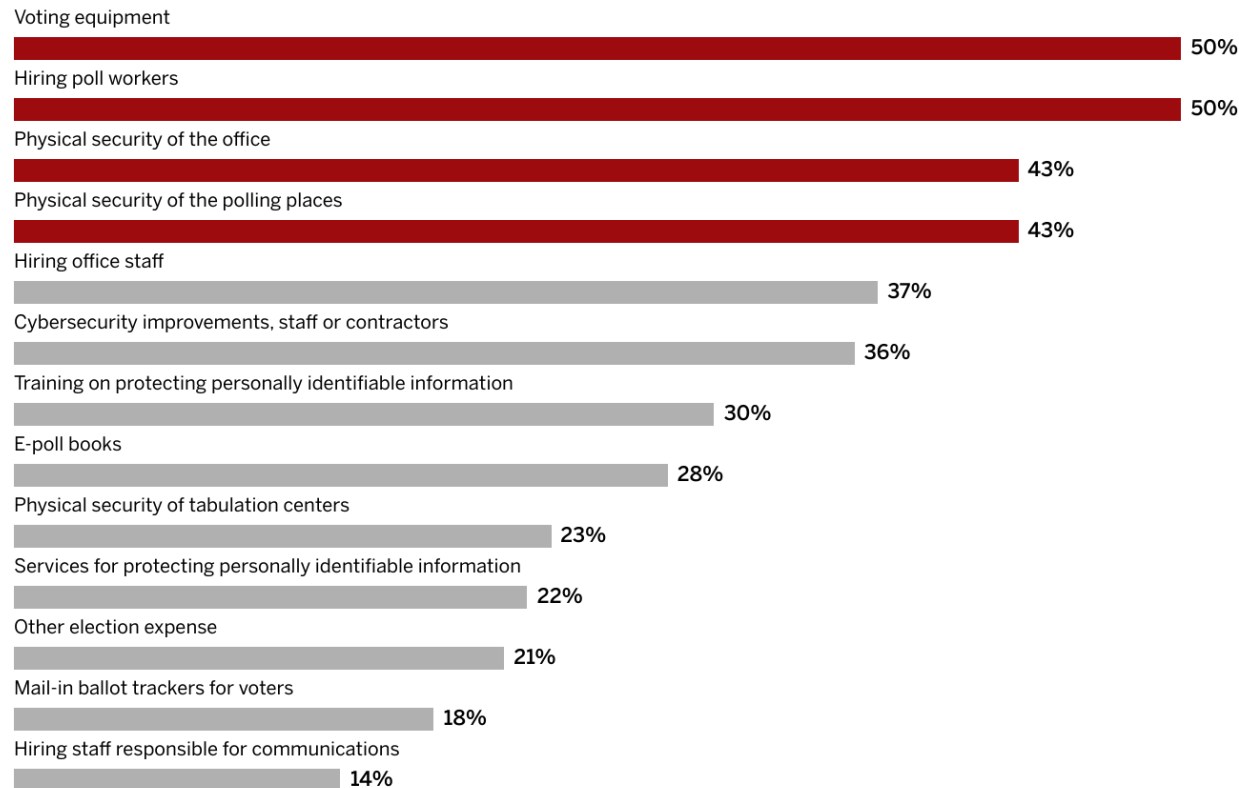
local election officials
need their budgets to
grow to keep up with
administration and
security needs

Thinking about your election administration and security needs over the next 5 years, would you say your annual budget needs to



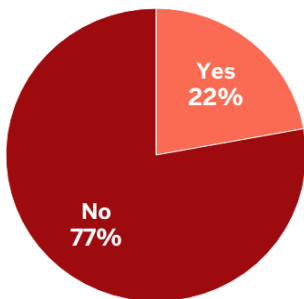
Local election officials would be most likely to invest in **voting equipment, hiring poll workers, and the physical security of the office and polling places**

If your budget was to grow, in which of the following areas (if any) would you invest? Please select all that apply.

