



Special Local Election Survey Launch and Other Updates

Office of the State Auditor
Division of Local Mandates

April 8, 2026

DLM Survey Portal Link

All surveys must be completed and submitted in the DLM Survey Portal:

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

Link provided in the chat.

Please bookmark!


Make sure to whitelist webserver@highgear.app to get all of our survey portal emails!

Launch – Special Local Elections

The Early Voting Cost Certification Survey for **FY 2026 Special Local Elections** launched on April 6, 2026. **All** municipalities received the survey launch announcement email. **Only** municipalities holding special local elections during the fiscal year need to submit a survey response.

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



webserver@highgear.app on behalf of DLM Certification Team <dml.costcertification@massauditor.gov> (webserver@highgear.app via highgear.app)
To  DeBarcelos, Carina O. (SAO)

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.

Early Voting Cost Certification Survey for Special Local Elections

Municipalities can submit multiple responses **if more than one** special local election is held during the fiscal year.

- (ex. town held a special local election in January 2026 but will hold a ***subsequent special local election*** in May 2026)


Municipalities can submit **prior to their regular local election** if the special local election has already occurred.

- (ex. town held a special local election in January 2026 but will hold their ***annual town election*** in May 2026)

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 (launch date: 12/17/2025)
- Special local election (launch date: 4/6/2026)
- Special state election (launch ETA: May 2026)


 **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**:

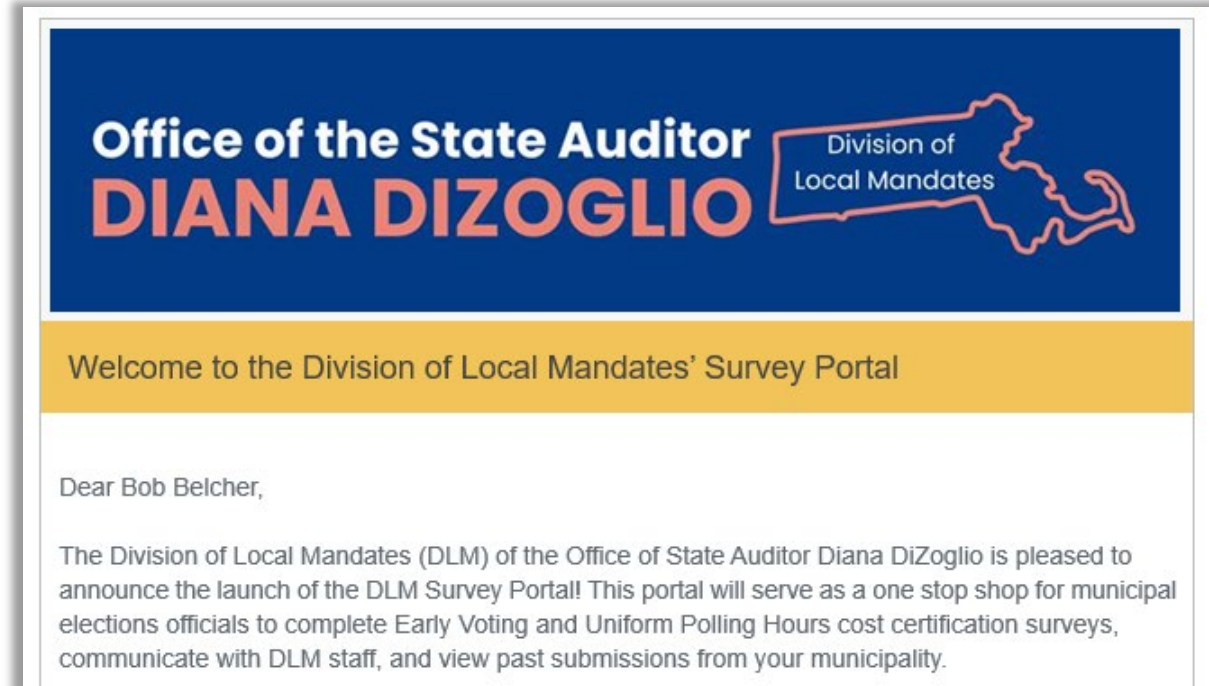
- Regularly scheduled local election (launch date: 12/17/2025)
- Special local election (launch date: 4/6/2026)
- Special state election (launch ETA: April 2026)

 **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.*

Email Communications: Portal Account Activation

- If you are a new municipal clerk and/or you have not received any communications from DLM regarding the Survey Portal, please email DLM.CostCertification@massauditor.gov.
- New users will receive a portal invitation with credentials to log in to the portal and update their contact information.



Welcome to the Division of Local Mandates' Survey Portal



webserver@highgear.app on behalf of DLM Certification Team <dml.costcertification@massauditor.gov> (webserver@highgear.app via highgear.app)
To

Email Communications: Survey Reminders

- Reminders to complete your cost certification survey for **regularly scheduled local elections** will be sent 5 business days prior to the date of your local election.
- **For municipalities with elections through May 31st:** personalized emails will be sent 2 business days prior to the due date to remind you to complete the survey.
- Reminders to submit a response to the cost certification survey for **special local elections** will be sent to all municipalities at the same time each month.

