

# Local Election Officials Survey 2026

# Methodology

- The Brennan Center Research Department administered the survey between January 27 and February 26, 2026, and 834 local election officials responded to the survey.
- The Brennan Center sent email invitations to participate in the online survey to a list of 8,760 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  $\pm 3\%$  for the full sample. The margin of error is higher among subgroups. Percentage totals may not add up to 100 due to rounding.
- The 2025 survey of local election officials reached 858 local election officials, and the margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$ . The 2024 survey of local election officials reached 735 local election officials, and the margin of error is  $\pm 3\%$ . Last year, we reweighted the 2024 data to address an error and ensure comparability with an updated weighting strategy.

# Key Takeaways

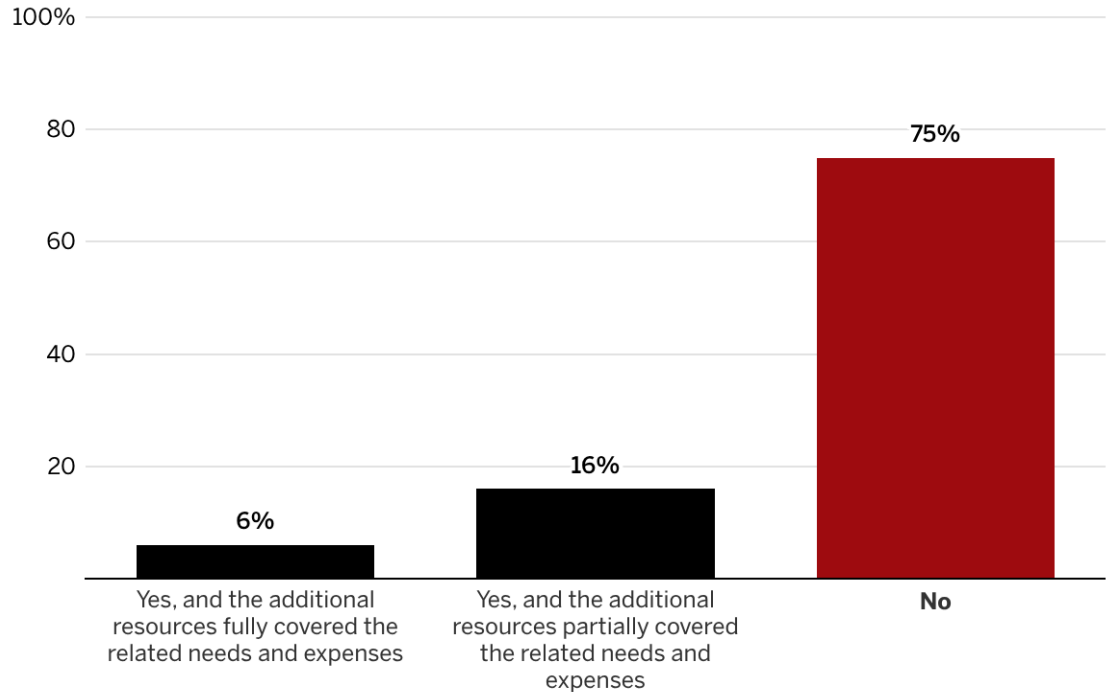
- 1. Local election officials need more government support for election administration.**
  - 75 percent of officials have not received additional resources from their state or local government to address federal cuts to election security.
  - Broad majorities of local election officials say election security services provided by the government are beneficial. 86 percent say election security training would be beneficial, and 83 percent say the same about guidance on emerging security threats.
  - Since 2024, the share of officials satisfied with federal government support has decreased from 52 percent to 45 percent.
  - 80 percent of officials need their budgets to grow to keep up with election administration and security needs over the next five years.
- 2. As with every election, local election officials are preparing for potential election disruptions.**
  - At least 71 percent of officials have done some preparation or planning for scenarios that could disrupt election administration, including requests for access to voting machines and voter data and Postal Service policy changes.
  - 89 percent of officials plan to coordinate with at least one other agency or department to prepare for safe and secure midterm elections.
- 3. Safety concerns among local election officials remain high.**
  - 32 percent report experiencing threats, harassment, or abuse because of their job.
  - 52 percent are concerned about the safety of their colleagues, and 23 percent are concerned about being assaulted at home or at work.
- 4. Local election officials remain worried about political interference in election administration.**
  - Half of officials worry about political leaders interfering with how election officials do their job.
  - 45 percent are concerned about politically motivated investigations of election officials.
- 5. Growing numbers of local election officials use AI. They are also concerned that AI and false information online make their jobs harder.**
  - 16 percent report using AI in their work – most commonly to draft social media content and create graphics – up from 5 percent in 2024.
  - 46 percent want guidance from government agencies about using AI in election administration, up from 31 percent in 2024.
  - 74 percent are concerned about the spread of false information online about elections making it more difficult or dangerous to do their job.
  - 63 percent are concerned about AI making their job more difficult or dangerous.