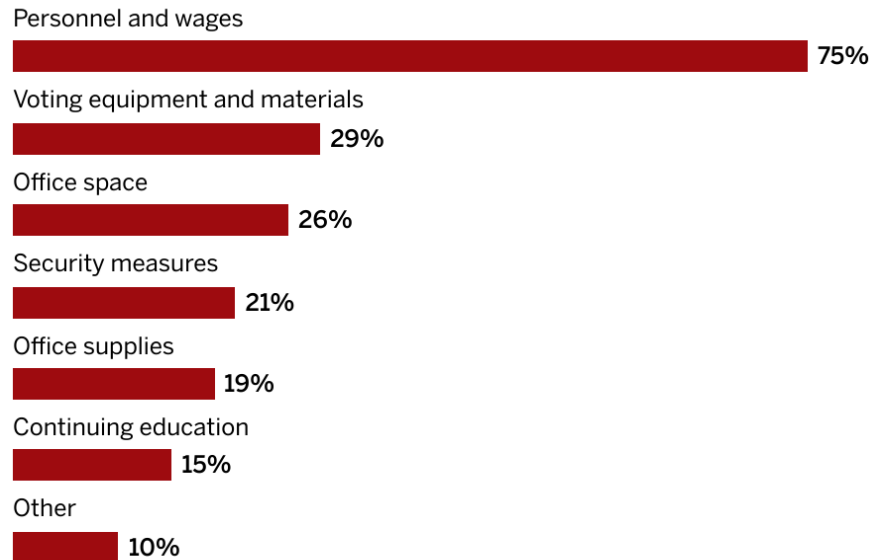


More than **1 in 5**
local election officials
have had a budget
request denied

Have you ever had a budget request denied?



(Among respondents who had a budget request denied)
What was an important item or service on a denied request?



Concerns about interference

Nearly **3 in 5** local election officials are very or somewhat worried about political interference

Thinking ahead to elections in the future, how worried are you about political leaders engaging in efforts to interfere with how you or your fellow election officials around the country do their jobs?



● Very worried ● Somewhat worried ● A little worried ● Not at all worried

Other concerns about political interference remain high

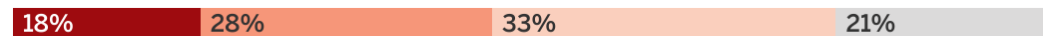
46 percent of local election officials are very or somewhat concerned about politically motivated investigations

Please indicate how concerned you are as an election official with each of the following in future elections.

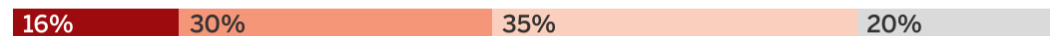
Your office being harassed with bad-faith information requests



Politically motivated investigations of you or other election officials



That some incoming local election officials might believe that there was widespread voter fraud during recent elections

