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# Portal Insights and Upcoming Survey Announcements

Office of the State Auditor  
Division of Local Mandates

March 11, 2026

# DLM Survey Portal Link

<https://massosa.forms.highgear.app/portal/DLMPortal>

Link provided in the chat.

Please bookmark!

**Make sure to whitelist [webserver@highgear.app](mailto:webserver@highgear.app) to get all of our survey portal emails!**

# Important Online Resources

## **DLM Survey Portal Navigation Aide:**

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/dlm-survey-portal-navigation-aide/download>

## **Upcoming Cost Certification Survey Launch Dates and Deadlines:**

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/upcoming-cost-certification-survey-launch-dates-and-deadlines>

## **Early Voting Frequently Asked Questions:**

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/early-voting-cost-certification-faqs>

## **Uniform Polling Hours Frequently Asked Questions:**


<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/uniform-polling-hours-cost-certification-faqs>

Links provided in the chat. Please bookmark!

# Early Voting Cost Certification Survey Deadlines for Elections On or Before May 31st

For municipalities that do not have a regularly scheduled local election during the fiscal year or that hold any of the following elections **on or before May 31, 2026**:

- Regularly scheduled local election
- Special local election (launch ETA: March)
- Special state election (launch ETA: April)


 **1 week** after survey launch or the date of the election, whichever is later

*Although data may be entered prior to an election, survey responses should not be submitted to DLM until after the election.*

# Early Voting Cost Certification Survey Deadlines for Elections On or After June 1st

For municipalities that hold any of the following elections **on or after June 1, 2026**:

- Regularly scheduled local election
- Special local election (launch ETA: March)
- Special state election (launch ETA: April)

 **24 hours** (or one business day) after the date of the election

*Please contact DLM at **617-727-0980** to schedule a meeting to ensure timely and complete responses.*

# Critical Survey Emails

- **Survey Launch Announcement** (upon survey launch):
  - **All** municipalities received the survey launch announcement email for **regularly scheduled local elections** on December 17, 2025.

ANNOUNCEMENT: Early Voting Cost Certification Survey Now Available in Portal for FY 2026 Regularly Scheduled Local Elections



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- **All** municipalities will receive the survey launch announcement email for **special local elections** when the survey becomes available.
  - *The Secretary of the Commonwealth's office does not maintain a calendar of special local elections. DLM therefore has no way of knowing if your municipality has held or will be holding a special local election. It is the responsibility of the municipality to timely submit early voting expenses for consideration in accordance with specified deadlines.*
- Municipalities holding **special state elections** will receive the survey launch announcement email for special state elections when the survey becomes available.

# Critical Survey Emails

- **Survey Response Acknowledgment and 24-Hour Editing Window** (upon submission of a survey response by the municipality to DLM):
  - Municipalities will receive an email acknowledging submission of survey responses and will have 24 hours (one business day) to review and edit responses after submission before they are locked for review by DLM.

Thank You for Submitting Your Survey Response! Read More for Details on Final Editing Opportunity



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# Critical Survey Emails

- **More Information Needed** (during DLM review):
  - Municipalities will receive an email if additional information is needed to determine if an expense is eligible for certification. Questions needing additional information will be visible **in the portal** in the “Need More Info Sections” tab. Responses to the requests for additional information should be sent to DLM **in the portal** using the “Notes for Municipality” textboxes below the applicable questions.

ATTENTION: More Information Needed For Your Cost Certification Submission



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REMINDER: More Information Needed for Your Cost Certification Submission



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# Critical Survey Emails

- **Certification Challenge 48-Hour Editing Window** (upon certification of a municipality's survey response by DLM):
  - Municipalities will receive an email that survey responses have been certified and will have 48 hours (2 business days) to review and edit responses after certification before they are finalized by DLM for submission to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

Final Review Opportunity for Certified Costs



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- **Certification Letter PDF** (after 48-hour editing window has passed):
  - Municipalities will receive an email with a PDF attachment containing their finalized certification letter summarizing costs that will be sent to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

FOR YOUR RECORDS: Early Voting Cost Certification Letter for FY 2026 Regularly Scheduled Local Elections



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# Critical Survey Emails

- **Message Acknowledgment and Response** (at any time during the process):
  - Municipalities may submit inquiries to DLM **in the portal** in the “Message DLM” tab and will receive an email acknowledgment.