# Government Support

**75 percent** of local election officials said their state or local government has not provided additional resources to address federal cuts.

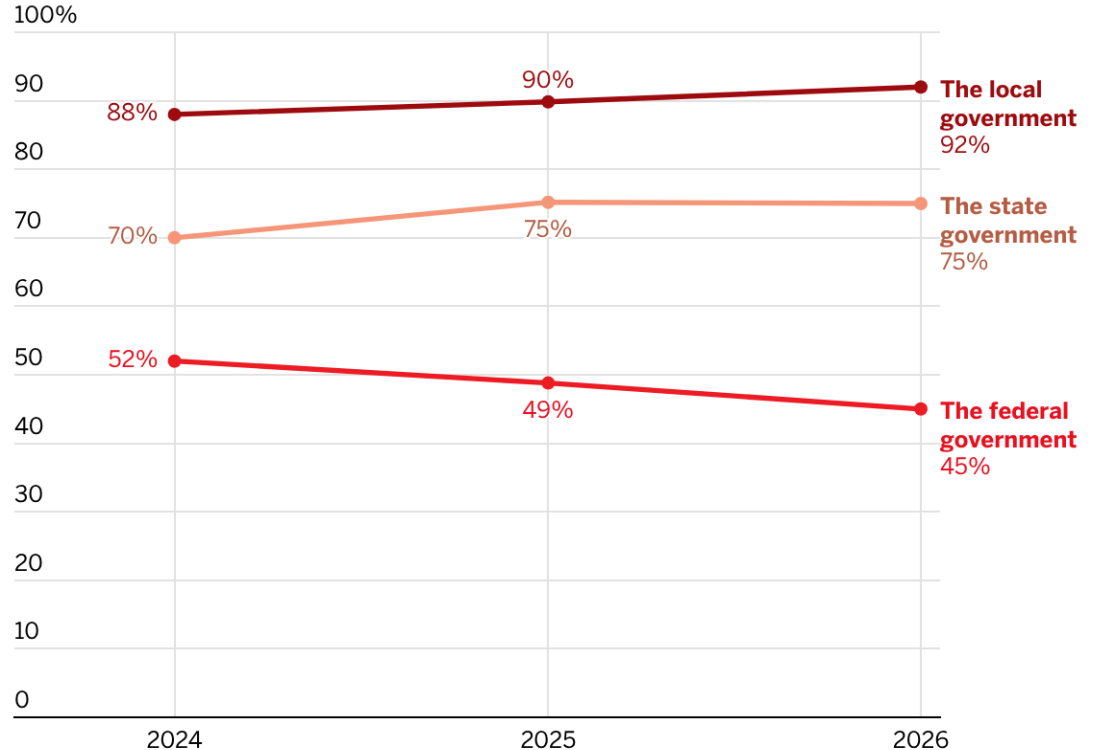
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**Has your state or local government provided additional resources to address federal cuts to election security services?**



Local election officials' satisfaction with federal support has decreased since 2024.

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



Broad majorities of local election officials say election security services provided by the government are beneficial.

