

Post-Election Survey Report

2024 Local General Elections

November 2025

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Key Findings	4
Legislative Changes for the 2024 Local Government Elections.....	5
Survey Background and Response Rate	6
Detailed Survey Results	8
Nomination and Election Timing	9
Giving Notice of Elections.....	10
Voter Numbers	12
Ballot Rejections and Objections.....	14
Vacant Positions and Further Calls for Nominations.....	15
Gender Ratio of Successful Candidates	17
Advance Polls	19
Mail-in Ballots.....	22
Accommodations for Voters with Special Requirements	23
Vote-Counting Machines	25
Voter Registries and Voters Lists.....	26
Emergency Powers.....	28
Tied Votes.....	29
Campaign Finance	30
Candidate Information	31
Unexpected Events	33
Feedback and Suggested Improvements.....	34
Conclusion and Thank You	35

Introduction

2024 was a general election year for Saskatchewan's local governments, comprised of 765 municipalities and 27 school divisions. Through these elections, Saskatchewan people chose thousands of local government representatives: mayors, reeves, councillors and school board members.

In Saskatchewan, elections for all municipalities and school divisions are governed by *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* and *The Local Government Election Regulations, 2015*. The Ministry of Government Relations is responsible for maintaining the legislation and regulations, for providing advice and information to municipalities and for collecting data on elections and their outcomes. Municipalities and school boards are responsible for conducting their own elections, from collecting candidate nominations to operating polling places and reporting the results.

After each general municipal election, the ministry surveys municipalities and school boards to learn about their experiences and to identify potential improvements to election processes. The survey results help inform potential amendments to the Act and regulations.

This report presents the results of the 2024 post-election survey which received responses from 481 local governments of all types. It includes information on the use of measures such as mail-in ballots and voters lists or registries, the effect of recent legislative and regulatory amendments and more. It concludes with respondent suggestions for improving local election processes.

Additional details about the results of the 2024 general elections as well as 2022 rural municipality division elections are available in the ministry's [2022/2024 Election Cycle Report](#).

Key Findings

This survey provided many insights into local governments' decisions and experiences during their 2024 general election. These include:

- Provisions allowing local governments to vary their nomination deadlines and election dates saw minimal use. The vast majority (over 99 per cent of respondents) used default timelines.
- Posting notices (at the local government office or elsewhere) and publishing in local newspapers were by far the most common means of giving notice of elections. Websites and social media were also commonly used.
- Just over one third of respondents (38.2 per cent) knew or had an estimate of the number of eligible voters they have.
- For the majority of respondents (87.9 per cent), the call for nominations produced at least as many candidates as there were positions to fill. For those that issued a second call for nominations, roughly two-thirds (64.2. per cent) had at least as many candidates as vacant positions afterward.
- The gender ratio of successful election candidates varied widely by local government type and by whether the candidates were elected by vote or acclamation. Overall, the large majority of successful candidates were male.
- More than two-thirds of respondents (67.8 per cent) held at least one advance poll. Although advance polling is now required by legislation, its use declined from 2020 both in terms of the number of local governments providing advance polls and the share of voters using them.
- Fourteen per cent of respondents provided their voters with the option to use mail-in ballots, down from 19.0 per cent in 2020. Mail-in ballot use varied greatly by local government type.
- Respondents made minimal use of emergency powers, voter registries, voters lists and accommodations for voters with special requirements.
- Nine respondents (seven cities and two school divisions) reported using vote-counting machines, with mainly positive experiences. Twelve respondents indicated that they plan to use vote-counting machines in their next elections.
- Less than two per cent of respondents had limits on campaign spending and less than three per cent required disclosure of campaign contributions and expenses.
- Sixteen per cent of respondents reported surprises or unexpected events during their elections. The most common issues related to voter or candidate eligibility or to individuals behaving in disruptive or unsafe ways.

Legislative Changes for the 2024 Local Government Elections

The Local Government Election Act, 2015 and *The Local Government Elections Regulations, 2015* were last amended in 2023. These amendments were shaped by extensive feedback with stakeholders following the 2020 local elections, including the results of the 2020 post-election survey. The amendments implemented several key changes that applied for the first time to the 2024 general municipal elections:

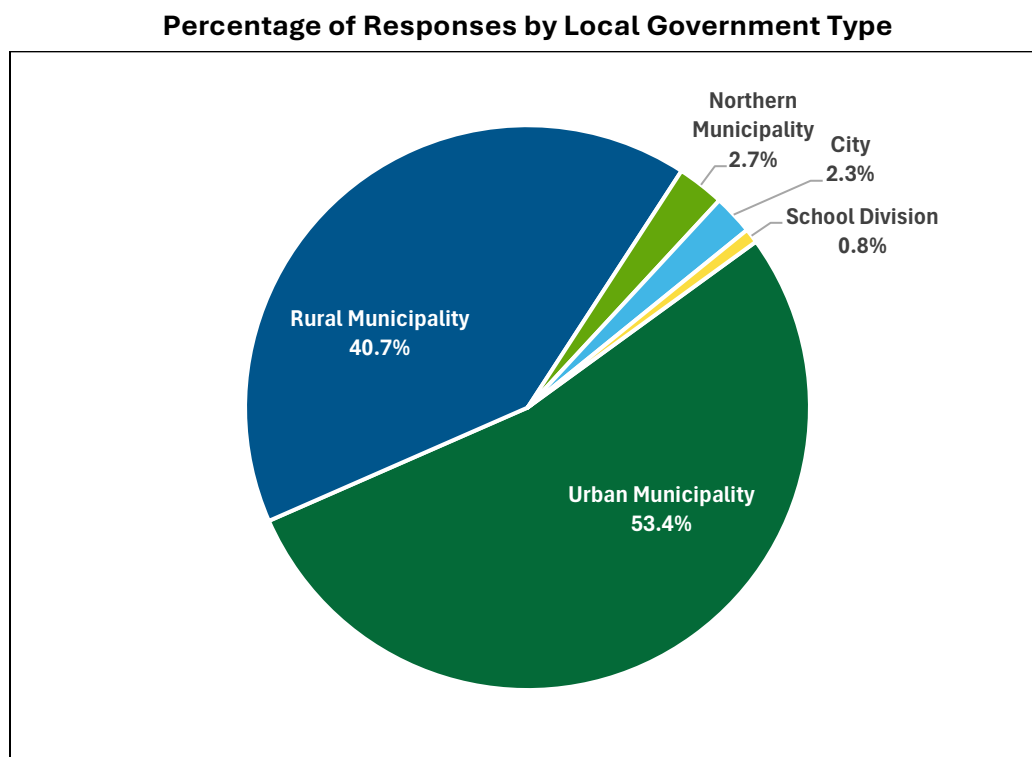
- Providing returning officers with authority to extend, suspend, postpone or relocate voting in the event of an emergency (see [Emergency Powers](#) section).
- Requiring all local governments to hold at least one advance poll. Previously, rural municipalities and resort villages that had adopted a bylaw establishing a mail-in ballot system were not required to hold advance polls (see [Advance Polls](#) section).
- Providing local governments with the option to create voter registries (see [Voter Registries and Voters Lists](#) section).
- Increasing flexibility around the use of voters lists including allowing for information provided by Elections Saskatchewan and/or Elections Canada to be used in preparing the list and for registry information to be stored electronically (see [Voter Registries and Voters Lists](#) section).
- Increasing opportunities for voters to vote at hospitals and personal care facilities or by using homebound voting (see [Accommodations for Voters with Special Requirements](#) section).
- Allowing local governments to set their nomination deadline up to seven weeks before election day. Previously, the nomination deadline was five weeks before (see [Nomination and Election Timing](#) section).
- Allowing municipalities to decide tied votes through a by-election rather than randomly drawing a name (see [Tied Votes](#) section).

