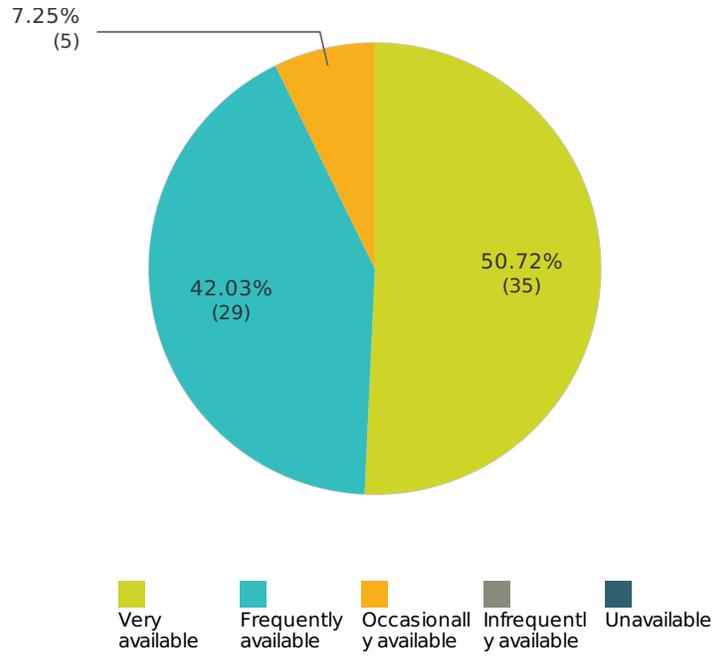


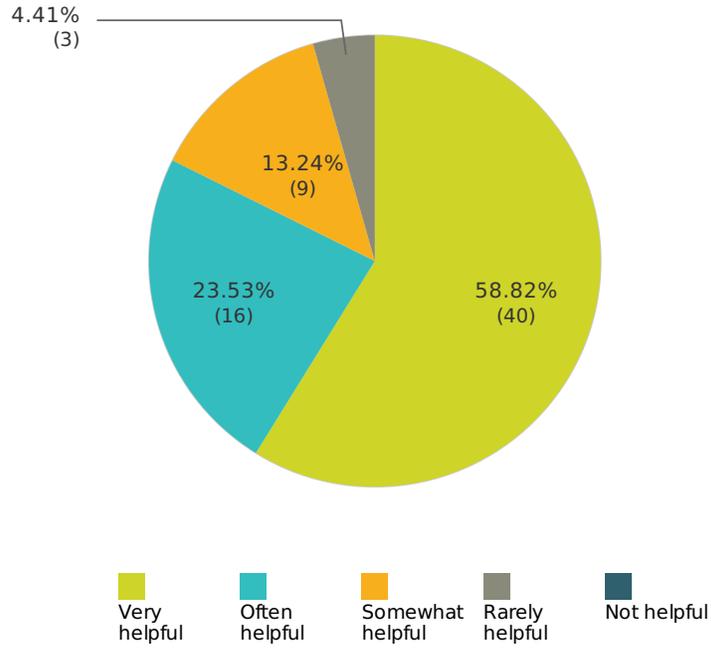
### Q1 To what extent was DLS staff available to provide assistance, answer questions, etc. on the tax rate setting process?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 1



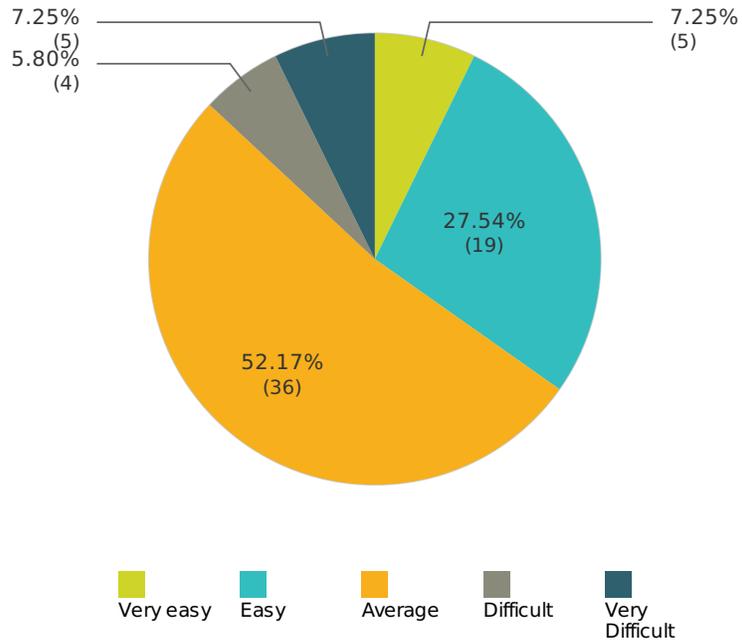
## Q2 Did you feel you had adequate guidance from DLS in the event that guidance was sought?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 2