## How beneficial, if at all, is it for the government to provide the following services?

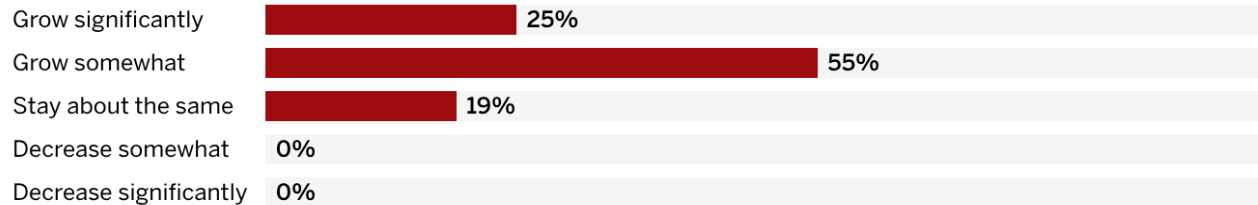


● Very beneficial ● Somewhat beneficial ● Total Not at all beneficial/A little beneficial

**80 percent** of local election officials say their annual budget needs to grow.

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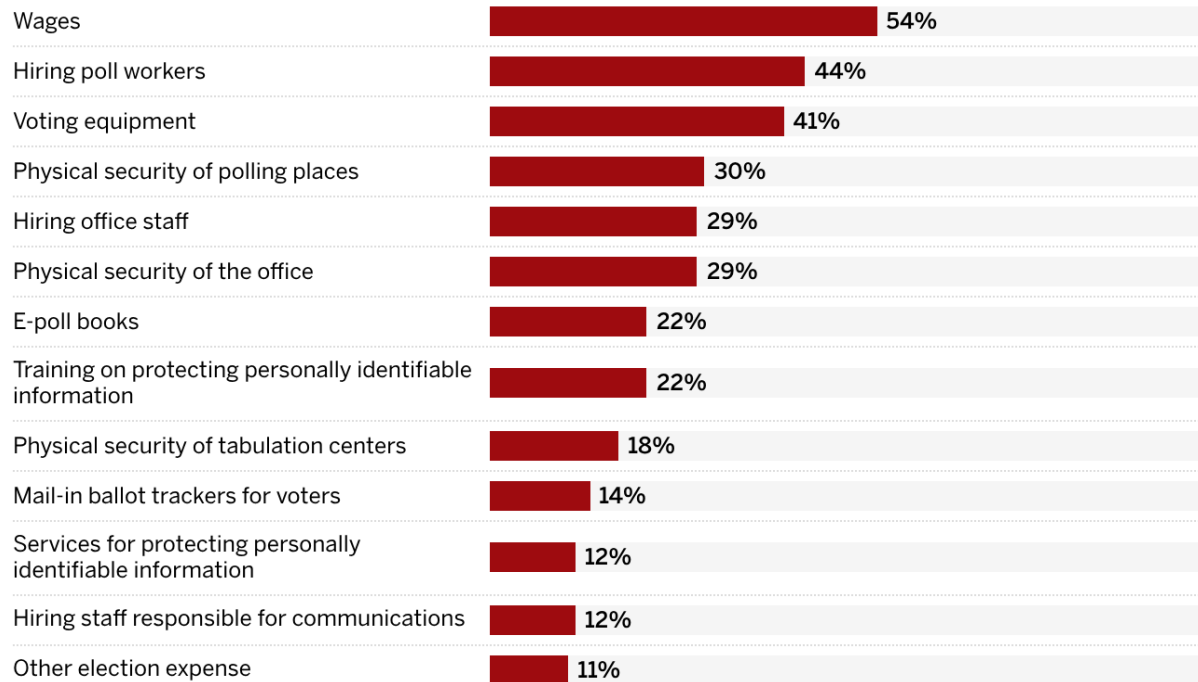
**Thinking about your election administration and security needs over the next 5 years, would you say your annual budget needs to...**



Local election officials would be most likely to invest additional funds in wages, hiring poll workers, and voting equipment.