Survey Background and Response Rate

Following the 2024 general elections, the ministry emailed invitations to participate in this survey to all Saskatchewan municipalities and to associations representing school boards, municipalities, and municipal administrators. The survey was also promoted in the ministry's *Municipalities Today* electronic newsletter. The survey was conducted online and was open for responses from November 15, 2024, until December 31, 2024.

In total, the survey received 481 responses. That represents a 4.6 per cent increase in responses from the ministry's 2020 post-election survey and is nearly double the response rate from the 2016 post-election survey.

The chart below shows the share of responses by municipality type or school board.



The urban municipality category includes towns, villages and resort villages. The northern municipality category includes towns within the Northern Saskatchewan Administrative District, northern villages and northern hamlets. These categories are referenced throughout this report.

This survey focused exclusively on local governments' experiences in their 2024 general elections; therefore, the results do not include information from the 2022 rural municipality division elections. Data for the 2022 division elections can be found in the ministry's [2022/2024 Election Cycle Report](#).

In total, 62.4 per cent of municipalities and 14.8 per cent of school divisions responded to the survey. The table below shows response by type.

Survey Response Rates by Local Government Type

Type	Survey Responses	Number of Municipalities	Response Rate
City	11	16	68.8%
Urban Municipality	257	429	59.9%
Rural Municipality	196	296	66.2%
Northern Municipality	13	24	54.2%
School Division	4	27	14.8%

Detailed Survey Results

The following pages provide detailed statistics and summaries for the results of this survey.

In these results, *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* is referred to as the “Act” and *The Local Government Elections Regulations, 2015* are referred to as the “regulations.”

Percentages regarding the responses to a question are based on the number of responses to that question, not the total number of responses to the survey.

Nomination and Election Timing

Nomination Deadlines

By default, the Act sets the nomination day for local governments as the fifth Wednesday before their election day (except for resort villages in which it is the fifth Saturday before election day). All municipalities may, by bylaw, set a different nomination day up to seven weeks before election day.

A significant majority of local governments used the default nomination deadline of five weeks before election day. In 2024, that day was October 9 with the exception of resort villages (where it was June 22) and a few northern municipalities that used alternate election dates. Only four respondents set a different nomination deadline.

Election Dates

The Act requires municipalities and school divisions to hold their general elections on the second Wednesday of November. In 2024, this was Wednesday, November 13. The Act establishes exceptions for:

- Resort villages, which hold elections during the last Saturday of July when seasonal residents are more likely to be present. In 2024, this was July 27.
- Northern municipalities and northern school divisions, which have the option of setting election days in September or October. In 2024, three northern municipalities set election dates other than November 13.

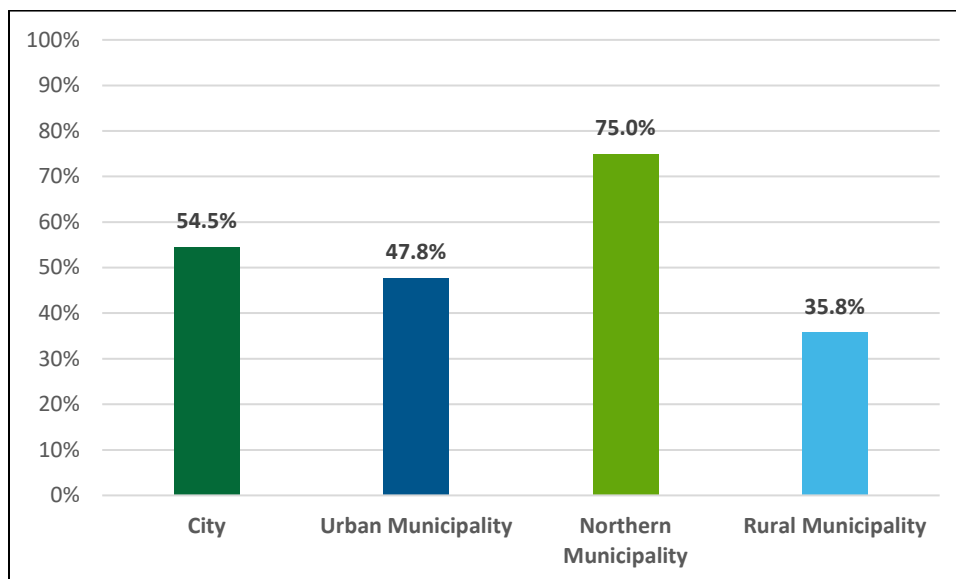
Giving Notice of Elections

Alternatives to Publishing in a Local Newspaper

By default, the Act requires local governments to post notice of their elections in a local newspaper. However, the Act does allow a local government to use other means of providing notice instead if it does not consider advertising in a newspaper to be feasible or practical. To utilize other means of providing notice, a municipality must describe these other means in its local election bylaw (bylaw requirements do not apply to school divisions).

Overall, 43.6 per cent of respondents had bylaws that provided for giving notice by other means in place of publishing in a newspaper. The share of municipalities with these bylaws varied considerably by municipality type, as shown in the chart below:

Percentage of Municipalities with Bylaw Authorization to Give Election Notice Without Using a Local Newspaper, by Type

