



DEPARTMENT OF
FINANCE
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Gavin Newsom ■ Governor

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March 18, 2025

Honorable Scott D. Wiener, Chair
Joint Legislative Budget Committee
Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee

Honorable Jesse Gabriel, Chair
Assembly Budget Committee

Honorable Anna M. Caballero, Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee

Honorable Buffy Wicks, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee

ELECTIONS MANDATES SURVEY – ELECTION YEAR 2024

The Department of Finance respectfully submits the following Elections Mandates Survey pursuant to Chapter 25, Statutes of 2015 (SB 84).

An electronic copy of the survey can be found on the Department of Finance's website at [Other Reports | Department of Finance \(ca.gov\)](http://Other Reports | Department of Finance (ca.gov)).

If you have any questions or need additional information regarding this matter, please call Chris Hill, Principal Program Budget Analyst, at (916) 445-3274.

JOE STEPHENSHAW

Director

By:

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Chief Deputy Director

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CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE

ELECTIONS MANDATE SURVEY

ELECTION YEAR 2024

BACKGROUND

As required by Chapter 25, Statutes of 2015 (SB 84), the California Department of Finance conducted a survey of county election officials pertaining to the 2024 statewide general and primary elections. The purpose of the survey was to determine whether counties performed requirements set forth in the following state mandates despite the mandates' suspended status:

- (1) Absentee Ballot
- (2) Absentee Ballot - Tabulation by Precinct
- (3) Primary Election
- (4) Permanent Absentee Voters
- (5) Voter Identification Procedures
- (6) Voter Registration Procedures

SURVEY DETAILS

The survey was emailed to all 58 counties on January 22, 2025, and responses were due by February 5, 2025. Reminders to complete the survey were emailed on January 29, 2025, and February 4, 2025. Forty-eight counties responded to the survey.

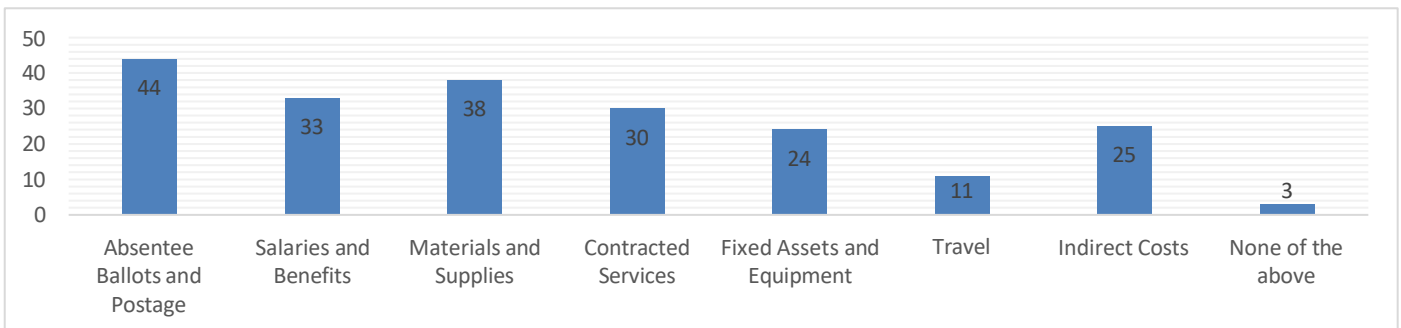
The survey consisted of six questions regarding the individual mandates listed above and an additional question about the source of funds used to perform the suspended mandates. An open comments textbox was also included at the end of the survey to allow respondents to add clarifying comments or to provide additional information related to the survey.