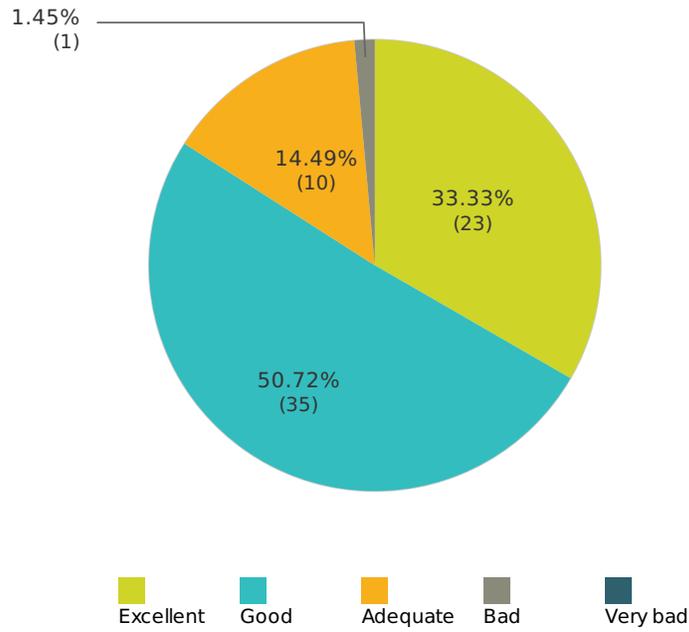
### Q3 How did you perceive your portion of the process of setting your community's tax rate?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 1



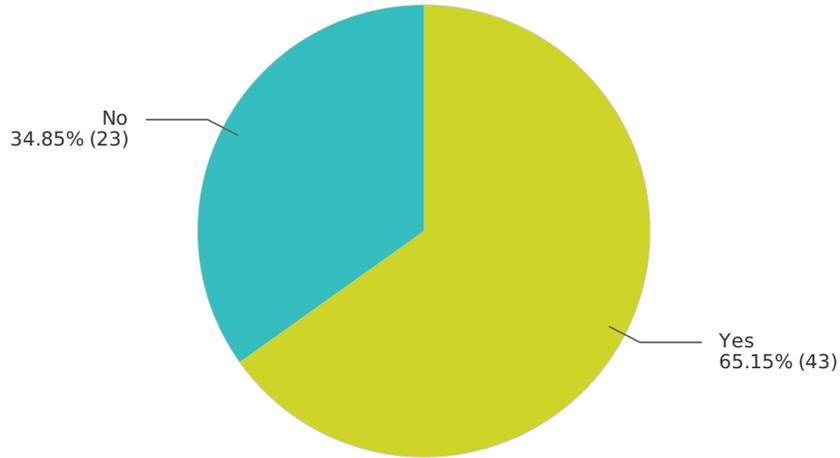
## Q4 What was your experience with Gateway?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 1



## Q5 Do you believe there are improvements that can be made to ease your role in the property valuation certification/interim year adjustment and new growth review processes?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 4



Answer Choices	Responses	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>65.15%</b>	43
<b>No</b>	<b>34.85%</b>	23
Total		66

If yes, please list them. ( 38 )

#	If yes, please list them.	Date
1	Not so much with new growth review as much as certification... I believe there are no perfect processes, so there are always improvements that can be made. A better understanding of the what is expected was the main issue I saw with the 2013 revaluation process. There was a lot of confusion about the narratives and the sketching of condos that slowed the process dramatically.	2/28/2013 1:42 PM
2	If a community currently does not have a split tax rate, and is not proposing one; the classification hearing seems unnecessary; particularly in an interim year.	2/11/2013 6:02 AM
3	Shorten the time between our submissions to BLA and BLA's _final_ acceptance of same.	2/7/2013 11:28 AM
4	1. Allow for the trimming of residuals in the res/comm analysis. 2. Due to the down market many properties are going for very low prices. Some properties are listed on MLS well below market/assessed value. It's more difficult to eliminate these sales during a reval year.	2/7/2013 10:34 AM
5	Stream line the process.	2/7/2013 7:19 AM
6	Although the DOR has a good working relationship with the MAAO, I believe there needs to be improved communication and cooperation between the parties regarding the certification process and procedures.	2/7/2013 5:55 AM