REMINDER: SURVEY AVAILABLE – FY 2026 Early Voting Cost Certification Survey for Regularly Scheduled Local Elections



webserver@highgear.app on behalf of DLM Certification Team <dml.costcertification@massauditor.gov>(webserver@highgear.app via highgear.app)

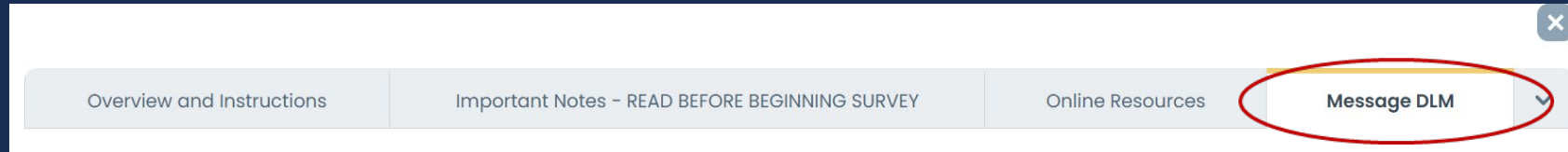
REMINDER: Please Complete Your FY 2026 Early Voting Cost Certification Survey for Regularly Scheduled Local Elections by 4/10/2026 9:00:00 AM



webserver@highgear.app on behalf of DLM Certification Team <dml.costcertification@massauditor.gov>(webserver@highgear.app via highgear.app)
To DeBarcelos, Carina O. (SAO);

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 April 8, 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

Need More Info Sections | Overview and Instructions | Important Notes - READ BEFORE BEGINNING SURVEY | Online Resources | Message DLM

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

Type to add a row...

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

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

When making changes, make sure that all fields related to a question are completed or removed – partially completing them creates errors!

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

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

B25. All expenses related to postage, rentals, and election workers for vote-by-mail should have been entered in the questions above (see questions B1 to B24). Include below any additional vote-by-mail expenses that your city or town incurred that you would like DLM to consider.

Note: Expenses related to consumable supplies and durable equipment should be entered in Section E.

Reminder: Expenses for meals, election worker transportation, voter registration, and ballot recounts are ineligible for certification.

Election Type	Total Cost	Reason for Expense
Local Election		
Local Election		
Local Election		

Type to add a row...

Total VBM Additional Expenses

Your response to Question B25 needs more clarification. Please use the textbox to respond to the analyst's request for more information.

Certification Challenge Window

Once DLM staff has finished review of your submission, you will receive an email notifying you of a final opportunity for edits before final certification. You will have **48 hours (2 business days)** to review and edit responses before costs are finalized to send to the Secretary of the Commonwealth.

You can review your submission by clicking on your submission (labeled as DLM Review) in the DLM survey portal. The status of the submission will be labeled as **Certification Challenge Window**.

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

Sarika Bansal - Ver Analyst - Test User

Certification Challenge Window

Certification Challenge Window

You can navigate through your responses within this copy of the survey. **No action is needed if your submission does not need edits** - your submission will automatically certify after the Certification Challenge window has ended.

If you need to edit your submission, please click on the **orange “Edit Submission”** button. Make any edits as needed and click on the **green button** to submit.

A DLM team member will review your edits once they have been submitted. Your submission will automatically certify once the review is completed.

Overview and Instructions | Important Notes – READ BEFORE BEGINNING SURVEY | Online Resources | Message DLM

Section A: Qualifying Questions

A1. * Did your municipality incur any vote-by-mail expenses for a special state election held during the fiscal year (see *Eligible Expenses* and *Ineligible Expenses* below)?

Eligible Expenses: Early voting expenses eligible for certification include, but are not limited to:

- Compensation paid to **temporary** election workers hired directly and primarily **to implement vote-by-mail** (e.g., ballot mailing, managing and processing mailed-in ballots (including advance processing of vote-by-mail ballots and/or **exclusively** processing vote-by-mail ballots, whether at a central tabulation facility or a polling location, on Election Day), and/or performing data entry into the Secretary of the Commonwealth’s Voter Registration Information System (VRIS) at the end of each early voting day).
- Additional compensation paid to election workers who are municipal employees, **if and only if:**
 - **(1)** the hours worked **(a)** are directly and primarily **to implement vote-by-mail and (b)** cause the employee to work more than the employee’s regular number of hours during the applicable pay period; **and**
 - **(2)** the compensation paid for those hours causes the employee to receive more than the employee’s regular amount of compensation for the applicable pay period.

Only **additional** compensation paid for **additional** hours may be submitted.

- Postage expenses for ballot mailing.
- Rental expenses for a separate location to manage the receipt and data entry of mailed-in ballots (if necessary).

Message DLM | **Edit Submission** | Close

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

Finding Response Copies in the DLM Survey Portal

A PDF copy of your original cost certification response is available in the portal under “Original Submission.”

A PDF copy of your finalized certification is available in the portal under “Certified Submission,” and will also be sent to your email on file.


You can find your PDF to download in the **Certification Clause** tab of the survey.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION	ASSIGNEE
Original Submission: FY 2026 Early Voting Cost Certification Survey for Regularly Scheduled Local Elections - Townscity (MR Demo)	Carina DeBarcelos - Muni Employee- Test..
Certified Survey: FY 2026 Early Voting Cost Certification Survey for Regularly Scheduled Local Elections - Townscity (MR Demo)	Carina DeBarcelos - Muni Employee- Test..




Original PDF Submission

Original Submission

 Original Cost-Certification Survey Submission.pdf



Certification Letter

 Final Certified Cost-Certification Survey Submission.pdf

Important Online Resources

DLM Survey Portal Navigation Aide:

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

Cost Certification Calendar and Deadlines:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/cost-certification-calendar-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!

Upcoming Office Hours

Monday, May 4, 2026, 1pm-2pm

Wednesday, May 6, 2026, 10am-11am

Monday, May 11, 2026, 1pm-2pm

Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 12pm-1pm

Monday, May 18, 2026, 1pm-2pm

Wednesday, May 20, 2026, 10am-11am

Registration links available 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?

Information as of April 8, 2026, and subject to change. For general informational purposes only; it does not constitute legal or other professional advice.