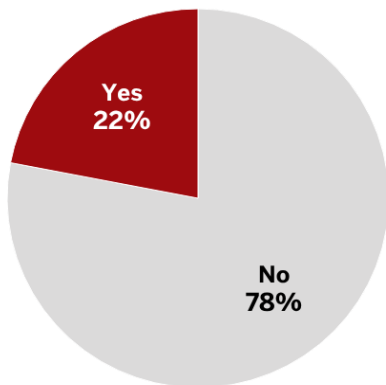
## If your budget was to grow, in which of the following areas (if any) would you invest?

Among those who say their annual budget needs to grow significantly or somewhat. Please select all that apply.



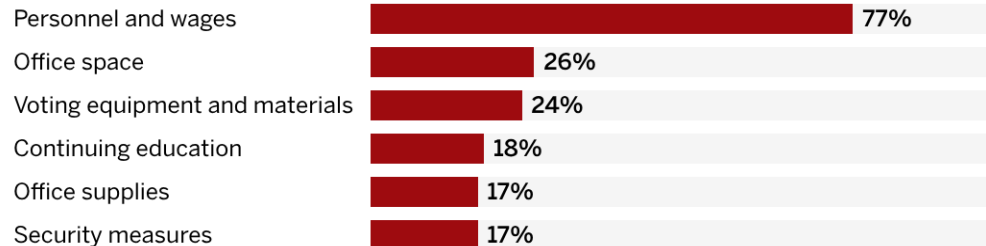
# More than **1 in 5** local election officials have had a budget request denied.

## Have you ever had a budget request denied?



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

(Among respondents who reported having a budget request denied)  
Please select all that apply.



n = 185

# Preparation for Midterms

**71 percent** of local election officials have done some planning for at least one of these potential election disruptions.

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## Have you prepared for or done any planning for any of the following potential scenarios?

Please select all that apply.

Postal Service policy or procedure changes that could impact delivery of election materials



Federal election observers or monitors at the polls or your election office



Requests for access to data (including from government officials)



Requests for access to voters' personally identifying information (including from government officials)



Requests for access to voting machines (including from government officials)



Troops or armed federal officials arriving at the polls or your election office



**At least one of the above**

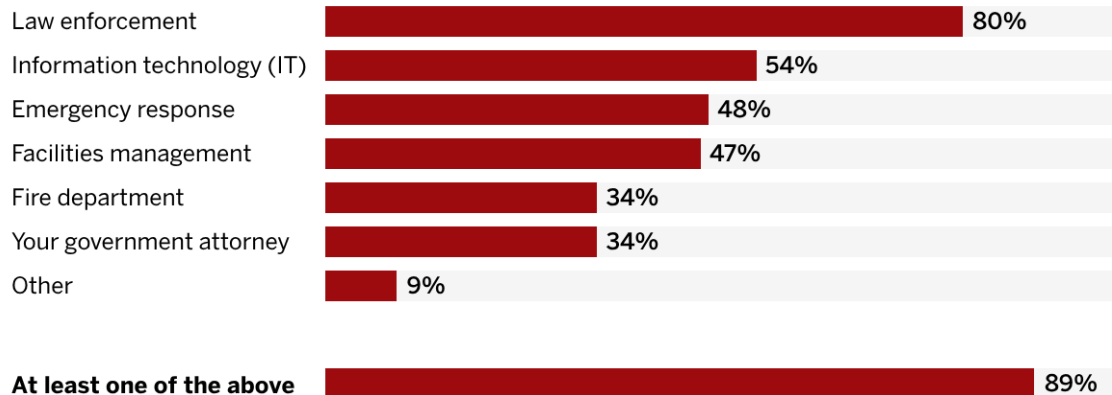


**89 percent**  
of local election officials plan to coordinate with at least one other agency to prepare for the 2026 elections.

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**Which of the following local or state agencies or departments do you plan to coordinate with this year to prepare for safe and secure midterm elections in 2026?**

Please select all that apply.

