DEMOCRACY 2025

Nonpartisan Election Official Preparedness Compilation
Fall 2026

The 2026 midterm elections are taking place in an increasingly complex and fraught environment for election administration. In addition to the traditional operational demands of conducting secure, accessible, and accurate elections, election officials are facing new and evolving challenges: potential interference from multiple actors including the federal government, the potential for increased voter intimidation, increased digital or physical security concerns, increased misinformation, and more.

As part of preparing for effective election administration, **election officials should consult in advance with their counsel (such as the municipal, city, or county attorney) about these threats, and if appropriate, consider whether to engage outside legal counsel.** Given the high likelihood that any legal issues emerging during the election period will be fast-moving, **consider beginning the process now of engaging outside legal counsel,** if that is your jurisdiction's preferred approach.

This 2026 Election Official Preparedness Compilation is intended to serve as a centralized collection of available resources developed by nonpartisan nonprofit organizations and election experts. The resources are organized by topic to help election officials quickly identify guidance relevant to their needs, including:

- Cross-cutting resources;
- General election preparedness;
- Election interference resources;
- Certification resources;
- Threats, harassment, and staff safety;
- Artificial intelligence and cybersecurity;
- Communications resources; and,
- Resources for other officials.

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This guide does not provide legal advice and should not be relied upon as a substitute for advice from legal counsel regarding any particular situation. Receipt of this information does not create an attorney-client relationship. Links to external websites are provided for informational purposes only. Democracy Forward Foundation does not endorse, control, or guarantee the accuracy or completeness of information on linked sites, and accepts no responsibility for their content.

Resources

Cross-Cutting Resource Hubs

- CEIR Resources (The Center for Election Innovation & Research)
- Election Administration Resource Hub (National Association of Counties)
- Election Center (National Association of Election Officials)
- PRP U Database of Resources (Public Rights Project)
- Resource Library (Election Security Exchange)
- Resource Page (Committee for Safe and Secure Elections)
- Resources for Election Officials (All Voting Is Local)
- Resources for State and Local Election Officials (Brennan Center)
- State Laws Prohibiting Private Funding of Elections (National Conference of State Legislatures)
- 2026 Midterm Elections Resources Hub (States United Democracy Center)

General Election Preparedness for Elections Officials

- Clearinghouse Resources for Election Officials (U.S. Election Assistance Commission)
- CORE Playbook: Continuity & Operational Readiness for Elections (National Civic League)
- Election Administration Reports (National Association of Secretaries of State)
- Election Administration at State and Local Levels (National Conference of State Legislatures)
- Elections Are Run by the States: A Guide to Statewide Offices and Election Power (States United Democracy Center)
- Fostering Resilient Elections Opportunities for Stronger Election Administration and Emergency Management Collaboration (Center for Tech and Civic Life)
- Guide Helps Election Officials Handle Intense Job Stress (The Carter Center)
- State Certification Guidelines, including a general state guide and guides for several key states: Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (All Voting is Local, Brennan Center, Campaign Legal Center, and Protect Democracy)
- State Elections Legislation Database (National Conference of State Legislatures)
- Training for Election Officials: A 50-State Analysis (Bipartisan Policy Center)
- Verified Voting Tools, includes interactive tools and databases that analyze and explain voting equipment usage, relevant laws, and more (Verified Voting)
- 60-Minute Toolkit for Emergency Readiness (The Elections Group)

Certification Resources

- Certification and Non-Discretion: A Guide to Protecting the 2024 Election (Stanford Law)
- Election Certification Processes and Guardrails (All Voting is Local, Brennan Center, Campaign Legal Center, and Protect Democracy)

Election Interference Resources

Cross-Cutting Resources

- State Election Law Interference Handbooks for Arizona, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin (Brennan Center)
- 2026 Election Risk Heat Map (Voting Rights Lab)