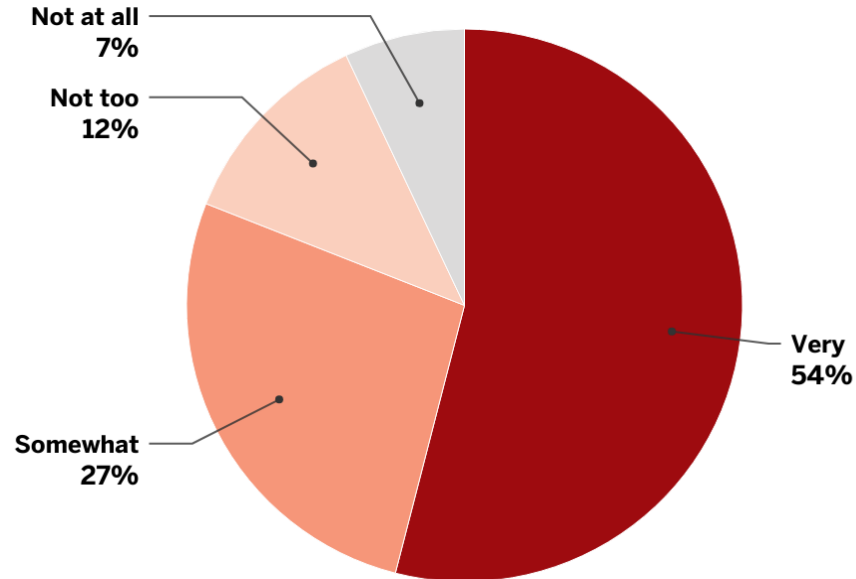


● Very concerned ● Somewhat concerned ● Not too concerned ● Not at all

A majority
of local election officials
are **very concerned**
about false information
about elections
spreading on
social media

Please indicate how concerned you are as an election official with each of the following in future elections:

False information about elections spreading on social media.

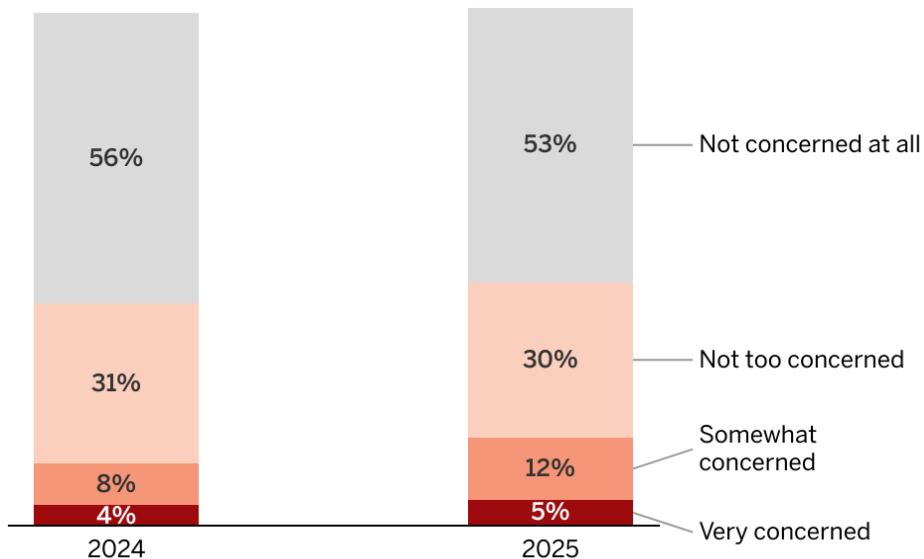


17 percent

of local election officials
are very or somewhat
concerned about
interference in the
certification process

Please indicate how concerned you are as an election official with each of the following in future elections:

Facing pressure to certify election results in favor of a specific candidate or party



Threats, harassment, and abuse

More than **1 in 3** local election officials have experienced **threats, harassment, or abuse**

Pop up messages offered the following definitions:

Harassed: Persistent, uninvited behavior, attention, or actions that cause distress, fear, or discomfort, such as stalking.

Abused: Demeaning, derogatory, or offensive comments, gestures, or actions that upset, belittle, and/or humiliate.

Threatened: Explicit or implicit expressions communicating an intention to harm, injure, or cause damage to an individual or others associated with them, implying imminent risk to a person's well-being and safety.

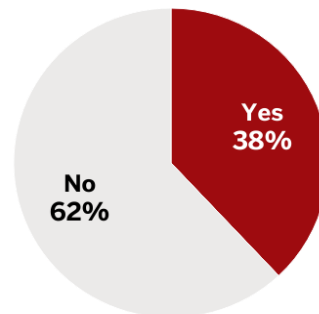
Have you ever been **harassed or abused** because of your job as a local election official?

36% 64%

Have you ever been **threatened** because of your job as a local election official?