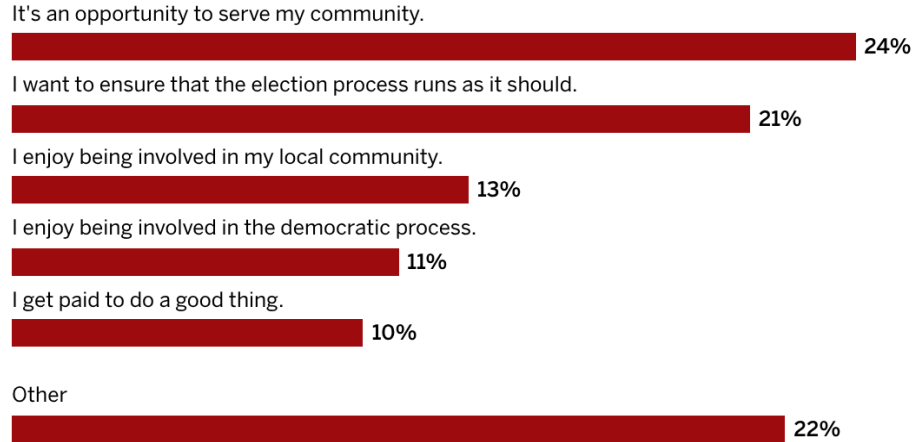


Local election officials most commonly take on this role to serve their communities and safeguard the electoral process.

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**Which of the following statements best describes why you became a local election official?**

**(Top reasons given)**



# Threats, Harassment, and Abuse

**32 percent**  
of local election  
officials have  
experienced threats,  
harassment, or  
abuse because  
of their job.

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

30%

69%

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

14%

85%

**Harassed/Abused/Threatened Combined**

32%

68%

Yes  No

**Pop-up messages offered respondents 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.

Local election officials who reported being threatened were most likely to receive threats in person or over the phone.

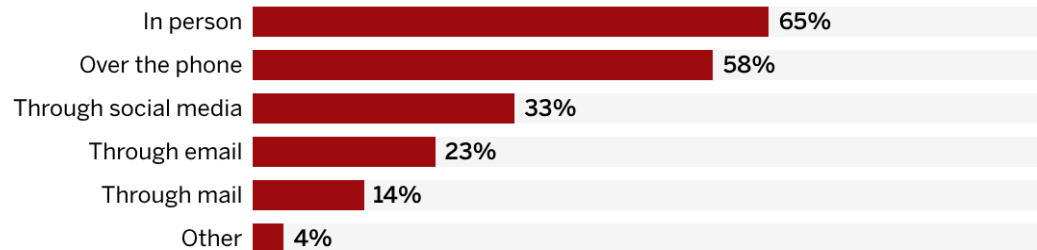
In-person threats most commonly occurred at the office.

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## You indicated that you have been threatened because of your job as a local election official. How have you been threatened?

(Among respondents who report being threatened)

Please select all that apply.



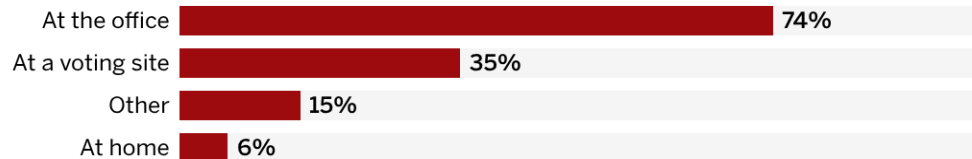
n = 120

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## Where were you when you were threatened in person?

(Among those who reported being threatened in person)

Please select all that apply.



n = 78

**More than half** of local election officials are concerned about their colleagues' safety. **23 percent** are concerned about being assaulted at home or at work.