Federal Role & Potential Federal Interference

- DOJ Election Monitor Partner Primer (Campaign Legal Center)
- Election Administration: A Guide to State and Federal Authority (Office of the Secretary of State and Office of the Attorney General, Washington State)
- Election Observers Rules and Constraints (Brennan Center)
- Federal Agents at the Polls (Public Rights Project)
- Judicial Guide to Search Warrants Seeking Election Materials (UCLA Law)
- Memorandum: November 2026 Considerations for Federal Election Observers (Public Rights Project)
- Preparing for Election Materials Seizure (Public Rights Project)
- Preparing for Federal Election Interference – Toolkit for Local Elected Officials (Public Rights Project)
- Search Warrants for Election Materials (Berkeley Law)
- The State and Local Role in Election Administration: Duties and Structures (Congressional Research Service)
- U.S. Department of Justice Election Monitors One-Pager (Campaign Legal Center)
- Understanding Federal Demands for Election Records (Protect Democracy)

Law Enforcement & Military

- Encountering Law Enforcement and Military Troops (ACLU)
- Early Warning Advisory: Assessing the Risk of Federal Immigration Agent Deployments to Polls (Bridging Divides Initiative at Princeton University)
- Federal Agents at the Polls (ACLU)
- Policy Spotlight: Five Approaches To Actually Secure U.S. Elections (Movement Advancement Project)
- Preparing for Federal Interference in the 2026 Midterms (Brennan Center and Protect Democracy)
- Preventing Voter Intimidation by Federal Agents at the Polls (Brennan Center)
- Recording and Documenting Police and Federal Agents (ACLU)

Voting Equipment and Data

- Requests for Access to Election Data and Equipment Require Balancing Risks and Public Access (Brennan Center)
- Tracker of Justice Department Requests for Voter Information (Brennan Center)

Officials and Poll Workers

- Election Official Legal Defense Network (Election Official Legal Defense Network)
- Poll Worker Rules and Constraints (Brennan Center)

Threats, Harassment, and Staff Safety Resources

- De-Escalation: A Toolkit for Election Officials (States United Democracy Center)
- De-Escalation Posters and Pocket Guides (The Elections Group)
- De-Escalation Training Materials (The Elections Group)
- Digital Security Best Practices (Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights)
- Laws Protecting Election Officials Against Threats (Movement Advancement Project)
- Laws Protecting Voters and Election Workers from Intimidation (Brennan Center)
- Protecting Election Workers and Officials From Threats and Harassment During the Midterms (Center for American Progress)
- State Laws Providing Protection for Election Officials and Staff (National Conference of State Legislators)
- Threats to Election Officials: Informational Guide for Law Enforcement (States United Democracy Center)
- Toolkit: Countering Threats to Local Officials During the 2026 Election Season (Bridging Divides Initiative at Princeton University)
- Understanding Threats and Harassment (Bridging Divides Initiative at Princeton University)

Artificial Intelligence, Digital Security, and Elections Resources

- AI + Elections Clinic, education for election officials on the application of AI to election systems (Arizona State University)
- Digital Security Best Practices (Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights)
- Election Cyber Incident Communications Coordination Guide (Harvard Kennedy School)
- Election Cyber Incident Communications Plan Template (Harvard Kennedy School)
- Cybersecurity Toolkit and Resources to Protect Elections (Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency)
- Generative Artificial Intelligence for Election Administrators: An Introduction (The Elections Group)
- How Election Officials Can Identify, Prepare for, and Respond to AI Threats (Brennan Center)
- Preparing for Artificial Intelligence and Other Challenges to Election Administration: Results From Tabletop Exercises in Five States During the 2024 Election (Bipartisan Policy Center)
- The State and Local Election Cybersecurity Playbook (Harvard Kennedy School)

Communications Resources

- Crisis Communications Intake Response Forms (The Elections Group)
- Election Communications Toolkit (National Association of State Elections Directors)
- What's Breaking Through (States United Democracy Center)
- Reporting on Threats and Harassment Targeting Public Officials (Protect Democracy)
- Bridging Divides: Recultivating Election Security and Trust (Institute for Responsive Government)

Resources for Other Officials

- Election Security and Safety – Information for Mayors and Other City Officials (The United States Conference of Mayors)
- How Local Leaders Can Strengthen Democracy by Supporting Election Administration Staff (National League of Cities)
- Keeping Elections Safe in Your Community: A Law Enforcement Quick Reference Guide (The Elections Group)
- Progressive State Leaders Committee Election Integrity Playbook 2026, for Attorneys General Offices (Progressive State Leaders Committee)