Local Election Officials Survey
The Brennan Center Research Department administered the survey between February 23 and March 28, 2024, and 928 local election officials responded to the survey.

The Brennan Center sent email invitations to participate in the online survey to a list of 11,678 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 **margin of error is ±3.1%**. The margin of error is higher among subgroups. Percentage totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.

The 2022 and 2023 surveys of local election officials referenced were conducted by Benenson Strategy Group, using lists provided by the U.S. Vote Foundation. The 2023 survey reached 852 respondents, and the margin of error is +/- 3.22%. The 2022 survey reached 596 respondents, and the margin of error is +/-3.95%. Both were weighted on region and jurisdiction size.
Key Takeaways

1. Local election officials have taken important steps since 2020 to improve election security and staff safety.
   • 92 percent have taken critical steps to increase election security for voters, election workers, and election infrastructure since 2020, including implementing or improving cybersecurity protections and enhancing physical security of election offices and polling places.
   • A broad majority of election officials who identified changes in state law or additional funding to protect election workers in their jurisdictions say these efforts increased their sense of safety.

2. Reports of threats, harassment, and abuse remain high, and safety concerns have reached 2022 levels.
   • 38 percent of local election officials report experiencing threats, harassment, or abuse.
   • Safety concerns have reached or exceeded levels from the last federal election year. 54 percent are concerned about the safety of their colleagues and staff, and 28 percent are concerned about their family or loved ones being threatened or harassed.

3. A majority of local election officials are worried about political interference in election administration.
   • 62 percent are worried about political leaders engaging in efforts to interfere with how election officials do their jobs.
   • 13 percent are concerned about facing pressure to certify results in favor of a specific candidate or party.

4. Local election officials need more resources for day-to-day administration and security needs.
   • 83 percent say their annual budget needs to grow in the next 5 years to meet administration and security needs.
   • 43 percent are concerned about recruiting enough poll workers for the November election.
   • 41 percent of those who have had a budget request denied would have used the funding for personnel and wages.

5. While few local election officials report using artificial intelligence in election administration, more see a need for guidance on AI use.
   • 7 percent report using AI, including for things like drafting social media content and translating voter materials into different languages.
   • 12 percent have been approached by vendors who sell products that use AI.
   • 33 percent want guidance from government agencies about using AI in election administration.
Election security and staff safety improvements
The vast majority of local election officials report that their offices have taken steps to increase election security since 2020.

What steps, if any, has your office taken to increase election security since 2020? Please select all that apply.

*Among all local election officials, n = 928*

- Implemented or improved cybersecurity protections for election technology (for instance, unique user logins or multifactor authentication) 56%
- Updated polling place contingency plan 44%
- Contacted law enforcement to share information and/or create emergency response plans 41%
- Participated in or led security trainings (for example, tabletop exercises) 41%
- Enhanced the physical security of election offices or polling places 40%
- Upgraded voting machine infrastructure or other election technology 39%
- Other 5%
Most local election officials who reported legislation and additional funding to protect election workers say the changes were helpful

Which of the following steps, if any, have been taken to increase the safety of you and/or your staff since 2020? Please select all that apply.

(Responses pertaining to local government action)

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- Legislation in your state to protect election workers, if applicable: 15%
- Additional funding from your federal, state, or local government: 13%

Have any of the following measures been helpful for increasing the sense of safety of you and your staff?

Among local election officials who indicated the step had been taken

Percent Yes

- Legislation in your state to protect election workers, if applicable (n=141): 73%
- Additional funding from your federal, state, or local government (n=124): 83%
More than half have shared election details, including election office locations and voting hours, with law enforcement.

Which of the following actions, if any, have you taken in the time since the 2020 election cycle? Please select all that apply.

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- Shared election details (e.g., election office and counting center locations, voting hours, etc.) with law enforcement: 53%
- Exchanged contact information with law enforcement: 52%
- Agreed with law enforcement to work together regularly: 42%
- Developed a plan for incident response with law enforcement: 35%
- Established a system for information sharing with law enforcement: 25%
- Defined rules of engagement for law enforcement where voters are present: 23%
- Shared bad experiences from previous cycles with law enforcement: 22%
- Practiced incident response plans: 12%
- Discussed the personal impact of threats with a medical or mental health professional: 8%

76 percent have taken at least one of the steps listed.
Threats, Harassment, and Abuse
More than 1 in 3 local election officials have experienced threats, harassment, or abuse

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

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

Among all local election officials, n = 928

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.
Reports of threats, harassment, or abuse have risen since 2023.

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

*Among all local election officials, n = 852 (2023), n = 928 (2024)*

- **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.
7 in 10 local election officials feel that threats have increased since 2020

Regardless of whether or not you have personally been threatened because of your job as a local election official, do you feel that threats against election officials have increased, decreased, or have stayed about the same since 2020?

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- Increased: 70%
- Stayed about the same: 27%
- Decreased: 2%
- Did not answer: 1%
Of those threatened, more than 3 in 5 have been threatened in person

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.

Among local election officials who report being threatened, n = 146
Nearly half of threats to local election officials go unreported

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

Among those who have been threatened, n = 146

- Yes: 54%
- No: 45%
- Did not answer: 1%
Those who report threats typically go to local law enforcement; reports to state law enforcement have roughly doubled since 2023.

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

Among those who reported a threat to law enforcement, n = 80 (2024), n = 52 (2023)
More than half of local election officials worry about their colleagues’ safety, and more than a quarter worry about being assaulted.

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

**Among all local election officials, n = 928**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Very concerned</th>
<th>Somewhat concerned</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The safety of your colleagues and/or staff</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being harassed over the phone or on voicemail</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being verbally harassed at home or at work</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being harassed on social media</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your family or loved ones being threatened or harassed</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being assaulted at home or at work</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
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Physical safety concerns have increased since 2023.

