



## U.S. Election Assistance Commission

### Voter Hotline Study

#### Background:

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission has commissioned The Pollworker Institute (PI) and the International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES) to conduct a survey on phone-based information lines. The data will serve as the basis for a report to the EAC that highlights the experiences and opinions of people like you who set-up, operate, and maintain the country's voter and pollworker phone hotlines.

This survey is for research purposes only. We are not selling anything nor are we associated with any political party or candidate. Your participation is voluntary and all of your answers will be kept strictly confidential and will not be connected to your name or the name of your office.

This survey should be completed by the person in your office most knowledgeable about your office's phone hotlines and/or voter information programs. If there is someone in your office who is more knowledgeable, please give your log-on and password to the person and request that he or she complete the survey.

No matter how small or big your offices' phone-based information services are it is still important that you complete the survey help us collect the most scientifically valid results possible.

Q1. Please indicate your level of government:

1. Federal [GO TO Q4a]
2. State [GO TO Q3b]
3. County [GO TO Q2a]
4. City [GO TO Q2b]
9. (No answer) [GO TO Q3a]

*IF COUNTY OFFICE, ASK:*

Q2a. What county or counties does your office serve?  
[Open text response] [GO TO Q3a]  
9 (No answer)

*IF CITY OFFICE, ASK:*

Q2b. What town/city does your office serve?  
[Open text response] [GO TO Q3a]  
9 (No answer)

*IF COUNTY OR CITY OFFICE, ASK:*

Q3a. And what state is this jurisdiction in?  
[Dropdown menu with list of states] [GO TO Q4a]  
9 (No answer)

*IF STATE OFFICE, ASK:*

Q3b. What state does your office serve?  
[Dropdown menu with list of states] [GO TO Q4a]  
9 (No answer)

- Q4a During the 2006 Election season, did your office operate a phone-based information line, phone bank or "hotline" to provide services or information to voters or pollworkers in your area?
1. Yes [GO TO 4b]
  2. No [GO TO Q52]
  9. (No answer) [GO TO 4b]
- Q4b. And was this information line or "hotline" the same as your office's main number or did you have a phone number dedicated specifically to providing information to voters and/or pollworkers?
1. Same as office main number [GO TO 4c]
  2. Dedicated phone number [GO TO Q5]
  9. (No answer) [GO TO Q4c]
- Q4c How does your office handle provisional ballots?  
[Open text response] [GO TO Q52]
- 9 (No answer) [GO TO Q52]

*IF HOTLINE, ASK:*

- Q5. How many dedicated phone information lines or "hotlines" did your office operate?  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ Record 2-digit response]  
 9999 (No answer)

*IF ONLY ONE HOTLINE, ASK:*

- Q6a. Was this information hotline toll-free (1-800) or a normal toll-call hotline?
1. Voter hotline toll-free (1-800) [GO TO Q7]
  2. Normal toll-call hotline [GO TO Q7]
  9. (No answer) [GO TO Q7]

*IF MORE THAN ONE HOTLINE, ASK:*

- Q6b. Please indicate how many, if any, of these hotlines are toll-free (1-800) and how many are normal toll call phone numbers.
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ toll-free (1-800)  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ normal toll-call  
 9999 (No answer)

- Q7. For each of the following, please indicate when, if at all, your information line(s) or "hotline(s)" are in operation

- A On Election Day
1. None, not in operation
  2. All day / 24 hours
  3. During normal office hours
  4. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- B During election season (excluding Election Day)
1. None, not in operation
  2. 24 hours / 7-days a week
  3. During normal office hours
  4. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- C The remainder of the year, outside of the main election season
1. None, not in operation
  2. 24 hours / 7-days a week
  3. During normal office hours
  4. Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Q8. For each of the following areas of election services, please indicate if the service is available to voters through any of your office's toll-free phone hotline(s), normal toll-call hotline(s), or not offered. (multiple responses accepted)