DLS Assessors Survey

#	If yes, please list them.	Date
7	I would like the Town of Natick to be assigned to one field advisor that will be able to complete the process without changing, adding and transferring Natick's information to several others. Natick has been told since 2007 that we are an unusual community or that we are different or difficult. In the last three certification years Natick's submission has not been rejected or problems did not have to be corrected. We are partners in the process and we value the DOR assistance, but we have continually been shifted to many advisors and have not had confirmation as to why our community is difficult or needs to be given to others. This year we submitted September 5, 2012 and received final certification on December 10, 2012 this is 96 days. During the process the DLS staff took our calls but were unable to answer our questions about what was happening.	2/6/2013 11:38 AM
8	It seems as though the people in Boston are trying to over manage the whole process. They try to control and micro manage too many aspects of the process and don't trust the judgment and actions of the local assessors. You have to prove why you have made certain reasonable adjustments to a property/s with a sale/s when it is local knowledge and situations that are contributing factors in the reasoning behind it. Land residuals are out of control. They have different factors each year that they seem to put too much emphasis on that slow down the process until there is such a backlog that they end up having to disregard them anyway in order for towns to get their bills out on time. It seems to happen every reval and interim year and has only gotten worse instead of better. This puts unnecessary stress and burden on not only the Local DLS representatives and Assessors, but also the other members of the finance team. Treasurers and Collectors are held hostage by the process and wait on pins and needles to finally get the chance to send out their bills. Many times having to work after hours and weekends to meet their deadlines when they had plenty of time get things done if there was no hold up. The Selectboards and Town Managers have to schedule and attend special meetings when things finally get approved. This also forces towns to give the public less time to view the disclosure of new values.	2/6/2013 7:39 AM
9	New reports, narratives or extra steps added to the certification or interim year process should not be implemented until all communities have had the ability to attend a seminar/class on the new requirement. If this isn't possible, then all towns should be sent a package in advance instructing them on how to complete the new step complete with sample spreadsheets.	2/6/2013 7:37 AM
10	Assessors should be included in any discussions related to their certification. Too often a last minute change is ordered yet the local advisor is the only one to whom an appeal/question/defense can be presented to. Those making the ultimate decisions seem to be behind some "Wizard of Oz" like curtain issuing demands and then making themselves unavailable.	2/6/2013 7:24 AM
11	It seems that your field personell are over booked and that the time between vists could be shorten with more field personell.	2/6/2013 6:28 AM
12	The community met the work plan deadlines for certification however the advisor was so swamped with other communitites that our community wasn't even looked at for over 6 weeks.	2/6/2013 6:18 AM
13	We should know well in advance exactly what is expected of us to complete our responsibilities. We should not be finding out at the last minute that there are new requirements. It took 7 weeks after submitting my data to get preliminary certification which was putting our community behind schedule for setting a tax rate. I always try to be one of the first communities to submit so I do not get held up. At one time it did not take more than 2 weeks for preliminary certification. This is what is creating bottle necks in getting towns certified. When we submit the beginning of August, we should not be waiting until the end of September to get preliminary certification.	2/6/2013 6:17 AM
14	This year we submitted in September but were not certified until late November- As result it cause a duplication of effort on both parts (town/DOR staff) to pick up where we had left off. I understand that often times communities don't have everything ready but for those that do it would be helpful if the staff could stay when they initially come out and get everything done that can be done before moving out to another town.	2/6/2013 6:04 AM
15	As this is "anonymous" as it says at end...Which I don't believe for a minute... Been doing this stuff since revals started. <b>No limits to yearly changing DOR</b> requirements, with or without adequate advanced notification of importance of requirement, that without compliance hinder tax rate settings... Assessing community wide knowledge that begging " no money to..." "inability to..." lets communities off the hook with DOR requirements. Communitys that strain & struggle to comply are never let go of again and all new requirements are also enforced. Lack of understanding by DOR that we do not work for them & that they make our lives holy hell with our employers and taxpayers when we enforce their requirements to meet their statistics. Limited or no questions of DOR reps at seminars. Definetly no arguement even thought of...Suggest anonymous questions after handouts, during and at end of sessions. And on & on...	2/6/2013 5:59 AM
16	Have DLS explain what they want so we don't feel like we have to hire the software providers to get through the recertification process.	2/6/2013 5:31 AM