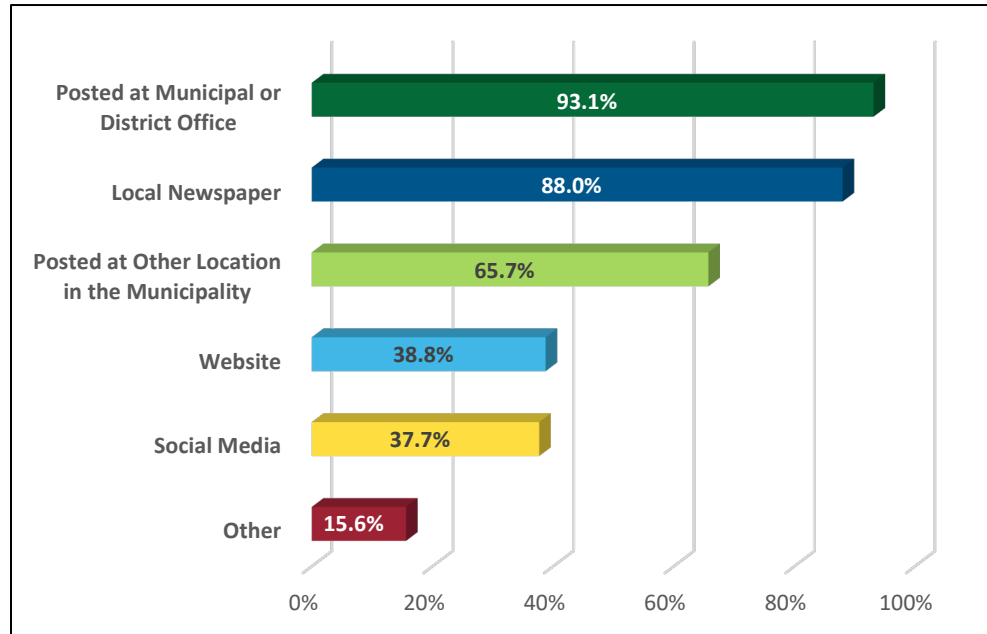


Responses: 461

Means of Giving Notice

Almost all respondents (97.4 per cent) used more than one method of giving notice of their 2024 elections. The table below shows the methods local governments used.

Percentage of Local Governments that Used Each Method of Giving Notice



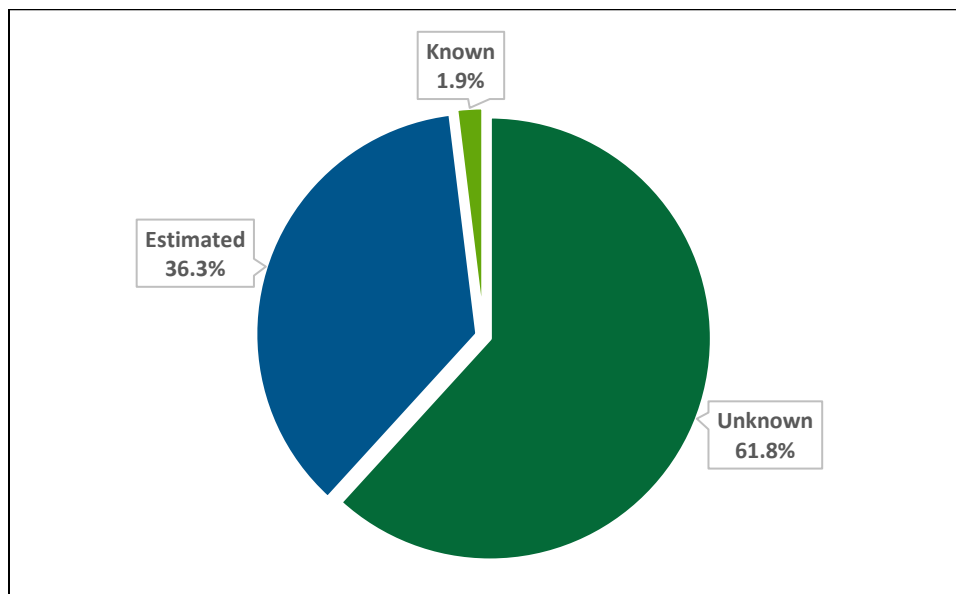
Responses: 467

- Using local newspapers was a common practice even by municipalities that adopted a bylaw to allow for other means. Of the 201 municipalities with bylaws allowing for alternative means of giving notice, 151 of them (75.1 per cent) still gave notice of their 2024 elections via publication in a local newspaper.
- Although posting notices at the municipal (or school division) office is required, a small percentage of respondents (6.9%) did not do so.
- Facebook was by far the most commonly used social media platform for giving notice. Almost two-thirds (60.8 per cent) of answers in the social media category mentioned Facebook by name.
- The “Other” category includes a wide range of measures including radio broadcasts, newsletters and mailouts, emails, text messages, apps and digital signs.

Voter Numbers

Most respondents (61.8 per cent) did not know or have an estimate of their total number of eligible voters.

Percentage of Local Governments with Known, Estimated and Unknown Eligible Voter Numbers



Responses: 463

- Very small and very large local governments were more likely to know or to have an estimate of their number of eligible voters. Mid-sized local governments (those with populations between 300 and 4,999) were most likely to have an unknown number of eligible voters.
- Cities were by far the most likely to know or have an estimate of their number of eligible voters, followed by resort villages. All other types of local government were more likely to have an unknown number of eligible voters than to know or have an estimate.
- Rural municipalities were the municipality type least likely to know or have an estimate of their eligible voter numbers, followed closely by towns.

A total of 176 local governments provided estimated or known eligible voter numbers. Their answers demonstrate the wide range of electorate sizes in Saskatchewan's local elections.

Known/Estimated Number of Eligible Voters in Local Government in Local Elections

Measure	# of Voters
Largest number of voters	196,288
Smallest number of voters	15
Average number of voters	3,266
Median number of voters	225

Responses: 176

Local governments also reported using a wide range of sources to calculate or estimate their number of eligible voters.

Sources used to Calculate or Estimate Voter Numbers

Source	# of Local Governments Using This Source	Use Rate
Population statistics ¹	54	31.4%
Tax roll	42	24.4%
Municipal software	17	9.9%
Voters list or voter registry	13	7.6%
Personal knowledge ²	12	7.0%
Manual count of households or individuals	9	5.2%
Utility bills/accounts	9	5.2%
Guess/estimate (no source specified)	9	5.2%
Data from previous elections	6	3.5%
Review of map	5	2.9%
Number of households or properties	5	2.9%
Information from division boundary policy	4	2.3%
Other	3	1.7%

Responses: 172

1: Population statistics mainly refers to the Statistics Canada census but some local governments used eHealth Saskatchewan's health coverage statistics or unspecified population data sources.

2: The "Personal knowledge" category was used for respondents who indicated that they relied on their own knowledge of their community's population.

One issue demonstrated by these responses is that the age categories used in the Statistics Canada census do not allow for an accurate count of those old enough to vote (at least 18 years old). Several respondents noted that they either included or omitted the 15-19 age category, meaning their statistics either included some residents too young to vote or excluded some who were just old enough to vote. Others compensated by subtracting the number of local students from the census total.

Ballot Rejections and Objections

Rejected Ballots

Election officials are required to reject ballots where the voter's choice is not clear, if the voter can be identified from the ballot or if the ballot is missing the deputy returning officer's initials.

Just under two-thirds of respondents that held a vote (166 out of 264 or 62.9 per cent) reported that zero ballots were rejected during their 2024 elections. Amongst the 37.1 per cent of local governments that reported rejected ballots, the number rejected varied between one and 121, representing between 0.01 per cent and 10.08 per cent of the total ballots cast. The median number of rejected ballots was two.