16% 83%

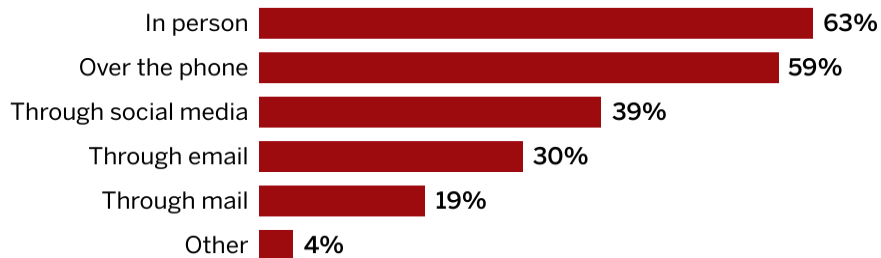
Yes, harassed, abused, or threatened



Local election officials who report being threatened were most likely to receive threats in person or over the phone; some received threats at home

(Among respondents who report being threatened)

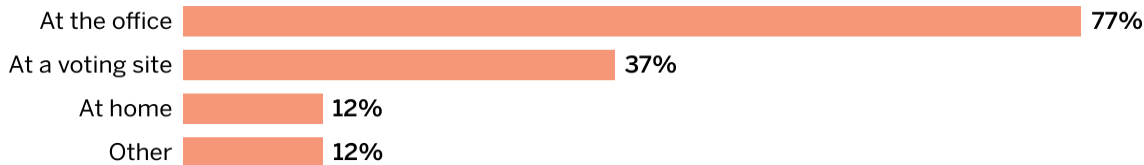
You indicated that you have been threatened because of your job as a local election official. How have you been threatened? Please select all that apply.



n = 141

(Among those who reported being threatened in person)

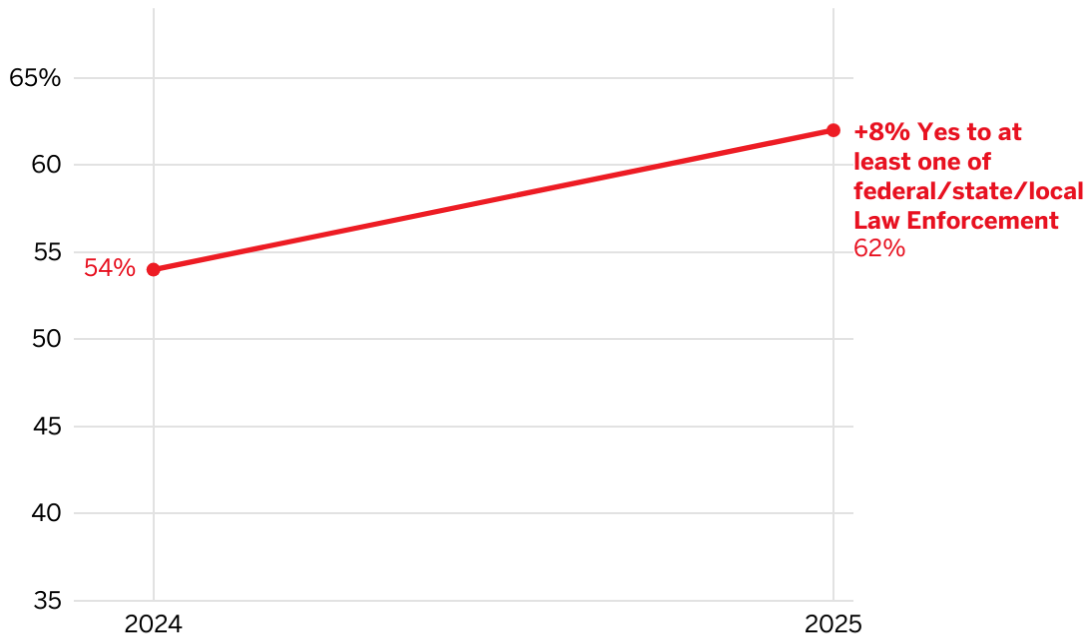
Where were you when you were threatened in person? Please select all that apply.