DLS Assessors Survey

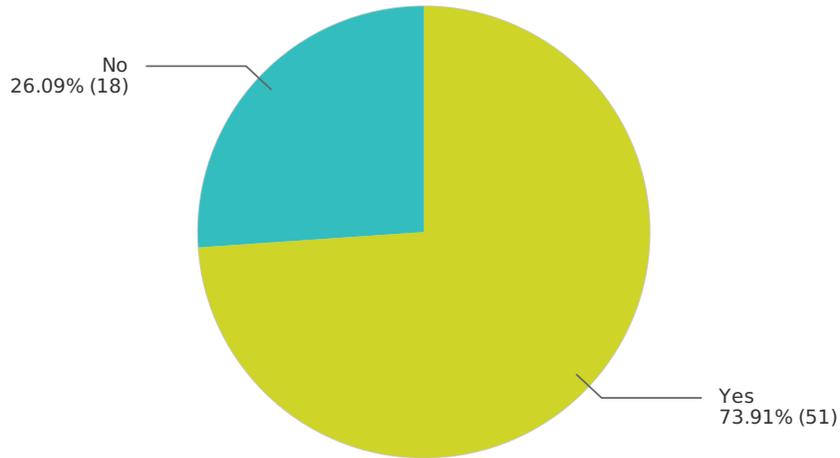
#	If yes, please list them.	Date
17	speaking with the certification advisor as early as possible for verification of what is needed and wanted for recertification	2/6/2013 5:20 AM
18	I do not believe the required narrative is of much value to us and /or the DOR. Also, I believe the DOR has to let the Assessors deal with issues that are unique to their municipalities with guidance from the DOR rather than try to form fit everything into predetermine guidelines that may not be applicable across the board.	2/6/2013 5:08 AM
19	The new growth tutorial is helpful. Even so I struggle with how to accurately report growth.	2/6/2013 5:07 AM
20	The interim year adjustment and the new growth processes both work very well and I have no issues with the way they are administered. The certification process, however, is a different story. I believe that the new guidelines promulgated in "Certification Standards" are too stringent and the quest for uniformity in assessments, when taken to this extreme, has led to unrealistic expectations in terms of COD's for residential stratifications and very unrealistic expectations in terms of Income Property Residuals. The 9-12 form is a useful tool to see if communities are performing adequately, but should not be the only measure of how a community is doing in terms of assessment level and uniformity. As a commercial appraiser with many years of experience, the thing you realize quickly is that the market is irrational and does not fit neatly into a box, no matter how hard you push it. I think the standards need to be loosened and let assessor's do more assessing. In my opinion, the DOR should have more of an oversight role to make sure that no large problems exist in the community and be less involved in the minutiae of the valuation process. As it stands now, the DOR is doing the assessing for communities by overly stringent standards that allow very little flexibility. I have to say that the Certification Advisers do a great job navigating the difficult waters between community concerns and the strictures handed down in the Certification Standards booklet. But the process as it now stands creates ill will between communities and the DOR in certification years.	2/5/2013 12:53 PM
21	Better response from DOR in evaluating our appraisal and stop requesting superflous information. Do not ask us to value property at a valuation that is not supportable before the ATB which requires us to add monies to our Overlay account and raise the tax rate,	2/5/2013 11:25 AM
22	The interim year adjustment and new growth review process last year was expeditious and easily done through Gateway. The triennial certification process however, in recent years has become an arduous and complicated process, universally frustrating assessors and apparantly local DOR advisors as well. I have seen the certification process, from initial DOR review to final certification go from a matter of a week or so to now what can be several months. The process somehow should be streamlined rather than adding more excessive and pointless requirements each year.	2/4/2013 10:23 AM
23	Stop micromanaging and having totally unrealistic stats requirements. COD of 10 is the requirement but you need 5 or under to meet all the multitude of stratifications. This is ivory tower and cannot be achieved in the real world as buyers and sellers do not act consistantly and are motivated by factors not quanifiable in a CAMA system. Also we appraise as if every house were available for sale but only a small percentage are. That is why IAAO suggests 20 COD, not 5!	2/4/2013 6:58 AM
24	Issues, unless very serious infractions, should be slated to improve for the following year, Although and interim year, a review of the issue brought up can then be addressed - having given the remedy expected by the advisor.	2/4/2013 4:27 AM
25	the new growth review process is working well, and i can sugest no improvement there. the interim year adjustment process has been good. however the vluation certification Triannual, is extreamly stressful!!! from the point of view that i had my submittsion package ready (we do everything in-house) at the preagreed date. The DOR certification advisor come out and picks it up. i stress for two months then get a few questions, then a month later get preliminary certification. i the mean time i have to worry about the timeliness for the classification hearing, fall town meeting, and getting the tax rate approved and bills mailed by Jan 1st. i have never been late with a tax billing but the uncertaintee of the timely certification is the most unpleasant part of my job. perhaps if the certification reviewers auditors and the field reps were required to send a weekly status report i would be more comfortable.	2/1/2013 1:08 PM
26	The length of time from submitting your data in gateway to hearing from DOR is unpredictable. Some towns are looked at right away and others have to wait weeks? If each city or town is looked at based on date of submission this would not happen.	2/1/2013 6:13 AM
27	Our company provider does an excellent job for us on explaining these aspects onhe adjustments and new growth process.	1/31/2013 3:43 PM
28	Make sure any changes to the process be made BEFORE the certification cycle begins. Also information relating to changes be forwarded to assessors via email.	1/31/2013 11:59 AM
29	Personal Property program needs improvement; I (the clerk) would like to see step by step checklist for each process, recert, tax rate, pro forma. Also, each advisor wants something different, can't this be standardized.	1/31/2013 9:40 AM