RESULTS

1. ABSENTEE BALLOT MANDATE

All 48 respondents answered the question regarding costs incurred relating to the absentee ballot mandate. Respondents were to select all applicable costs. Forty-four respondents indicated incurring costs associated with increased absentee ballot filings and postage, 38 respondents indicated incurring costs for materials and supplies, and 33 respondents indicated incurring costs for salaries and benefits. Contracted services, fixed assets and equipment, and indirect costs were also significant incurred cost areas. Results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Absentee Ballot Mandate – Costs Incurred



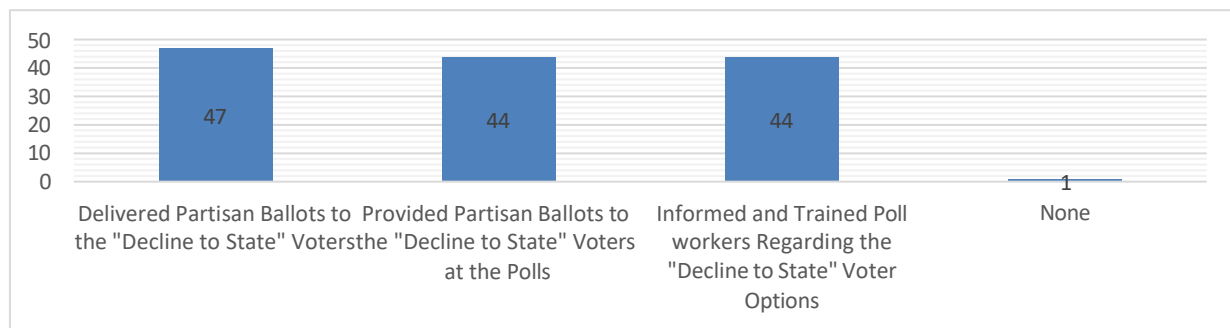
2. ABSENTEE BALLOT – TABULATION BY PRECINCT MANDATE

Forty-six respondents answered the question regarding the activities performed relating to the tabulation precinct mandate. Forty-two respondents indicated including the precinct of each voter on the election official's list of voters for those who received and voted by absentee ballot, while four respondents indicated they did not include the precinct.

3. PRIMARY ELECTION MANDATE

All 48 respondents answered the question regarding the activities performed relating to the primary election mandate. Respondents were to select all applicable activities performed. Forty-seven respondents indicated they delivered partisan ballots to the "Decline to State" voters, while 44 respondents provided partisan ballots to the "Decline to State" voters at the polls and informed and trained poll workers regarding the "Decline to State" voter options. Only one respondent indicated that no activities relating to this mandate were performed. Results are summarized in Table 2.

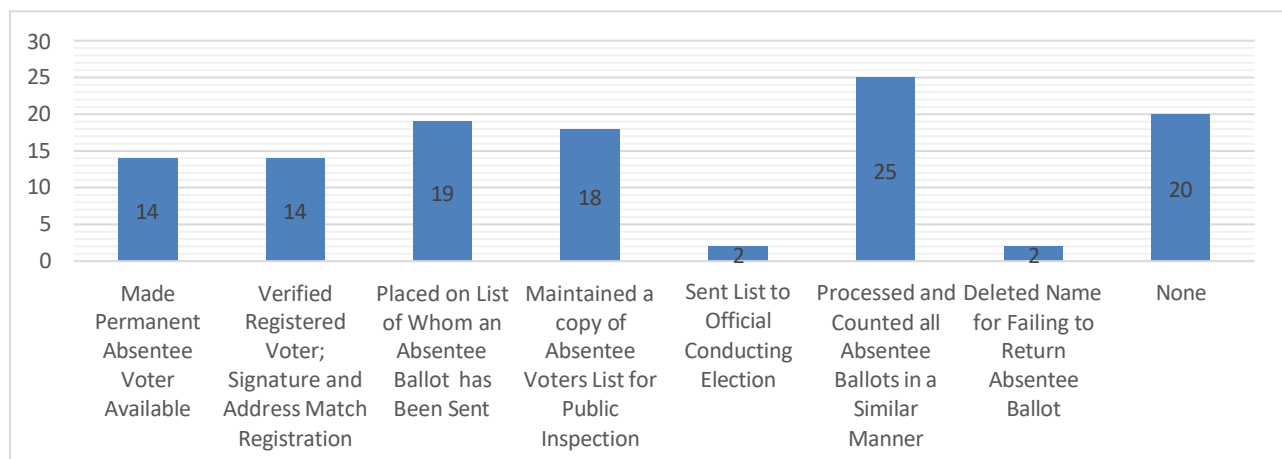
Table 2: Primary Election Mandate – Activities Performed