DLM Survey Portal: Thank you for your inquiry



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- Municipalities will receive an email when a response to an inquiry has been posted by DLM **in the portal**.

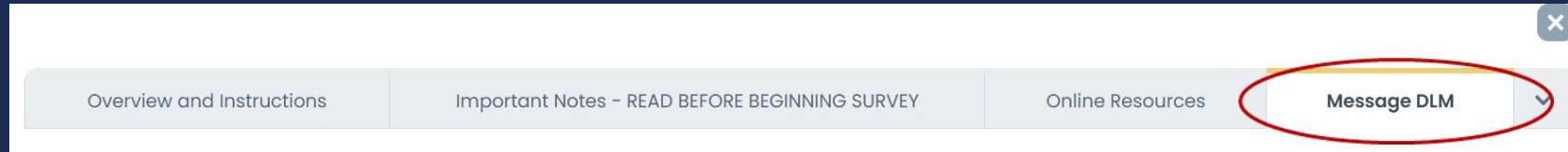
DLM Survey Portal: Response available to your inquiry



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# Messaging DLM in the Survey Portal

To write a message to us, click on the “Message DLM” tab.



Use the white section at the bottom of the textbox for your message and send by clicking on the **blue** “Message DLM” button.

Feel free to ask any questions or provide feedback about the cost certification process here and click on the blue “Message DLM” button. A DLM analyst will get back to you within 1-2 business days.

What invoices do you need for ballot printing and production expenses?

Save and Exit **Message DLM** Click Here to Submit Survey Submit Changes Discard Changes

Information as of March 11, 2026, and subject to change. For general informational purposes only; it does not constitute legal or other professional advice.

# More Information Needed Requests

Once your submission has entered review, you will receive an email if more information is needed to determine if an expense is eligible for certification.

Return to the portal and open the copy of your submission labeled “DLM Review” with the status “Returned to Municipality – Attention Needed.” You will see a “Need More Info Sections” tab with the requested information outlined below.

DLM Review: FY 2026 Early Voting Cost Certification Survey for Special Local Elections - Carina Sub Test Muni

Carina DeBarcelos - Muni Employee- Test User

Returned to Municipality - Attention Needed

The screenshot shows a web interface with a navigation bar at the top containing tabs: "Need More Info Sections" (highlighted with a red circle), "Overview and Instructions", "Important Notes - READ BEFORE BEGINNING SURVEY", "Online Resources", and "Message DLM".

Below the navigation bar, the main content area displays the following text:

**B6a. List how many vote-by-mail ballots were sent to voters and returned to the municipal clerk's or elections office for the election(s). Do NOT include any absentee ballots in your count.**

**Note:** The Secretary of the Commonwealth's office provides instructions on how to retrieve vote-by-mail and in-person early voting turnout data. **Please refer to the [Online Resources](#) tab for more information.** If you haven't already retrieved this data from VRIS, retrieve **Extract 22** for each election as soon as possible. The Secretary's office recommends that clerks and local election officials retrieve reports and extracts **as close to elections as possible** to get the most accurate data.

Election Type	# of Ballots Mailed	# of Ballots Returned	Total Postage
Special Local Election	400	200	\$428.00

Below the table, there are three progress indicators:

- Total Ballots Mailed: 400
- Total Ballots Returned: 200
- Total Postage: \$428.00

Below the progress indicators, there is a message:

**Your response to Question B6a needs more clarification. Please use the textbox to respond to the analyst's request for more information.**

Below the message, there are two sections for providing more information:

- B6a - Reason for More Information:** Possible data entry error
- B6a - Notes for Municipality:** [following added by Sabiel Rodríguez on 3/6/2026 1:20:29 PM (UTC-5:00)]  
Ballot data reported seems to be estimates. Please provide more specific ballot data from VRIS. Please reference Online Resources tab for instructions to access VRIS.

# More Information Needed Requests

Each question needing more information will be accompanied by a textbox that will include the analyst's reason for requesting more information. Similar to the "Message DLM" tab, you will be able to compose your response to DLM in the textbox. Once all questions have been addressed, you will be able to **resubmit** your survey response.