DLS Assessors Survey

#	If yes, please list them.	Date
30	SEE BELOW	1/31/2013 9:30 AM
31	Proposed directives should allow for more lead time to implement in certification years. In order to adequately address any new DLS requirements, I believe any new requirements to the certification process should be required in the following Fiscal year which would allow adequate time for the assessors to implement the changes. It is an unreasonable expectation in some cases to implement the new directives from the time of the workshop to the time of certification.	1/31/2013 9:11 AM
32	1) DLS should provide a standard checklist of data submissions and itemized reporting of categorized information that will be asked for during recertification. Up to now, some of the requests seem to be random or afterthoughts produced by Boston staff. I had many such questions still coming after receiving preliminary certification. 2) When a statistical analysis approach is submitted by me that the Boston staff does not agree with, it has been extremely difficult in the last 7 years to get any kind of example or information from them about what would be acceptable and instead have been left to redo the approach multiple ways, eating up time, and to submit them hoping it would suffice and often just being told "that won't do" and "try again". That isn't helpful in the least and has created a "dictatorial" impression of DLS staff attitudes in Boston as well as dragging out the certification timeline for everybody.	1/31/2013 7:33 AM
33	Regular updates from our field representatives on the status of certification from the time we submit until final certification.	1/31/2013 7:21 AM
34	For now the process has worked well for our city.	1/31/2013 7:14 AM
35	I feel like the minimum guidelines are not informative enough. The unwritten yearly rules slow the process of getting our values approved. I also think the approval process starts out slow and only gets going in November, maybe we can get towns approved sooner.	1/31/2013 7:09 AM
36	It appears that policies and requirements are put into place by certain individuals without consideration of the feedback received from the Assessor community as it relates to the equitable valuation and mass appraisal process. The feedback of the Assessing community, many of whom have been doing this a long time, is ignored if it does not agree with the individual who wields the power. There should exist a review board that includes assessors, DLS staff, and others who review and must vote to approve any new requirements prior to implementation to ensure that new requirements have and achieve a goal towards equity and valuation removing this power from individuals.	1/31/2013 6:58 AM
37	How would you be easing our role in the property valuation certification? Since I became an assessor 14 years ago - you have only increased the demands on us - interm valuations every year, etc. The statical baseline that we have to adhere to is very difficult for small communities with little or no sales in vacant land. Also an issue is that Farmland in the Pioneer Valley is worth alot more than the Farmland Advisory Commission thinks it is and although it states that you may change your valuation providing that you have documentation supporting your numbers - the DLS doesn't really mean that. It is more of a case of use our numbers or don't get certified.	1/31/2013 6:50 AM
38	Continued dialogue in a timely fashion between BLA & Assessors of upcoming guideline changes and the cost to implement if warranted.	1/31/2013 6:42 AM

## Q6 Did you attend one of the certification preparation workshops held last winter?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
<b>Yes</b>	<b>73.91%</b>	51
<b>No</b>	<b>26.09%</b>	18
Total		69

If yes, was the workshop helpful to you in the property valuation certification process? ( 45 )

#	If yes, was the workshop helpful to you in the property valuation certification process?	Date
1	Yes... although it seems that the same issues are reviewed every year. It might be helpful if the workshops were more interactive, with assessors being allowed to make suggestions of ways to improve the process.	2/28/2013 1:42 PM
2	Yes	2/7/2013 11:28 AM
3	yes	2/7/2013 10:34 AM
4	Needed to have power point and hand outs.	2/7/2013 7:19 AM
5	Yes, it provided insight and updates to the certification process.	2/7/2013 5:55 AM
6	The workshop was helpful because we knew what was needed and therefore had the information in the format requested and available and was able to produce support information to any an all concerns brought forward by the DLS staff. We made available our contracted support person for all meetings scheduled by the DLS staff.	2/6/2013 11:38 AM
7	It was helpful to have the reasoning behind some of the things that are asked for.	2/6/2013 7:39 AM
8	Our vendor attended.	2/6/2013 7:28 AM
9	Yes, in many, many ways these workshops are helpful and I think that staff does a good job presenting the materials and requirements. However, there are occasions when certain things arise during the actual certification process that hadn't been discussed before (and sometimes not budgeted for) that ultimately cause delays.	2/6/2013 7:24 AM
10	It was very helpful	2/6/2013 7:10 AM