4. PERMANENT ABSENTEE VOTERS MANDATE

Forty-five respondents answered the question regarding the activities performed relating to the permanent absentee voters mandate. Respondents were to select all applicable activities performed. Twenty-five respondents indicated processing and counting permanent absentee ballots similar to other absentee voter ballots, while 20 respondents indicated they did not perform any of the mandate activities. Results are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Permanent Absentee Voters – Activities Performed



5. VOTER IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURES MANDATE

All 48 respondents answered the question regarding the activities performed relating to the voter identification procedures mandate. Respondents were to select all applicable activities performed. Forty-five respondents indicated they performed voter identification procedures, with 41 respondents indicating they rejected ballots that had signatures that did not match voters' affidavits of registration. Two respondents indicated they did not perform any of the mandate activities.

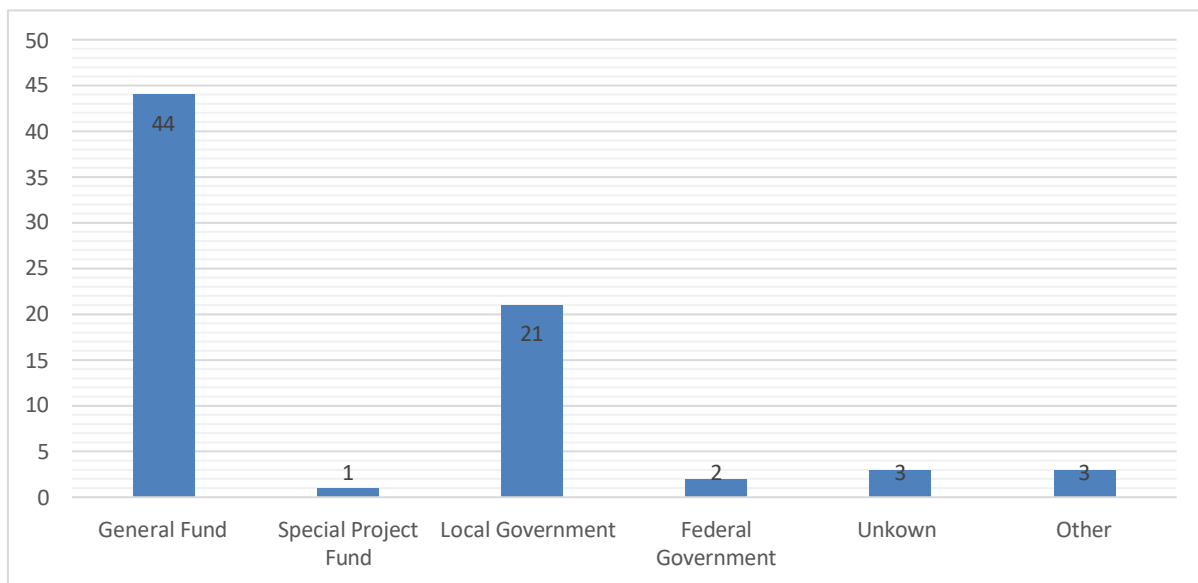
6. VOTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES MANDATE

Forty-seven respondents answered the question relating to the voter registration procedures mandate. Forty-six respondents reported processing voter registration affidavits, while one respondent reported that they did not process them.

7. FUNDING SOURCE USED TO CARRY OUT MANDATES

All 48 respondents answered the question regarding the funding source used to perform mandate activities. Respondents were to select all applicable funding sources. Forty-four respondents indicated mandate activities were funded with their county general fund, and 21 respondents indicated using funding from other local government sources. Results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4: Funding Sources



CONCLUSION

Based on the survey results, California counties continue to perform the requirements set forth in the six state mandates despite their suspended status. However, 18 respondents noted difficulty in answering some of the survey questions; specifically, respondents commented that the absentee ballot mandate questions are no longer applicable due to the enactment of Assembly Bill 37, Chapter 312, Statutes of 2021, which revised the Elections Code to require a vote-by-mail ballot be mailed to every active registered voter in the state.