n = 89

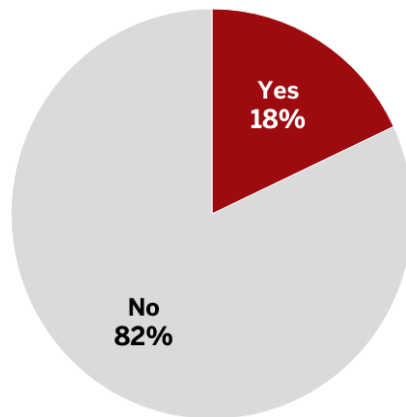
Nearly **2 in 5** threats go unreported to law enforcement, although reports have increased slightly since 2024

Did you report this threat to law enforcement? Please select all that apply.

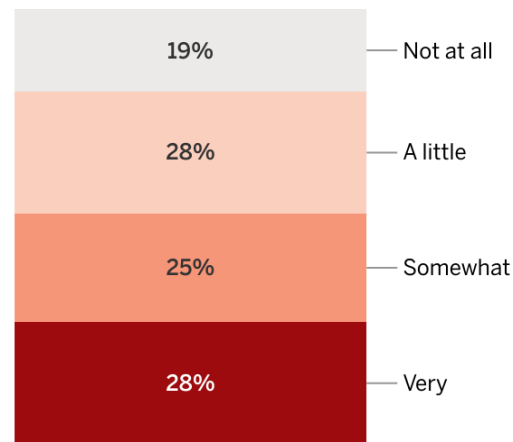


More than 1 in 6 report that a First Amendment auditor or member of the public has filmed them or their staff while they were at work

In the last year, has a member of the public or a First Amendment auditor filmed an interaction with you or your staff while you were at work?



(Among respondents who have been filmed)
Was that interaction disruptive to you or your staff?



n = 151

More than half of local election officials are very or somewhat concerned about the safety of their colleagues

Please indicate how concerned you are as an election official with each of the following in future elections.

The safety of your colleagues and/or staff including other election officials and election workers



Being doxxed (having your personal information published online with the intent to threaten your safety)



Being harassed on social media



Being harassed over the phone or on voicemail



Being targeted in a "swatting" incident, when a fake emergency call sends an armed response to the victim's home



Your family or loved ones being threatened or harassed

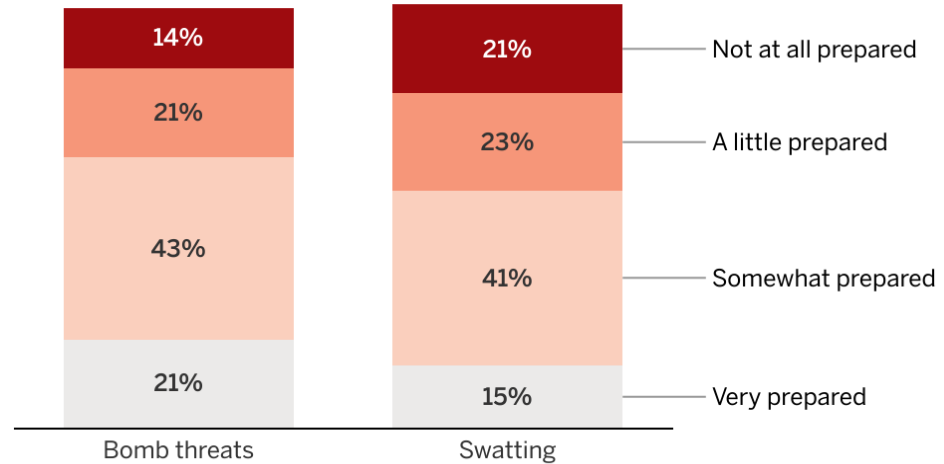


● Very concerned ● Somewhat concerned

1 in 7 local election officials feel not at all prepared to respond to **bomb threats**