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

Among all local election officials, n = 596 (2022), n = 852 (2023), n = 928 (2024)

Percent Very/Somewhat Concerned

- 2024/2023: The safety of your colleagues and/or staff including other local election officials and election workers; 2022 The safety of your colleagues, including other local election officials and election workers
- Your family or loved ones being threatened or harassed

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<tr>
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<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2024</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The safety of your colleagues</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<td>and/or staff</td>
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<td>including other local election</td>
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<td>officials and election workers</td>
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<td>21%</td>
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</tbody>
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BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE
Concerns over verbal and social media harassment have increased as well.

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

Among all local election officials, n = 596 (2022), n = 852 (2023), n = 928 (2024)

Percent Very/Somewhat Concerned

- Being harassed over the phone or on voicemail
  - 2022: 45%
  - 2023: 36%
  - 2024: 47%

- Being harassed on social media
  - 2022: 41%
  - 2023: 32%
  - 2024: 45%
4 in 10 local election officials are concerned about being doxed; nearly 1 in 4 are concerned about swatting.

Please indicate how concerned you are as an election official with each of the following in future elections. Among all local election officials, n = 928.

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

- **Very/Somewhat concerned**: 41%
- **Not too/Not at all concerned**: 59%

**Being targeted in a “swatting” incident,**
when a fake emergency call sends an armed response to the victim’s home

- **Very/Somewhat concerned**: 23%
- **Not too/Not at all concerned**: 77%
Safety concerns continue to drive some local election officials to leave their jobs

Do you personally know of any local election officials or election workers who have left their jobs at least in part because of fear for their safety, increased threats, or intimidation?

Among all local election officials, n = 852 (2023), n = 928 (2024)

- 18% 2023: Yes, I know of one or two who have left their jobs because of concerns about their safety.
- 27% 2024: Yes, I know of many who have left their jobs because of concerns about their safety.
- 4% 2023: Yes, I know of many who have left their jobs because of concerns about their safety.
- 8% 2024: Yes, I know of many who have left their jobs because of concerns about their safety.

Total Yes:
- 22% 2023
- 34% 2024
1 in 5 local election officials are unlikely to continue to serve in the 2026 midterms

How likely are you to continue serving as a local election official going forward?

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- Very unlikely
- Somewhat unlikely

In the 2026 midterm election:
- Very unlikely: 13%
- Somewhat unlikely: 7%
- Total: 20%

In the 2024 presidential election:
- Very unlikely: 5%
- Somewhat unlikely: 2%
- Total: 7%
Nearly 1 in 4 local election officials will likely serve in their first presidential election in 2024.

In the 2024 presidential election, among all local election officials, n = 928.

- How long have you been serving as a local election official?
  - Less than 3 years: 18%
  - More than 3 years, likely to continue serving: 76%
  - More than 3 years, unlikely to continue serving: 6%
Threat of political interference
More than 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?

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- Very worried: 31%
- Somewhat worried: 31%
- A little worried: 22%
- Not at all worried: 15%

62% total
Nearly 1 in 7 are 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.

Among all local election officials, n = 928

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

- Not too/Not at all concerned: 56%
- Very/Somewhat concerned: 13%
- Not too concerned: 31%
Nearly 1 in 2 are concerned that some incoming colleagues may believe in widespread fraud

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

Among all local election officials, n = 928

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

- Very/Somewhat concerned: 48%
- Not too/Not at all concerned: 52%

Very concerned: 21%
Somewhat concerned: 27%
Not too concerned: 31%
Not concerned at all: 21%
Nearly 2 in 3 are concerned about bad-faith information requests

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

Among all local election officials, n = 928

Your office being harassed with bad-faith information requests

- Very/Somewhat concerned: 63%
- Not too/Not at all concerned: 36%

Very concerned: 31%
Somewhat concerned: 32%
Not too concerned: 22%
Not concerned at all: 14%
Need for additional resources
More than 4 in 5 local election officials need their budgets to grow to keep up with their 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…

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- Grow significantly: 31%
- Grow somewhat: 52%
- Stay about the same: 16%

83% total
More than 6 in 10 are concerned about retaining or recruiting enough election workers, and more than 4 in 10 are concerned about obtaining enough poll workers

How concerned are you about obtaining your target number of poll workers for the November 2024 general election? Please indicate how concerned you are as an election official with each of the following in future elections.

That threats, harassment, and intimidation against local election officials will make it more difficult to retain or recruit election workers in future elections

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- Retaining or recruiting election workers: 61% very concerned, 31% somewhat concerned, 30% not very concerned
- Obtaining target number of poll workers: 43% very concerned, 33% somewhat concerned, 10% not very concerned
Denied budget requests most commonly included resources related to personnel and wages.

What was an important item or service on a denied request?

Among those who have had a budget request denied, n = 231
(Most common responses) (Open ended, multiple responses accepted)

- Personnel and wages: 41%
- Voting equipment, materials: 18%
- Office supplies: 7%
- Security measures: 6%
- Continuing education: 5%
- Office space: 5%

Have you ever had a budget request denied?
Among all local election officials, n = 928

Yes: 25%
Artificial intelligence
Few local election officials use artificial intelligence in election administration, but many more would like government guidance for potential future use.

Are you currently using artificial intelligence in any of the following ways in your work as an election official? Please select all that apply. Have any vendors or outside groups approached you with products that they advertise as using artificial intelligence?

Among all local election officials, n = 928

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

Among all local election officials, n = 928
2 percent of local election officials use AI in their work in each of the following ways

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

Among all local election officials, n = 928

- 2% To draft social media content and/or press releases
- 2% Locating polling locations
- 2% To translate materials into different languages