Objections to Ballots

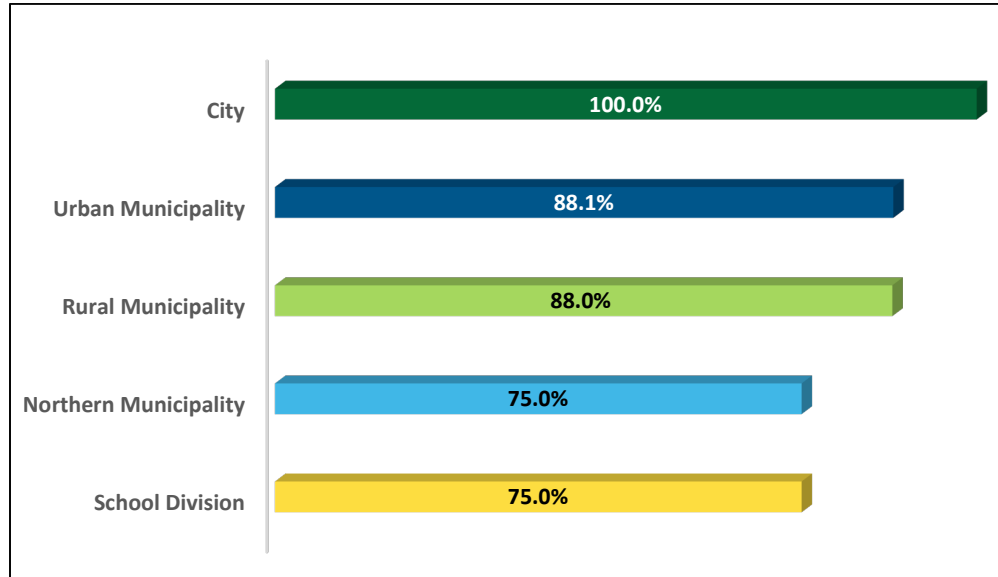
The Act allows a candidate or their agent to object to the rejection of a ballot they believe should be counted or to the counting of a ballot that they believe should be rejected.

The vast majority of local governments (244 out of 257 respondents or 94.9 per cent) reported that zero ballots were objected to during their 2024 elections. Amongst the 5.1 per cent of respondents that reported ballot objections, the total number of ballots objected to varied between one and five, representing between 0.2 per cent and 2.9 per cent of the total ballots cast. The median number of ballots objected to was one.

Vacant Positions and Further Calls for Nominations

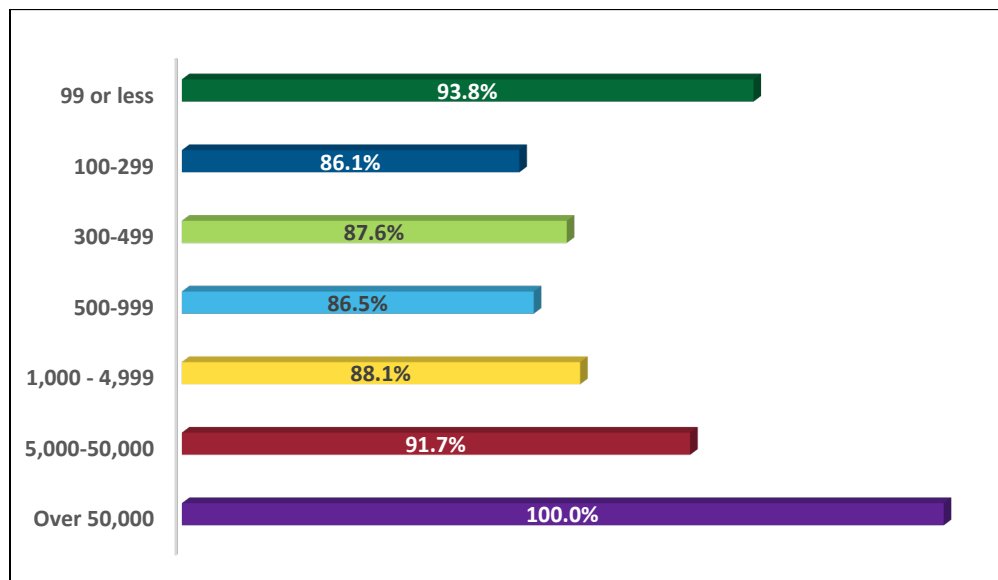
At the end of their call for nominations, 87.9 per cent of respondents had at least as many candidates as they had positions to fill. The results varied by local government type and by population.

Percentage of Local Governments with at Least Enough Candidates Following Call for Nominations, by Type



Responses: 461

Percentage of Local Governments with at Least Enough Candidates Following Call for Nominations, by Population



Responses: 461

Local governments that do not receive enough candidates on nomination day to fill vacant positions are required by legislation to make a second call for nominations. Of those local governments that did not have enough candidates following their initial call for nominations, 94.6 per cent reported holding a second call for nominations.

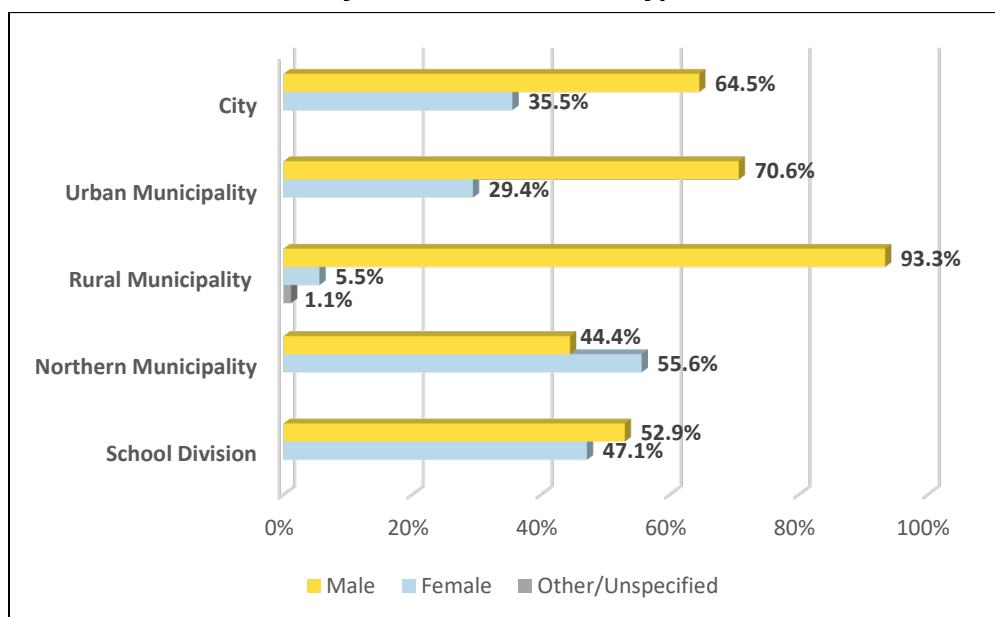
In roughly two-thirds of cases (64.2 per cent), a second call for nominations produced at least enough candidates to fill all vacant positions. In the remainder of cases, local governments were short of candidates even after holding a further call for nominations.