About **1 in 5** feel not at all prepared to respond to **swatting**

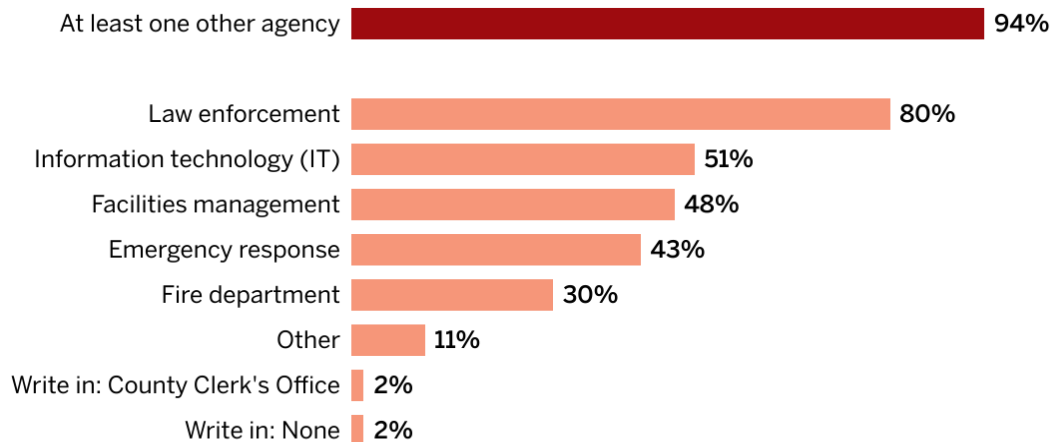
How prepared do you feel to respond to the following in your jurisdiction?



n=637

94 percent of local election officials coordinated with at least one other agency to prepare for the 2024 election

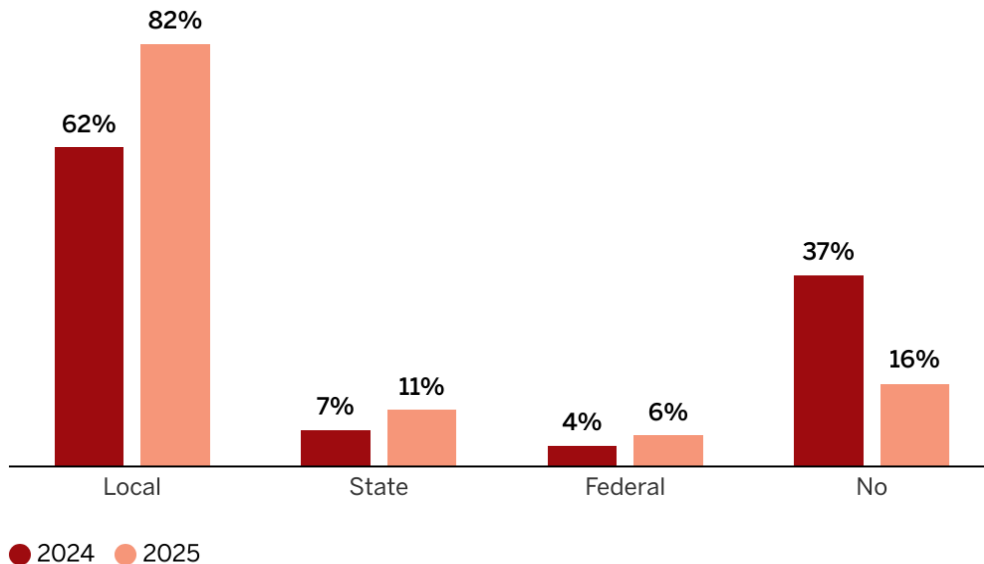
Which of the following local or state agencies or departments did you coordinate with to prepare for a safe and secure election in 2024? Please select all that apply.