	Yes, available through toll-free hotline	Yes, available through normal toll hotline	No, but caller is referred to appropriate person / office	Not available and caller not referred	(No answer)
Voter registration – am I registered?	1	2	3	4	9
Request or check status of absentee ballot	1	2	3	4	9
Information on legal deadlines to request/return absentee ballot	1	2	3	4	9
Information on voting location and hours	1	2	3	4	9
Information on voting system used in voter's polling place	1	2	3	4	9
Information on accessibility provisions in polling locations for voters with disabilities	1	2	3	4	9
Provisional ballot status	1	2	3	4	9
Voter information specific to Overseas and Military Voters (UOCAVA ballot sent, received (status))	1	2	3	4	9
How to be a pollworker	1	2	3	4	9
Clarification of laws and/or procedures	1	2	3	4	9
Report fraud – file HAVA complaint	1	2	3	4	9
Other general voter complaints/concerns	1	2	3	4	9

Q9. Please indicate if this is available to pollworkers through your office's toll-free phone hotline(s), normal toll-call hotline, or not offered.

	Yes, available through toll-free hotline	Yes, available through normal toll hotline	Not offered	(No answer)
Pollworker recruiting and pollworker information (assignment, training schedule, etc.)	1	2	3	9
Election Day Hotlines for Pollworkers (clarification on laws and procedures, troubleshooting with voting system problems, "no-show" pollworkers, missing supplies, etc.)	1	2	3	9
Pre- Election Day Hotlines for Pollworkers (clarification on laws and procedures, troubleshooting with voting system problems, etc.)	1	2	3	9
Automated system for pollworkers to signal the open/closed station of that polling location	1	2	3	9

- Q10. Thinking only about the calls made to your hotline(s) on Election Day, approximately what percentage of calls are made to the following categories? (Just your best guess is fine)
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % Am I registered?  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % Where do I vote?  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % Did you get my absentee ballot?  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % I suspect fraud  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % I have a complaint (non-fraud related)  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 9999 (No answer)

- Q11. Does your office's hotline(s) operate solely in English or do you offer support in a language other than English?
1. English only
  2. Languages other than English
  9. (No answer)

*IF LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH AVAILABLE, ASK:*

- Q12. Which, if any, of the following languages are available (directly or via a referral program) through your office's hotline(s)?

	Available	Not available	(No answer)
Chinese	1	2	9
Japanese	1	2	9
Korean	1	2	9
Spanish	1	2	9
Tagalog	1	2	9
Vietnamese	1	2	9
Other language(s) (specify)	1	2	9

- Q13. Is your hotline number(s) equipped with TTY or TTD technology for the hearing impaired?
1. Yes, hotline directly TTY / TTD
  2. Yes, have relay program with a state-level service
  - 3 No, not offered and callers not relayed/transferred
  9. (No answer)

*IF ONLY ONE HOTLINE, ASK:*

- Q14a. Is your information line or hotline initially answered by a live operator (even if momentarily put on hold) or is it answered by an automated system?
1. Answered by a live operator
  2. Answered by an automated system
  9. (No answer)

*IF MORE THAN ONE HOTLINE, ASK:*

- Q14b. Are your information lines or hotlines answered by a live operator or are they answered by an automated system or do you have both kinds of hotlines?
1. Answered by a live operator
  2. Answered by an automated system
  3. Have both a hotline answered by live operator and one answered by automated system
  9. (No answer)

*IF HAVE HOTLINE ANSWERED BY A LIVE OPERATOR, ASK:*

Q15a. Why did your office choose to have a live-operator hotline rather than an automated one? For each of the following, please indicate whether this was a "minor reason", "major reason", or "not a reason".

	Minor reason	Major reason	Not a reason	(No answer)
A. Customer service				
B. Costs	1	2	3	9
C. Availability of staff	1	2	3	9
D. Anticipated call volume	1	2	3	9
E. Wait times / time on hold	1	2	3	9
F. Special needs of voters in jurisdiction	1	2	3	9
G. Other (specify _____)	1	2	3	9

*IF HAVE AUTOMATED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q15b. Why did your office choose to have an automated hotline rather than one answered by a live operator? For each of the following, please indicate whether this was a "minor reason", "major reason", or "not a reason."

	Minor reason	Major reason	Not a reason	(No answer)
A. Customer service	1	2	3	9
B. Costs				
C. Availability of staff	1	2	3	9
D. Anticipated call volume	1	2	3	9
E. Wait times / time on hold	1	2	3	9
F. Special needs of voters in jurisdiction	1	2	3	9
G. Other (specify _____)	1	2	3	9

For the next few questions, please think back to when you first developed your office's information line or hotline to provide service or information to voters and/or pollworkers. (If your office operates more than one hotline, please think about the most recent hotline developed by your office).