Gender Ratio of Successful Candidates

The average ratio of elected male candidates to elected female candidates varied widely by local government type. This gender ratio also varied, to a lesser degree, within local government types depending on whether the candidates considered were elected by acclamation or elected by vote.

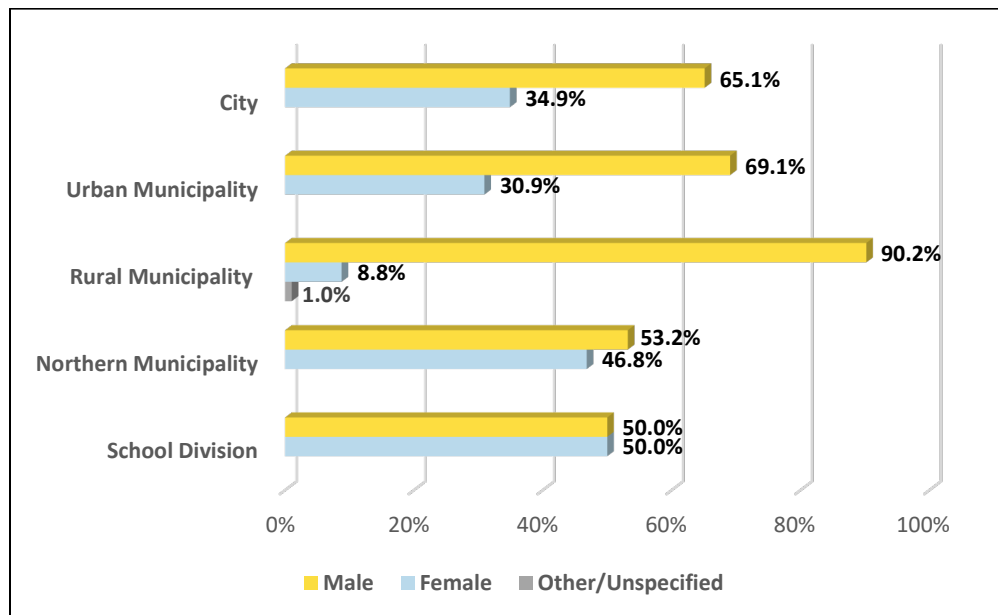
The survey asked respondents to provide the number of male and female candidates elected as well as provided an “Other/Did Not Specify” option. Rural municipalities were the only type of local government to report any candidates in the “Other/Did Not Specify” category.

**Percentage of Male and Female Candidates Elected by Acclamation,
by Local Government Type**



Responses: 388

**Percentage of Male and Female Candidates Elected by Vote,
by Local Government Type**



Responses: 282

Advance Polls

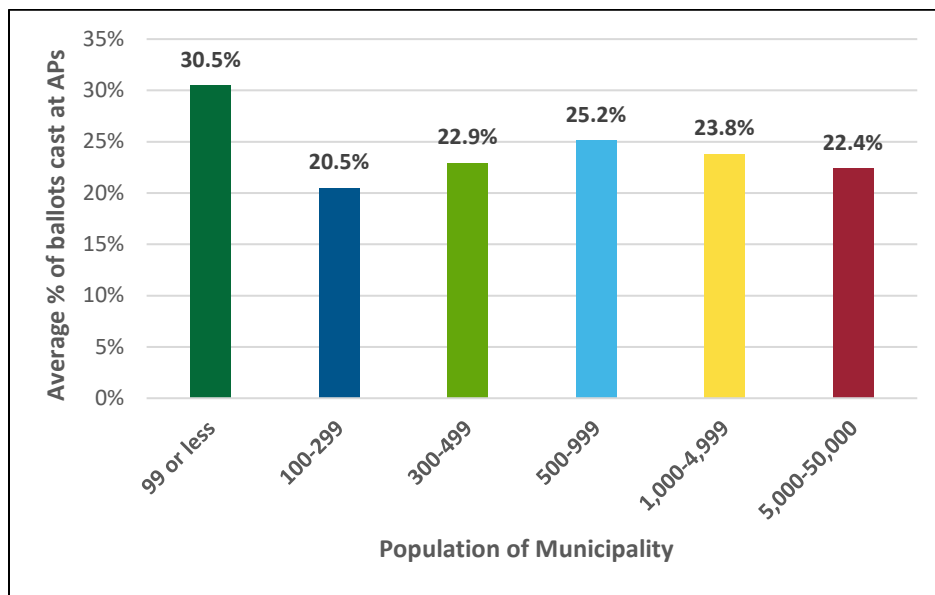
Although the Act requires all local governments to hold at least one advance poll, only two-thirds of respondents (67.8 per cent) reported doing so.

Of local governments that held advanced polls, the overwhelming majority (94.1 per cent) had a single advance polling location. Most (88.1 per cent) had a single day of advance polling with the poll open for between two and 12 hours (an average of 4.8 hours).

There was not a strong correlation between the number of hours that a local government's advance polls were open and the percentage of ballots cast at advance polls. In some cases, advance polls open for only two or three hours handled a larger share of total votes than advance polls that were open for 10 or more hours.

The percentage of total votes that were cast at advance polls varied across municipalities of different populations. The highest usage of advance polls occurred in the smallest municipalities.

**Average Percentage of Ballots Cast at Advance Polls (Where Used),
by Local Government Population**

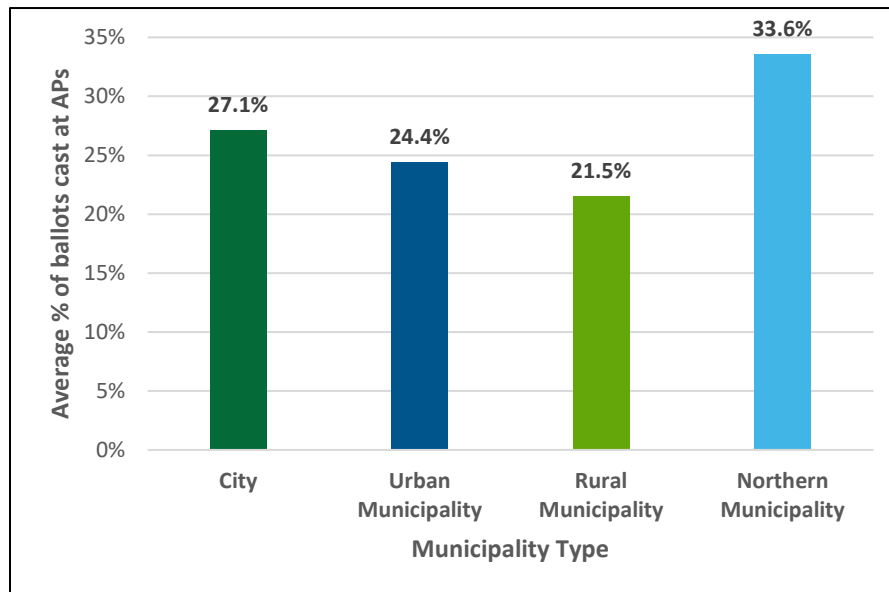


Responses: 244

Note: The Over 50,000 category was omitted from this chart due to low sample size.