11	It did not detail what the cert. team would be looking for. It is always annoying not knowing what	2/6/2013 6:28 AM
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DLS Assessors Survey

#	It did not detail what the cert. team would be looking for. It is always nerve racking not knowing what they want. Was the workshop helpful to you in the process of valuation and certification process?	Date
12	It usually is good to know what is expected. Once we attend that workshop and know what the DOR is looking for, there should not be surprises as we get into September.	2/6/2013 6:17 AM
13	yes	2/6/2013 6:07 AM
14	Yes, but they never cover "any & all changing aspects" that hinder us at last phases when not notified beforehand... Usually find out from another Assessor that is having trouble with DOR requirements before us.	2/6/2013 5:59 AM
15	Yes	2/6/2013 5:52 AM
16	yes	2/6/2013 5:48 AM
17	somewhat	2/6/2013 5:31 AM
18	MOre detailed information on the requirements for certification	2/6/2013 5:20 AM
19	It was worthwhile.	2/6/2013 5:07 AM
20	Yes and no. I thought the workshop was helpful in preparing me for my certification, but I also thought that it was "told" to us in a manner that did not allow any room for discussion or comment. As I noted above, I do not think that tighter standards necessarily lead to better assessment practice. I think the standards could be loosened, and more time, effort and money could be put into helping assessors solve the big issues in their community, and let the smaller issues be handled by the assessors on the local level.	2/5/2013 12:53 PM
21	Some what !	2/5/2013 7:37 AM
22	Somewhat, however the management seemed disinclined to accept seriously suggestions from outside their group. I would characterize the environment as rather adversarial and one sided.	2/4/2013 10:23 AM
23	Yes This was my first certification. So being new I believe I will gain more in future years	2/4/2013 9:15 AM
24	No, just explaind how bad the assessors were and that the staff were going to require even more documantation and explanations. It is an adversarial atmosphere.	2/4/2013 6:58 AM
25	It is good to know of changes in advance.	2/4/2013 5:36 AM
26	It should be filmed and able to review at any time during that year.	2/4/2013 4:27 AM
27	i did not need to hear MassGIS for an hour. .	2/1/2013 1:08 PM
28	Have many times in the past and they are very helpful.	2/1/2013 6:13 AM
29	I try to attend every workshop I can so that I can be better prepared for what is upcoming and to help train us in the proper way for being better prepared for completing on time.	1/31/2013 3:43 PM
30	Yes	1/31/2013 10:02 AM
31	YES.. HELPS POINT OUT THE"GOTCHAS" BEFORE WE BEGIN	1/31/2013 9:44 AM
32	Assessor did attend.	1/31/2013 9:40 AM
33	Yes, as it provides guidelines as to what information BLA is looking for and why. In non reval years, I will often ask my BLA advisor, or a community undergoing a triennial recert what additional information or changes are required.	1/31/2013 9:30 AM
34	Somewhat helpful. However, issues that impeded a timely certification of values were not discussed at either the Boston workshop nor the Cape workshop in June. ALL changes should be discussed and explained at the workshop.	1/31/2013 9:11 AM
35	No, not really. For example, there was no mention in the workshop that condominiums were required to be sketched. A change in policy of this magnitude should have been conveyed far in advance so that this additional work could have been budgeted for when obtaining funding for revaluations services.	1/31/2013 8:01 AM
36	Yes	1/31/2013 7:36 AM
37	Somewhat. At least they seem to be trying to communicate in the last year or so. Up until then, we got very little pre-certification information, other than what the field representatives were able to provide, which has often been changed by Boston staff with no explantion or warning during the process.	1/31/2013 7:33 AM

38	Yes, helpful in understanding what the DLS is looking for	1/31/2013 7:14 AM
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DLS Assessors Survey

#	If yes, was the workshop helpful to you in the property valuation certification process?	Date
39	I found that the meeting did not go into the detail that I expected.	1/31/2013 7:09 AM
40	Received notes from another assessor; workshop has limited value in that after 15 years in the field, the Reval was the worst I had ever experienced. Advisor seemed intimidated by Boston and also had too many towns. For example, data quality survey should be done early on so that if major changes are needed, analysis can be done. Our data quality survey was not done until after we had already finalized values.	1/31/2013 7:08 AM
41	I do not understand why you insist on scheduling property valuation workshops that are over an hour away from the smaller communities in Western Mass and not closer to us. Why could one of them be held in Northampton/Sunderland/Greenfield Area. If the workshops are going to continue to be Springfield - in one of the more "unsavory" areas at that - you won't find us there. Drive two plus hours round trip to attend a one hour or so workshop doesn't make much sense. Nevermind the unpleasantness of the location.	1/31/2013 6:50 AM
42	Yes. It prepares Assessors to deal with any new changes in guidelines in a proper time frame.	1/31/2013 6:42 AM
43	Somewhat	1/31/2013 6:34 AM
44	Yes, I came more prepared for my revaluation vendor and the State. Process went smoothly.	1/31/2013 6:30 AM
45	very helpful - networking with others was a key	1/31/2013 6:26 AM