**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 harassed over the phone or on voicemail



Being harassed on social media



Being verbally harassed at home or at work



Bomb threats at election-related locations



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



Being assaulted at home or at work



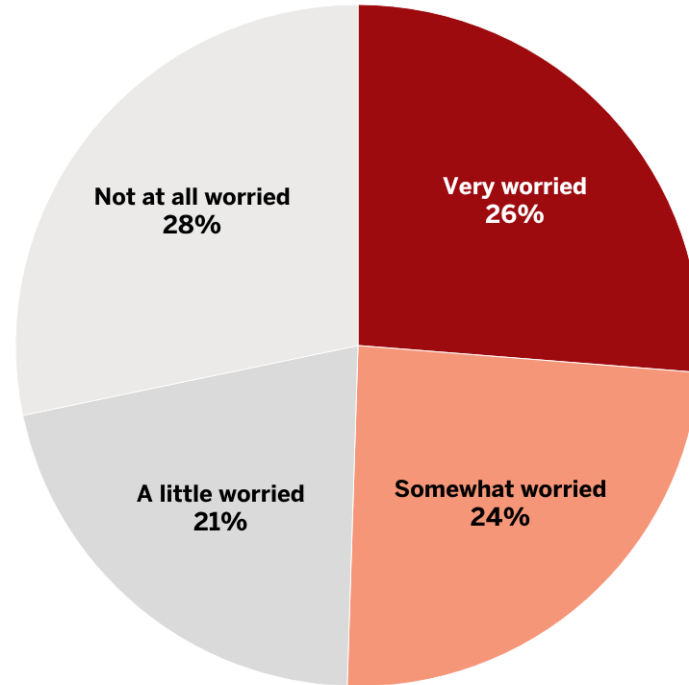
● Very concerned ● Somewhat concerned ● Not too concerned ● Not concerned at all

# Concerns About Interference

**Half** of local election officials are worried about political interference.

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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?

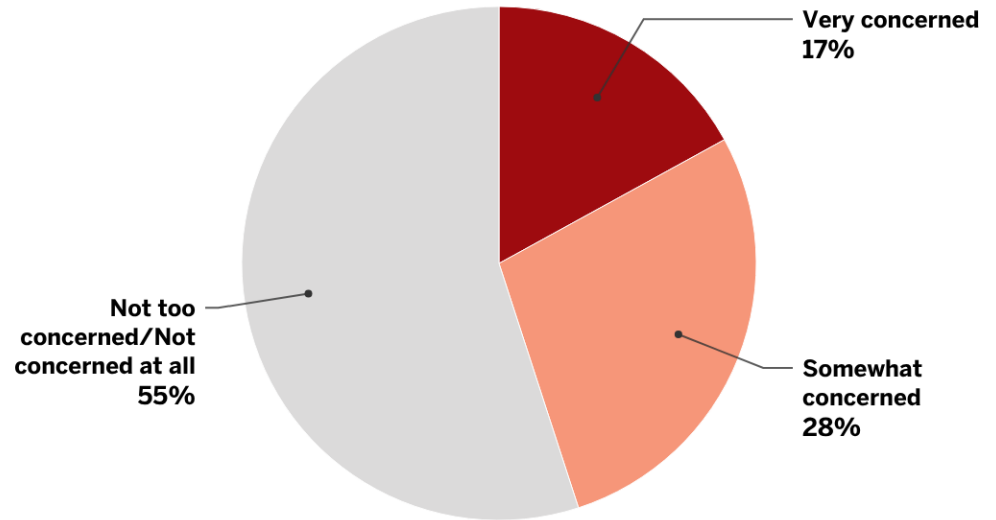


**45 percent** of local election officials are concerned about politically motivated investigations.

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

**Politically motivated investigations of you or other election officials**



Other concerns about political interference remain high.