Local election officials are more likely to report coordinating with **local law enforcement** than in 2024

Only **6 percent** have coordinated with **federal law enforcement**

In the past election cycle, did your office coordinate with law enforcement in any capacity? Please select all that apply.

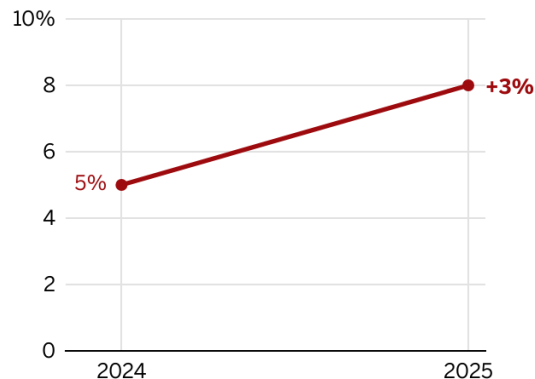


Artificial intelligence

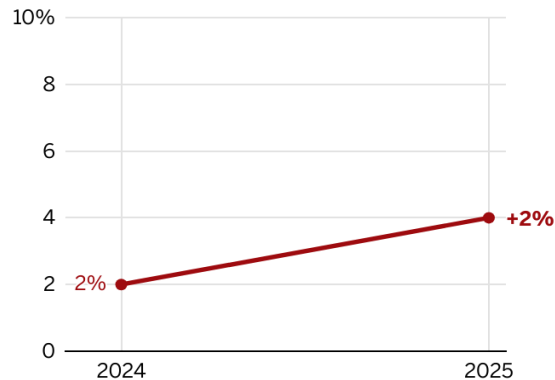
AI adoption remains low at election offices

Are you currently using artificial intelligence in any of the following ways in your work as an election official? Please select all that apply.

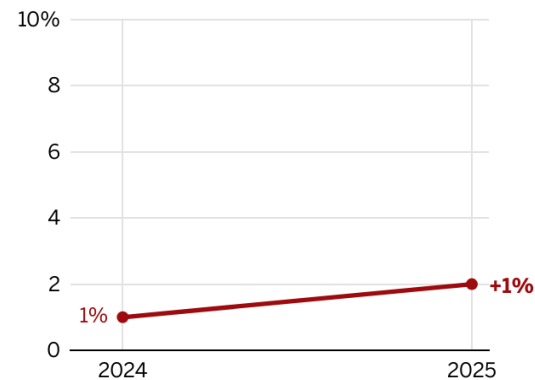
Total yes



To draft social media content and/or press releases

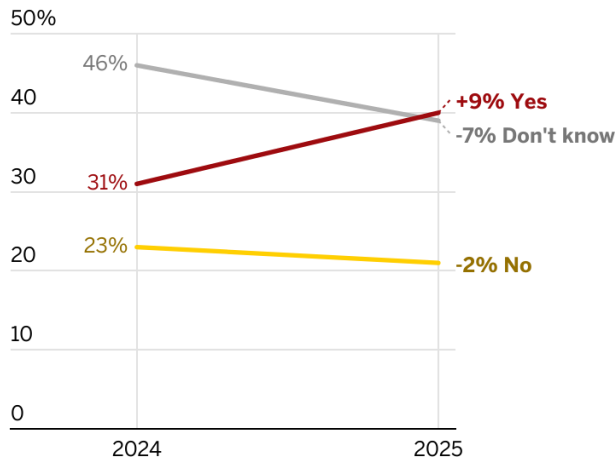


To create graphics



A growing number of local election officials want guidelines on using AI, and **15 percent** have been approached by AI vendors

Would it be helpful for federal, state or local agencies to give you guidelines about using artificial intelligence in election administration?



Have any vendors or outside groups approached you with products that they advertise as using artificial intelligence?