## Q7 We value your feedback. Please use the space below to provide comments and suggestions.

Answered: 42 Skipped: 28

#	Responses	Date
1	As referenced in question 5, the biggest issue I had with the revaluation was how long it took to receive preliminary certification after I submitted my data. It appears that my information sat in Boston for a very long time before anyone even looked at it. There seems to be a bottleneck there for some reason, with several layers of review - i.e., we spend a lot of time with our field people going over everything and answering all of their questions, then it appears that the same exact review happens again when the data gets to Boston. Just my opinion, but you have a fabulous staff of field advisors, and I think it would be helpful if they had more authority instead of one or two people having to approve everything that the field people have already deemed adequate.	2/28/2013 1:42 PM
2	The Gateway system could be more user friendly in the calculate/save area. When you save, it should return you to the last entry you put in, not back at the top again.	2/11/2013 6:02 AM
3	Relying on cost tables is not a good approach in certifying property values. I've never seen a prospective purchaser bring a marshall and swift handbook to an open house or closing. The uniformity of data such as grades/condition/housing style is much more important.	2/7/2013 10:34 AM
4	If possible bring on more staff to excel the process.	2/7/2013 7:19 AM
5	Kudos to Grace Sandell. She is a true professional. Grace provided valuable feedback. Her knowledge of the property valuation certification process allowed our revaluation program to proceed smoothly. Grace returned telephone calls promptly. She communicated her concerns immediately whenever they occurred throughout the certification process and she responded to all inquiries in a timely fashion.	2/7/2013 5:55 AM
6	We respect the certification process and the need to conduct complete analysis. Natick has always produced all the documentation requested and is requesting in turn similar follow thru. I believe that the submission should be worked on through the entire process as submitted. If a community does not have the support or documents requested then the DLS staff need to proceed to the next community. A nominal time to produce the requested information should be allowed. This certification year the Town of Natick submitted all requested information in an early time period, but it was known by me and confirmed with DLS staff that other communities were completed before Natick even after a later submission date. The certification process is a huge undertaking and requires many hours of analysis by both the community and the DOR, but a need for constant feedback and resolve between both entities is a necessity. Mutual respect for each other's job and time frame for completion must be the priority for both departments.	2/6/2013 11:38 AM
7	our work was done and it sat around on your staff's desk for weeks. Next time we will bird-dog it.	2/6/2013 10:58 AM
8	Use more common sense and trust the integrity and ethics of the people that are at the local level.	2/6/2013 7:39 AM
9	As a new employee (the Assessors Clerk), I have to admit that I was a bit nervous about the whole process of this, but I must say, it went better than what I had anticipated. There were a few hiccups, but that was a separate issue that delayed our process and made everything happen later than usual (not anything to do with state). The Reps that I worked with (Joseph Barbieri & Terry Williams) were always available to answer my questions and made me feel comfortable about asking the questions.	2/6/2013 7:33 AM
10	Better communication. Too often it is what "they" want and that is the end of discussion. The opinions of the assessors are treated as irrelevant.	2/6/2013 7:24 AM
11	The Board of Assessors in our towns have to explain to our taxpayers how after many years of discounts that were applied for to their land for easements, way, unrecorded topo problems had to be removed because we did not have current sales proving that the discounts were warranted. The logic behind assessment seems to be lost.	2/6/2013 6:28 AM