The percentage of votes cast at advance polls also varied by municipality type, with particularly high usage in northern municipalities.

**Average Percentage of Ballots Cast at Advance Polls
(Where Advance Polls Were Used), by Local Government Type**



Responses: 246

Note: The School Division category was omitted from this chart due to low sample size.

First Uses of Advance Polls

Of the local governments that held advance polls, 6.9 per cent indicated that this was (to the respondent's knowledge) their first election using advance polls. The other 93.1 per cent had held advance polls in at least one previous election.

The results did not show a significant difference in voter use of advance polls between local governments that were holding advance polls for the first time and those that had held them before.

Comparison to 2020

Use of advance polls – both the number of municipalities that held them and the share of ballots cast at them – was lower in the 2024 local government elections than in the 2020 elections.

Use of Advance Polls by Municipality Type, 2020 and 2024		
Municipality Type	Percentage that used advance polls	
	2020	2024
City	100.0%	83.3%
Town	87.2%	62.3%
Village	70.8%	41.7%
Resort Village	57.1%	62.9%
Rural Municipality	68.4%	81.3%
Northern Municipality	83.3%	100.0%
School Division	75.0%	66.7%
All	75.9%	66.7%

Average % of Ballots Cast at Advance Polls by Municipality Type, 2020 and 2024		
Type	2020	2024
City	36.8%	27.1%
Town	27.9%	24.1%
Village	28.3%	25.1%
Resort Village	40.4%	17.7%
Rural Municipality	31.4%	21.5%
Northern Municipality	37.9%	33.6%
All	33.8%	23.7%

Note: School divisions have been omitted from this chart due to low sample size.

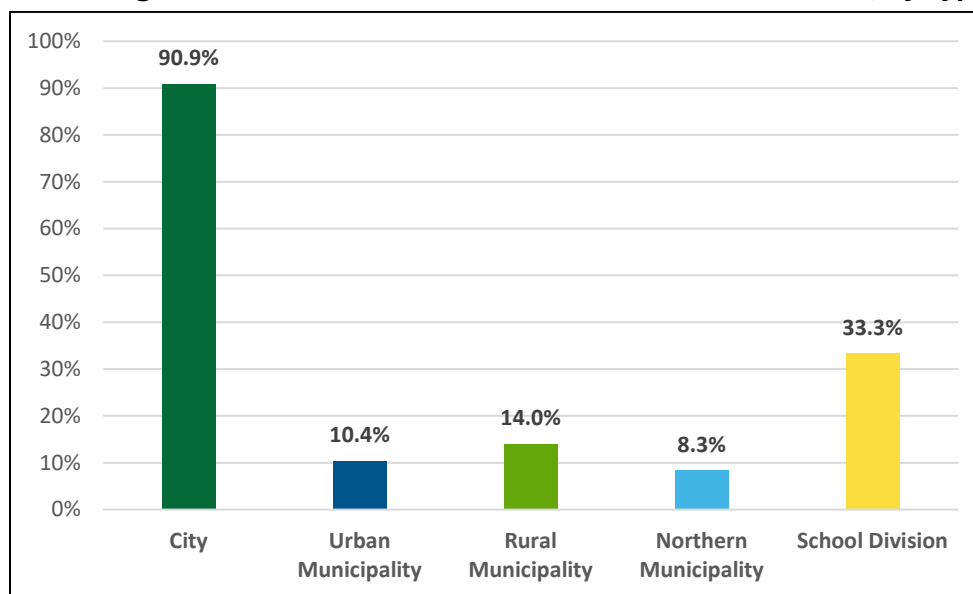
Mail-in Ballots

Sixty-one respondents (14.1 per cent) indicated that their local government provided the option to use mail-in ballots in their 2024 elections. The other 373 local governments (85.9 per cent) did not provide for the use of mail-in ballots.

This represents a decline from the 2020 post-election survey when 19.0 per cent of respondents provided the option to use mail-in ballots.

The likelihood that mail-in ballots were offered to voters varied widely by local government type, as shown in the chart below.

Percentage of Local Governments That Offered Mail-in Ballots, by Type



Responses: 434

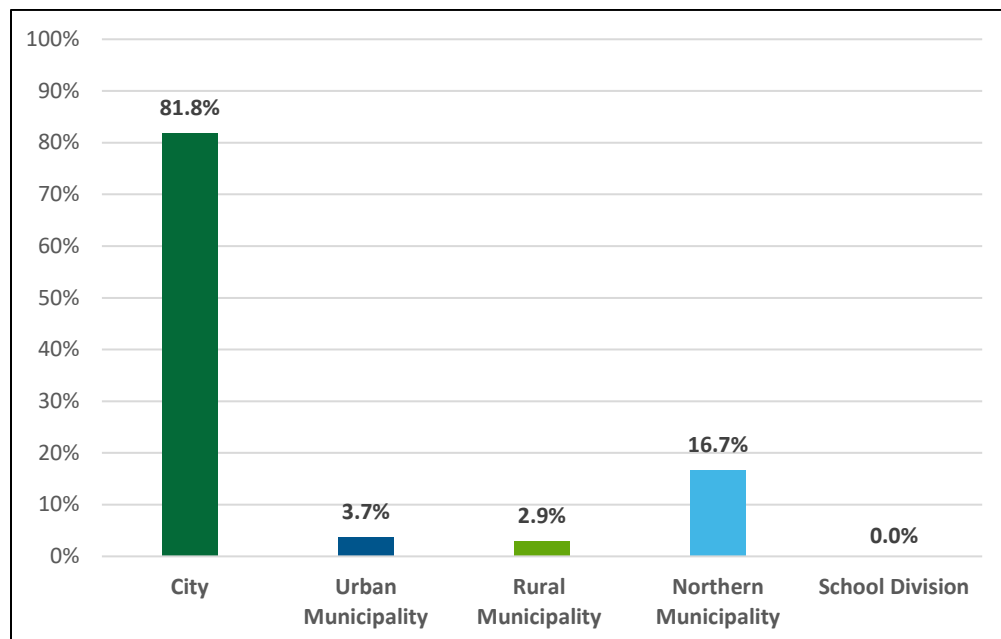
Accommodations for Voters with Special Requirements

The Act allows local governments to arrange several types of accommodation for voters with special requirements.

Homebound Voters

Local returning officers may arrange for election officials to visit the homes of voters with disabilities or limited mobility, allowing those voters and their caretakers to vote at home if requested. Whether this option was made available varied greatly between types of local government.

Percentage of Local Governments That Provided the Option for Homebound Voters and Caretakers to Vote at Home, by Type



Responses: 413

Where this option was made available it saw limited use. In villages, resort villages and rural municipalities, an average of less than one ballot was cast by homebound voters or their caretakers. In towns, the average was two ballots and, in cities, it was seven ballots. Use of homebound voting options was most common in northern municipalities where an average of 15 ballots were cast this way.