Q16. Overall, how would you describe your office's experience developing the hotline? Would you say the overall process for developing the hotline was very easy, somewhat easy, somewhat hard or very hard?

1. Very easy
2. Somewhat easy
3. Somewhat hard
4. Very hard
9. (No answer)

Q17. And did you develop the hotline in-house or did you outsource most or all of the work to another company or organization?

1. Developed the hotline in-house
2. Outsourced some of the development work
3. Outsourced most of the development work
4. Outsourced all of the development work
9. (No answer)

*IF OUTSOURCE SOME, MOST, OR ALL, ASK:*

- Q18. How would you rate your satisfaction with this service provider?
1. Very satisfied
  2. Somewhat satisfied
  3. Somewhat unsatisfied
  4. Very unsatisfied
  9. (No answer)
- Q19. Approximately how many weeks did it take you to develop the hotline—from the time that you started planning the hotlines features to when the hotline was fully operational?
- \_\_\_\_ weeks  
9999 (No answer)
- Q20. Approximately, how much did it cost for your office to develop and implement the hotline?
- \_\_\_\_ USD  
9999 (No answer)
- Q21. What advice would you offer to another jurisdiction like yours that is planning to develop its own hotline to provide services and/or information to voters or pollworkers?
- [open-ended text box]  
9 (No answer)

*IF HAVE AUTOMATED HOTLINE:* For the next several questions, we'd like you to think about the gathering and maintenance of the information used by your phone information hotline (If your office operates more than one hotline, please think about the most recent hotline developed by your office).

*IF HAVE OPERATOR-ANSWERED HOTLINE:* For the next several questions, we'd like you to think about the day-to-day operation of your phone information hotline (If your office operates more than one hotline, please think about the most recent hotline developed by your office).

- Q22. Does your office handle in-house the day-to-day maintenance of information and/or databases used by your hotline or do you outsource some, most or all of the work to another company or organization?
1. Handle maintenance of information completely in-house
  2. Outsourced some of the work
  3. Outsourced most of the work
  4. Outsourced all of the work
  9. (No answer)

*IF OUTSOURCE SOME, MOST, OR ALL, ASK:*

- Q23. How would you rate your satisfaction with this service provider?
1. Very satisfied
  2. Somewhat satisfied
  3. Somewhat unsatisfied
  4. Very unsatisfied
  9. (No answer)

*IF HAVE OPERATOR-ANSWERED HOTLINE, ASK:*

- Q24. Do your call-takers have a protocol card, form, checklist script or software system to guide their interaction with callers OR does your office use a non-structured and non-automated approach to respond to callers questions?
1. Use protocol cards / form / checklist script
  2. Use automated script / protocol software system
  3. Use BOTH protocol cards/ form / checklist script and an automated software system
  4. Use a non-structured and non-automated approach
  9. (No answer)

*IF HAVE OPERATOR-ANSWERED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q25a. What databases, if any, do your hotline operators have access to?

1. Voter registration database
2. Pollworker management database
3. Absentee ballot database
4. Provisional ballot database
5. Polling-place lookup database
9. (No answer)

*IF ONE AUTOMATED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q25b. What databases, if any, are integrated with your hotline(s) system?

1. Voter registration database
2. Pollworker management database
3. Absentee ballot database
4. Provisional ballot database
5. Polling-place lookup database
9. (No answer)

*IF MORE THAN AUTOMATED ONE HOLTILNE, ASK:*

Q25c. Thinking about all the hotlines your office operates to provide information or services to voters or pollworkers, what databases, if any, are integrated with your hotline(s) system?

1. Voter registration database
2. Pollworker management database
3. Absentee ballot database
4. Provisional ballot database
5. Polling-place lookup database
9. (No answer)

*IF STATE OFFICE, ASK:*

Q26. Does your hotline have access to statewide voter registration lists?

1. Yes
2. No
9. (No answer)

*IF STATE OFFICE, ASK:*

Q27. Is your office's hotline able to give callers the general contact information for their specific county/township election office?

1. Yes, operators have a hard copy list of phone numbers of county/city offices.
2. Yes, operators have access to a database of phone numbers for counties/cities on the computer at their workstation.
3. Operators are provided access to local jurisdiction's databases so they can provide immediate assistance.
9. (No answer)

*IF STATE OFFICE, ASK:*

Q28. Does your office have a list of voter information hotlines operated by subordinate jurisdictions in your state?