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

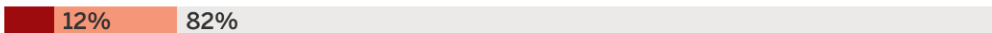
Your office being harassed with bad-faith information requests



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



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



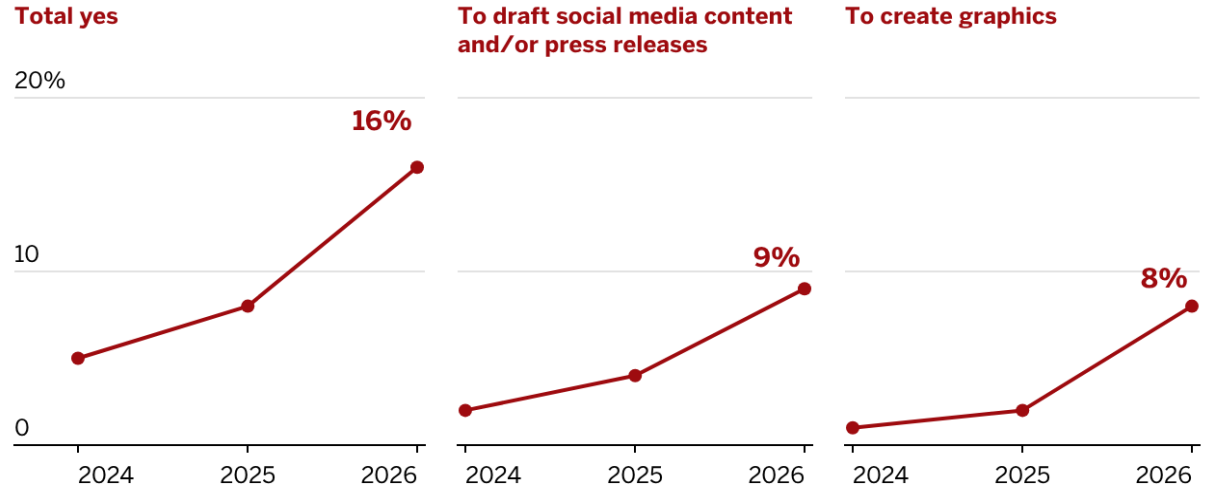
● Very concerned ● Somewhat concerned ● Not too concerned/Not concerned at all

# Artificial Intelligence

AI adoption at election offices has doubled since 2025. Officials most commonly use AI to draft social media content and create graphics.

## Are you currently using artificial intelligence in any of the following ways in your work as an election official?

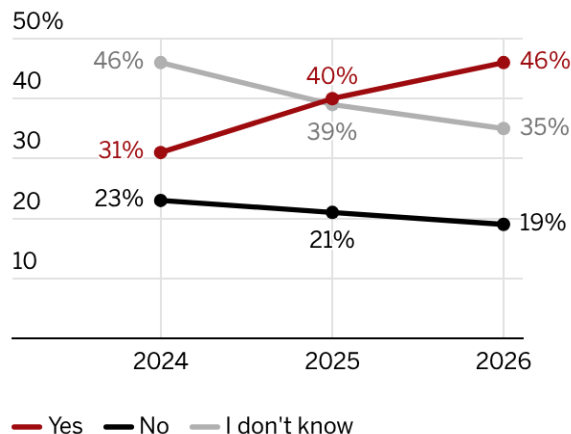
Please select all that apply.



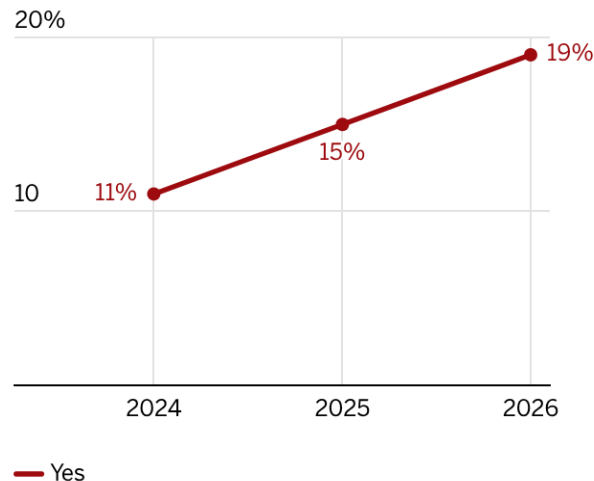
A growing share of local election officials want guidelines on using AI.

**19 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?



Most local election officials are concerned about AI and the spread of false information online making their job more difficult or dangerous.

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