Polling Places in Health and Personal Care Facilities

In communities with hospitals, personal care facilities or similar institutions, local returning officers may establish polling places in these institutions for those receiving and providing care there.

In the 2024 elections, these polling places were established primarily by cities though some towns and rural municipalities also did so. The number of these polling places and the number of ballots cast at them was significantly higher in cities than in towns or rural municipalities.

Polling Places Established in Health or Personal Care Facilities and Ballots Cast at those Polling Places, by Municipality Type			
Type	# of Municipalities that Established Polling Places	Average # of Polling Places Established	Average # of Ballots Cast at those Polling Places
City	10	9	379
Town	8	1	30
Rural Municipality	1	1	49

Ballots Cast Outside of Inaccessible Polling Places

The Act allows for voters with disabilities or limited mobility, if they cannot enter a polling place, to have officials take their vote at another location nearby. This provision was rarely used during the 2024 elections.

The table below shows the number of respondents where at least one ballot was cast this way.

Number of Local Governments Where Voters Voted Outside an Inaccessible Polling Place, by Type	
Type	# of Local Governments
City	3
Urban Municipality	13
Rural Municipality	17
Northern Municipality	3
School Division	0

Interpreters

If voters require translation to navigate the voting process, local election officials may allow interpreters to assist them. Interpreters were rarely used in the 2024 general elections with only six respondents (1.5 per cent) indicating that any of their voters used an interpreter.

Interpreters were used in two cities, one town, two northern municipalities and one school division. Most of these local governments did not indicate which language was interpreted; however, the two northern municipalities reported the use of Cree and Dene interpreters.

Vote-Counting Machines

Nine respondents – seven cities and two school divisions – used vote-counting machines during their 2024 elections compared to 395 local governments that did not. Although this means vote-counting machines were used in only 2.3 per cent of local elections, they were primarily used in large centres with high numbers of voters.

Where local governments used voting counting machines, their experiences with them were mainly positive.

Local Governments' Experiences Using Vote-Counting Machines				
Extremely Positive	Generally Positive	Neutral	Generally Negative	Extremely Negative
44.4%	44.4%	11.1%	0.0%	0.0%

Several respondents who used vote-counting machines in 2024 indicated that they worked well, including by streamlining their processes and reducing the time needed to tally results.

Respondents also noted some concerns related to use of the machines including high costs, a long delay in receiving results and challenges with using the machines at drive-through voting locations during potentially cold and damp weather.

Twelve local governments (2.9 per cent) indicated that they intend to use vote-counting machines in their next elections. These included all nine local governments that used vote-counting machines in 2024, as well as three – one city and two northern municipalities – that did not use the machines in 2024.

Four hundred and one local governments (97.1 per cent) said they would not use vote-counting machines in the next election.

Voter Registries and Voters Lists

Voter registries

The Act provides local governments with the option of establishing a voter registry – a database of voters in the local government’s jurisdiction that can be maintained and updated between elections. The option to establish a voter registry was added to the Act in 2023, making the 2024 general elections the first in which local governments could have them in place.

Voter registries were not widely used: only 10 out of 432 respondents (2.3 per cent) had created one at the time of the 2024 elections. Where voter registries were used, enumeration of voters was the most common means of collecting the information needed to prepare them.

Sources Used by Local Governments to Prepare Voters Registries	
Voter Registry Source	Uses
Enumeration of voters	6
Information-sharing agreement with Elections Saskatchewan	2
Information-sharing agreement with Elections Canada	0
Information from public telephone directories	1
Other	3

The other sources mentioned by local governments were the tax roll, a house-to-house count and an online census of the municipality.

Voters Lists

The Act also provides local governments with the option of creating a voters list which contains the names of all individuals known to be eligible to vote in an upcoming local election. Amendments to the Act and regulations in 2023 clarified and simplified the requirements for creating a voters list, including by allowing them to be kept electronically and eliminating the need to prepare the lists according to a prescribed form.

Only 11 out of 421 respondents (2.6 per cent) used a voters list in their 2024 elections: one city, four villages, one town, two rural municipalities, one resort village and two northern municipalities.

Of the 11 voters lists used in 2024, two were in electronic form.

The most common source of information used in the preparation of voters lists was a voter registry.

Sources Used in Preparing Voters Lists	
Voters List Source	Uses
Voter registry	6
Information-sharing agreement with Elections Saskatchewan	1
Information-sharing agreement with Elections Canada	0
Other	4

The other sources mentioned by local governments were the tax roll, a house-to-house count, information from Information Services Corporation and an online census of the municipality. One city that used an electronic voters list provided feedback on its experience. It noted that voters were able to check, update or add their information to the voters list within the timelines set by the Act and reported a better voting experience for voters.

Emergency Powers

The most recent amendments to the Act provided returning officers with emergency powers to extend voting hours, suspend and postpone voting and/or relocate polling places. The 2024 general elections were the first for which these provisions were available.

Only one local government reported using these powers during its 2024 election: a town rescheduled one of its advance polls due to a power outage.

Tied Votes

Tied Votes During the 2024 Elections

Six respondents (1.5 per cent) reported that there was a tied vote for a councillor position during their 2024 elections. None reported tied votes for mayor, reeve or school board positions.

Methods of Resolving Tied Votes

Under the Act, the default method of resolving a tied vote is to draw the name of one of the tied candidates from a receptacle. Alternatively, a municipality (though not a school division) may set out in its general election bylaw that tied votes will be resolved via a by-election.

In total, 12.3 per cent of responding municipalities reported that their bylaws specify that ties are resolved via by-election. The other 87.7 per cent use the default method of drawing names to resolve tied votes.

The prevalence of each means of resolving ties did not vary much across municipality types.

Campaign Finance

Spending Limits

The Act allows local governments to establish election campaign spending limits (by bylaw for municipalities and by resolution for school divisions). Only 1.8 per cent of local governments (eight out of 439 respondents) utilized this authority and established limits on campaign spending during their 2024 elections.

Three cities, three towns, one rural municipality and one school division had spending limits in place in 2024. The limits varied significantly, from prohibiting any campaign spending at all to an upper limit of roughly \$278,000. Some respondents set higher spending limits for mayors than for councillors or school board trustees.