1. Yes
2. No
9. (No answer)

*IF HAVE AUTOMATED SYSTEM, ASK:*

Q29a. During election season, how often are updates made to the system?

1. In real time / as changes are made
2. Daily
3. Weekly
4. Monthly
5. Only at the end of the canvass/audit period
6. None of the above
9. (No answer)

*IF HAVE OPERATOR-ANSWERED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q29b. During election season, how often are updates made to the information operators have access to?

1. In real time / as changes are made
2. Daily
3. Weekly
3. Monthly
4. Only at the end of the canvass/audit period
5. None of the above
9. (No answer)

Q30. Over the last year, what where the total costs including administration and personnel costs associated with maintaining and/or updating the information for your phone hotline?

\_\_\_\_ USD  
9999 (No answer)

*ONLY IF HAVE AUTOMATED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q31. Is there a database maintenance charge per record?

1. Yes
2. No
9. (No answer)

*IF CHARGE, ASK:*

Q32. What is the monetary charge per call?

\_\_\_\_ USD  
9999 (No answer)

*IF AUTOMATED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q33a. What advice about information gathering and maintenance would you offer to a jurisdiction such as yours that is setting up a voter hotline?

[open-ended text box]  
9 (No answer)

*IF OPERATOR-ANSWERED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q33b. What advice about the day-to-day operation of a hotline would you offer to a jurisdiction such as yours that is setting up a voter hotline?

[open-ended text box]  
9 (No answer)

*IF AUTOMATED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q34. Does your automated hotline system have the following features to track the....

	Yes	No	(No answer)
wait time of calls	1	2	9
duration of calls	1	2	9
the type or category of call			
disposition or end result of each call	1	2	9
call volume			

Q35. Do you currently track the type of call or information being sought after by the caller (for example, polling place lookup or absentee ballot status, etc.)?  
1. Yes, track manually  
2. Yes, track through automated system  
3. No, don't currently track  
9 (No answer)

Q36. What is the average wait time for calls made to your hotline? (just your best guess is fine)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
98 not enough information to answer  
99 (no answer)

Q37. What is the average duration of calls made to your hotline once a caller is connected (not including hold time)? (just your best guess is fine)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
98 not enough information to answer  
99 (no answer)

Q38. What is the number of incoming calls that can be received at one time?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
98 not enough information to answer  
99 (no answer)

Q39. Historically, what is the largest number of calls received in one day?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
98 not enough information to answer  
99 (no answer)

*IF AUTOMATED HOTLINE, ASK:*

Q40. Are callers able to exit the automated portion of the phone information hotline and speak to an operator or is your hotline 100% automated?  
1. able to speak to an operator  
2. 100% automated  
9. (No answer)

*ONLY IF ABLE TO SPEAK TO OPERATOR:*

For the next few questions, we'd like you to think about the <u>people who operate or staff</u> the hotline and take calls.
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*IF ABLE TO SPEAK TO OPERATOR, ASK:*

Q41. Does your office handle in-house the day-to-day operation and staffing of the operators who take hotline calls or do you outsource some, most or all of the staffing of the hotline staff to another company or organization?  
1. Handle day-to-day operation and staffing completely in-house  
2. Outsourced some of the day-to-day operation and staffing  
3. Outsourced most of the day-to-day operation and staffing  
4. Outsourced all of the day-to-day operation and staffing  
9. (No answer)

*IF OUTSOURCE SOME, MOST or ALL, ASK:*

Q42. How would you rate your satisfaction with this service provider?  
1. Very satisfied  
2. Somewhat satisfied  
3. Somewhat unsatisfied  
4. Very unsatisfied  
9. (No answer)

IF ABLE TO SPEAK TO OPERATOR, ASK:

Q43. During peak times or seasons what is the average number of full-time and part time hotline operators?

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ full-time
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ part-time
- 9998 Not sure
- 9999 (No answer)

IF ABLE TO SPEAK TO OPERATOR, ASK:

Q44. During non-peak peak times or seasons what is the average number of full-time and part time hotline operators?

- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ full-time
- \_\_\_ \_\_\_ part-time
- 9998 Not sure
- 9999 (No answer)

IF ABLE TO SPEAK TO OPERATOR, ASK:

Q45. For each of the following, please indicate whether or not this method is used to train hotline operators:

	Used	Not used	Not sure / Not enough information to answer	(No answer)
Classroom lectures	1	2	8	9
Role playing / simulated calls	1	2	8	9
Computer-based tutorial	1	2	8	9
Shadowing experienced operator or person	1	2	8	9

IF ABLE TO SPEAK TO OPERATOR, ASK:

Q46. Are all operators, regardless of their level of experience, trained before each major election cycle?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 9. (No answer)

IF ABLE TO SPEAK TO OPERATOR, ASK:

Q47. Switching topics, what, if any, systematic effort does your office undertake to monitor the hotline for accuracy, security, or other critical performance variables?

	Yes	No	Not sure / Not enough information to answer	(No answer)
Periodic listening in on calls	1	2	8	9
Tracking of complaints	1	2	8	9
Other (please describe)	1	2	8	9

Q48. When a voter calls the hotline seeking information such as voting location, absentee ballot request, change of address, do you have a standardized procedure for verifying the caller's identity such as verifying social security number, date of birth, etc?

- 1. Yes, always
- 2. Yes, sometimes
- 3. No
- 9. (No answer)

Q49. Which, if any of the following security measures do you employ?

	Yes	No	Not enough information to answer	(No answer)
The data utilized by the hotline(s) is secured behind a firewall.	1	2	3	9
Operators need a secure password to access data.	1	2	3	9

Q50. Thinking now about possible outreach efforts, what methods, if any, do you use to inform voters about your voter hotline?

	Use	Don't use	(No answer)
Advertise number in election mailing/sample ballot	1	2	9
Publicize number on office's or jurisdiction's website	1	2	9
Ads in local or community paper	1	2	9
Phone company operator	1	2	9
Handouts or posters at polling place	1	2	9
Advertise through outreach partners			

Q51. Last year, approximately how much did you spend specifically on publicizing your office's hotline(s)?  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ USD  
 9999 (No answer)

We have just a few more questions to help us better understand the types of election offices taking part in our survey.

Q52. How many full-time and part-time staff work in your election office?  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ full-time  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ part-time  
 9999 (No answer)

Q53. Approximately how many voters are in your jurisdiction?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ [7-digit numeric response]  
 9 (No answer)

Q54. How would you describe the area of your jurisdiction?  
 1. Mainly rural  
 2. Mainly urban  
 3. Mainly suburban  
 4. Mixed  
 9. (No answer)

Q55. About what percentage of the voters in your area would you say are well-off, about average, and poorer than average? (just your best guess is fine)  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % well-off  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % about average  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ % poorer than average  
 9999 (No answer)

Q56. About what percentage of the voters in your jurisdiction have a limited English proficiency? (just your best guess is fine)  
 \_\_\_ \_\_\_ %  
 9999 (No answer)

Q57. If your office required by federal law to publish election materials in a language other than English?  
1. Yes  
2. No  
9. (No answer)

Q58. The EAC would like to collect the phone numbers of election-related phone information hotlines to publish on the EAC's website. If you consent to have your hotline number(s) given to the EAC, please provide the numbers below. By doing so, the EAC will know your office has responded to the survey, but they will NOT have the ability to connect your answers to you or your office. Your answers to all other questions will be combined with the responses of others who have taken the survey and will be reported in the aggregate to get an overall picture.

Voter hotlines:

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Pollworker hotlines

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Q59. Would you be willing to speak with one of our project researchers about your office's experience with phone information hotlines?  
1. Yes  
2. No  
9. (No answer)

*IF WILLING TO BE CONTACTED, ASK:*

Q60. Please fill in your contact information below:  
First name:  
Last name:  
Phone number:  
Email:

\*This information collection is required for the EAC to meet its statutory requirements under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002 (42 U.S.C. 15301). Respondent's obligation to reply to this information collection is voluntary; respondents include election offices in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. This information will be made publicly available on the EAC website at [www.eac.gov](http://www.eac.gov). According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is OMB Control No. pending (expires: to be determined). The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 30 minutes per response. Comments regarding this burden estimate should be sent to the Program Manager – 2007 Study of the Voter Hotlines, U.S. Election Assistance Commission, 1225 New York Ave, NW, Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005.