**Your response to Question B6a needs more clarification. Please use the textbox to respond to the analyst's request for more information.**

B6a - Notes for Municipality

[following added by Carina DeBarcelos on 12/23/2025 3:22:35 PM (UTC- 5:00)]  
The ballot data appears to be small for your municipality - can you confirm this for us?

B6a - Reason for More Information

Possible data entry error

**B I U S** | | | | | | **A** | Size

Save and Exit | Message DLM | **Click Here to Submit Survey Response** | Submit Changes | Discard Changes

# Allocating Expenses between VBM and IPEV

Compensation expenses must be **allocated** between vote-by-mail (VBM) and in-person early voting (IPEV) and entered in the appropriate sections of the survey. For example, if a temporary election worker performs both VBM and IPEV tasks, their hours and compensation must be allocated between VBM and IPEV and separately entered in Sections B and D.

**B13. \* List the hourly rates of pay for temporary workers hired directly and primarily to implement vote-by-mail.**

**Note:** Election workers who receive different rates of pay should be entered on separate lines regardless of title or tasks performed.

Election Type	Hourly Rate	# of Temporary Workers at Specified Hourly Rate	Total Hours Worked (all temporary workers) at...	Total Cost	↗
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Type to add a row...

**D3. \* List the hourly rates of pay for temporary workers hired directly and primarily to implement in-person early voting at the central in-person early voting location.**

**Note:** Election workers who receive different rates of pay should be entered on separate lines regardless of title or tasks performed.

Election Type	Hourly Rate	# of Temporary Workers at Specified Hourly Rate	Total Hours Worked (all temporary workers) at...	Total Cost	↗
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Type to add a row...


Total IPEV Temporary Worker Expenses

# Allocating Expenses between VBM and IPEV

Expenses for consumable supplies and durable equipment must be **allocated** between vote-by-mail (VBM), in-person early voting (IPEV), and general office use/unrelated tasks, and percentages entered accordingly. For example, if an address printer has been purchased and will be used 60% for VBM and 40% for a municipality's other mailings, the total expense and percentages should be entered as follows:

**E5.10. \*** Provide the incurred expense and a percentage allocation of use of the **address printer** between vote-by-mail, in-person early voting, and general office use/tasks unrelated to early voting (totaling 100%) over such equipment's useful life or length of lease/rental.

**Reminder:** Excludes extended warranties, optional add-ons, service or maintenance fees, finance charges, and other indirect costs.

Equipment Expense	% Use: Vote-by-Mail	% Use: In-Person Early Voting	% Use: General Office Use/Unrelated Tasks	Total Eligible Durable Equipment Expense 
\$600	60%	0%	40%	\$360.00

Type to add a row...

Total Durable Equipment Expense

# Local Ballot Production and Printing Costs

Expenses for production and printing of **local** ballots for early voting are classified as **consumable supplies** and may be submitted for consideration in Section E. Please do not enter or duplicate these expenses in other sections of the survey.

**E2. \* Did your municipality incur any expenses to produce and print early voting ballots for a special local election held during the fiscal year?**

Yes  No

**E2a. \* List expenses for early voting and absentee ballot printing and production (including applicable taxes and shipping) needed for the special local election(s).**

Election Type	# of Absentee Ballots Mailed	# of Vote-by-Mail Ballots Mailed	# of In-Person Early Voting Ballots Cast	# of Early & Absentee Ballots...	Total Production Cost	Total Eligible Production Cost ↗
Type to add a row...						

Total Printing and Production Cost

**E2b. \* Upload the invoice(s) detailing the ballot production and printing expenses associated with the special local election(s). Ballot production and printing expenses will not be certified if we do not receive an upload.**

 Upload File

Drag and drop files here to upload

# Upcoming Webinars

**Wednesday, April 8, 2026**  
**12pm-12:45pm**

**Wednesday, May 13, 2026**  
**12pm-12:45pm**

Topics and registration links are updated here:

<https://www.mass.gov/dlm-webinars>

Link provided in the chat. Please bookmark!

# Contact Us

**Email:**

**[DLM.CostCertification@  
MassAuditor.gov](mailto:DLM.CostCertification@MassAuditor.gov)**

**Office Number:  
(617) 727-0980**

# Questions?

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