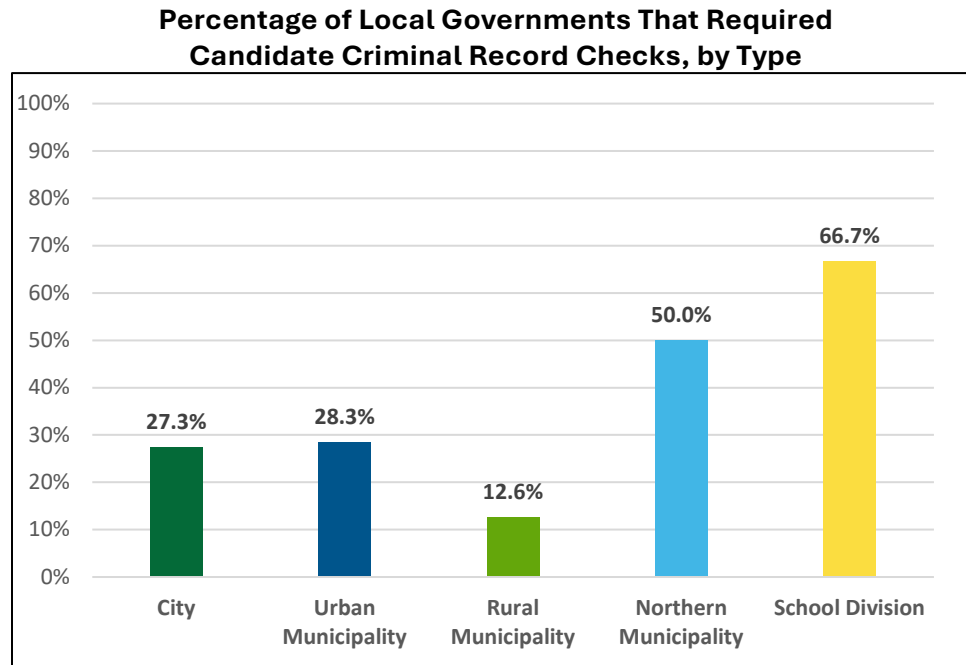
Campaign Contribution and Expense Disclosures

Similarly, only 2.5 per cent of local governments (11 out of 436 respondents) required the disclosure of campaign contributions and expenses during their 2024 elections.

Six cities, one town, one village, two rural municipalities and one school division required contribution and expense disclosures. These included four of the local governments with spending limits. Ten of these 11 local governments required that campaign financial disclosures be made public and one did not.

Candidate Information

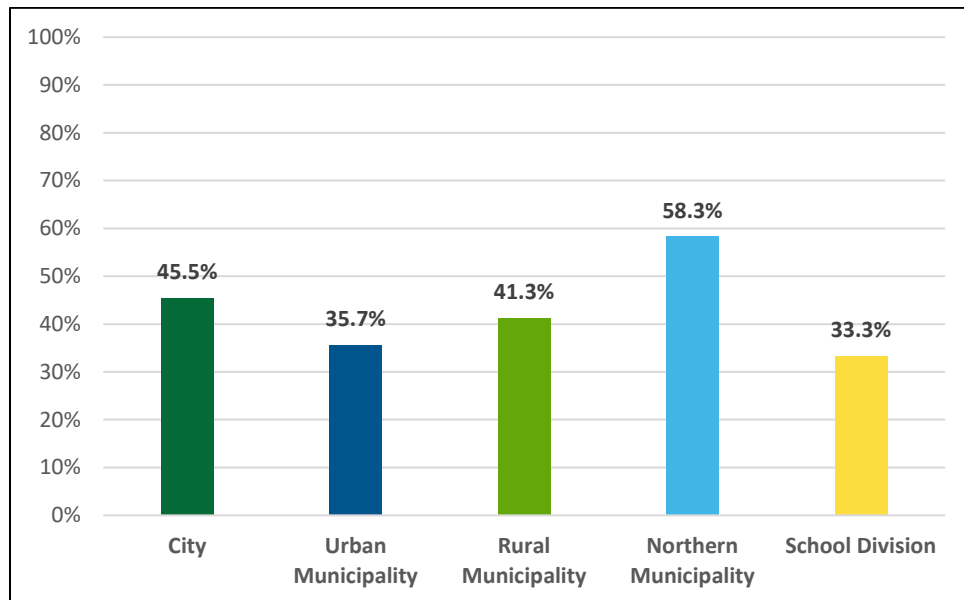
Legislation provides local governments with the option of requiring a criminal record check from election candidates. The share of respondents that required these checks varied greatly by type.



Responses: 442

The Act also allows local government to require that the occupations of candidates appear on their nomination paper and on ballots. As with criminal record checks, the share of local governments that adopted this requirement varied widely by type:

Percentage of Local Governments That Require Candidate Occupations on the Nomination Paper and Ballot, by Type



Responses: 440

Unexpected Events

Respondents were asked whether their local government experienced any surprises or unexpected events during their 2024 elections and, if so, how they responded to them.

Most respondents (83.2 per cent or 144 out of 173 respondents) indicated that they did not experience any unexpected events or surprises. About one-sixth of these specified that all candidates were acclaimed so no voting took place.

For the 29 local governments that reported surprises or unexpected events, their experiences fell into the following categories:

Voter/candidate eligibility: Ten local governments reported issues in which individuals either cast ballots in a municipality or division where they were ineligible to vote or attempted to cast ballots when ineligible to vote. In addition, two local governments reported difficulties related to determining candidate eligibility.

Compliance and security issues: Six local governments reported issues in which individuals behaved in disruptive or unsafe ways. This included candidates or their agents or supporters campaigning within 100 metres of the polling place, engaging directly with voters or refusing to sit in designated areas. Respondents also reported online harassment of candidates and the presence of disruptive individuals at polling places.

Logistics: Four local governments reported logistical difficulties including difficulty securing an advance poll location, staffing shortages and long wait times due to higher-than-expected voter turnout.

Voter confusion: Four local governments reported voters being confused about when or where to vote, about the deadlines for mail-in ballots or because of how close the provincial and local election dates were in 2024.

Other: Eight local governments reported other surprises or issues. These included unexpectedly low numbers of candidates or low voter interest, extremely close outcomes requiring possible recounts, difficulty determining which division voters should vote in, frequent objections to voters by candidates and agents and unrealistic expectations from residents or nominees.

Feedback and Suggested Improvements

Near the end of the survey, respondents were invited to give their feedback on the Act and regulations along with any other comments, experiences or suggestions they wished to share. In total, 121 respondents answered one or both questions for a total of 166 responses (excluding responses such as “N/A” and “none.”)

Key issues raised include uncertainty over voter and candidate eligibility, the timing of nominations and elections, and the conduct of candidates and agents. Respondents also raised concerns about identification requirements, administrative challenges, the casting of ballots by ineligible voters, and the complexity of prescribed forms, alongside requests for more training resources.

Respondents made suggestions to address these issues, along with additional proposals to improve processes – such as enhancing information-sharing agreements and allowing care-home workers to vouch for multiple residents – to ensure fair, efficient, and transparent elections.

All feedback and suggested improvements will be considered when the Act and regulations are next reviewed.

Conclusion and Thank You

The ministry is grateful to all the municipal and school division officials who took the time to respond to this survey. The high level of engagement from local governments makes this survey a valuable tool for understanding the on-the-ground realities of Saskatchewan's local elections.

The ministry is committed to continually strengthening local elections through improvements to legislation, regulations, policy and resources. This report will inform future work to make elections a positive experience for both voters and local governments.