DLS Assessors Survey

#	Responses	Date
12	I have found over the years that the DOR has become an entity that has made our jobs much harder and more costly to the Town. The need to hire outside vendors to help us get through the process is costly but necessary. One new requirement is that this next certification round is requiring all communities to sketch condo's. This is going to be very costly to my community along with creating disproportionate assessments until this project is completed. I also question the cost of adhering to this requirement when we have to defend this decision at the Appellate Tax Board because the square footage we will be assessing will not agree with the master deed square footage of the unit. We currently have all the necessary data to assess these units properly and have been doing so for years. Because they found a town or 2 that was not doing their job correctly they impose requirements on all of us that is not necessary. When the process we had in place was correct, worked perfectly and now we are asked to change it completely with a cost effect to the town is mind boggling to say the least. There needs to be better oversight into what they are requiring of the communities and the cost impact when they put new requirements into place. It appears to me that they have forgotten their role is to assist us to get through the process, not put road blocks in front of us. They are suppose to be advisers not dictators. This is only one example of many. I unfortunately am not signing this survey because we all know there are repercussions to our community from the DOR if they know who is speaking against them. I am hoping this survey will put things in another direction and make us once again a team working together to do things right for the communities and taxpayers that we serve. I really do appreciate being able to give a slight view on the difficulty of getting certified.	2/6/2013 6:17 AM
13	Wasn't there a meeting with DOR heads & MAOA reps last year? No one I knew had any input to our reps or heard of any results from the DOR. Sorry...	2/6/2013 5:59 AM
14	If changes are proposed in either the data collection or statistical requirements, they should be announced far enough in advance so that a community up for certification can budget for it.	2/6/2013 5:52 AM
15	I don't know why you want the condo's drawn, we use the recorded deeds that are more legally binding than what we do. We specifically went through all of our condominium documentation to make sure that our square footage was correct prior to the recert year anyway.	2/6/2013 5:31 AM
16	Yes, DLS Certification Standards are among the most stringent in the nation. When meet your statistics and then are told we must change something arbitrarily that is unfair and unnecessary. That can endanger a communities ability to set their tax rate due to the delays in getting values certified. I also believe that there should also be more local judgment and leeway. Assessors are the people who have live in these communities and know them best. Finally this survey is anonymous and I am grateful because in talking to Assessors many fear repercussion from the DLS if they make waves.	2/6/2013 5:11 AM
17	The staff at the DLS really worked with the Town of Sudbury to ensure a timely certification for FY 13. We truly appreciate the effort given the transition in Town staffing this year. Thanks to you all. Cynthia Gerry Assistant Assessor Town of Sudbury	2/6/2013 5:07 AM
18	I think the biggest problem with the whole certification process is that a very antagonistic relationship has been created between local communities and the DOR. The certification process has turned into an ordeal to be survived rather than a cooperative experience that helps the communities make reasonable adjustments to their property values. I truly believe that most communities and/or their consultants feel that they are running the gauntlet during certification years. It doesn't have to be that way. Something needs to change to make it a more cooperative and less adversarial process. On a more positive note, I believe that the narrative explanation of the communities valuation methodology can be a very useful tool in understanding the way a specific community is handling the assessment process. I think less emphasis should be placed on the form report and more emphasis should go into fleshing out assessment practice through the community narrative.	2/5/2013 12:53 PM
19	Field reviewers should have more input as to certification instead of Boston.	2/5/2013 7:37 AM
20	We are assisted in our tax prep by our consultants (Paul S. Kapinos and Assoc) so our part of the process is eased already, but the DLS reps were always very accessible and very helpful whenever we had questions or needed to interact with them. After a couple of years using it, we are getting the hang of Gateway and it seems to have streamlined the whole process very nicely,	2/4/2013 4:27 PM
21	The certification process should be simplified and made more like the interim year adjustment. Recent focus on unrealistic statistical requirements has not been productive; especially with respect to land residual analysis. Sample size and resulting confidence levels have not adequately been considered or accounted for in new statistical requirements. Local DOR advisors seem overwhelmed by the volume of data they must process and unable to answer questions without checking with superiors. I believe the local advisors should be given more responsibility in the approval process.	2/4/2013 10:23 AM
22	I found everyone I dealt with to be extremely helpful and available. Thank you	2/4/2013 9:15 AM

DLS Assessors Survey

#	Responses	Date
23	Not having supporting data does not mean that the schedules or adjustments are wrong. Nothing to prove right also means nothing to prove wrong. The burden of proof rests on the taxpayer, not the assessor and to the DOR. The DLS should help, not hinder the assessors. The role should be in checking to see if the assessors have applied their rules and schedules consistently BY LOOKING AT PROPERTY IN THE FIELD, not by analyzing spreadsheets everywhich way. I feel the field people do a very good job but are saddled with absurd requirements by the staticians who hand down edicts and requests without regard for reality or partiality. Gateway locks up frequently.	2/4/2013 6:58 AM
24	I do believe that filming the certification workshop will end a lot if issues as to what was or was not stated and to be able to review again for the helpful suggestions to solve some of the problems faced that year with certification. Many times there are great suggestions in handling situations at the workshop.	2/4/2013 4:27 AM
25	i would like a DOR manual that guides for factoring of land values of residual land analysis that would allow for a lower sales to assessment ratio. i believe the Vendors has a process that has recieved the DOR blessing, please make it available to all towns.	2/1/2013 1:08 PM
26	The precertification should count for the classification hearing. We are asked to juggle so many things and it is getting more difficult to comply. Seletmen have their meeting schedules set up way in advance and to try and coordinate when you will reiceve certification, setting up a meeting and notify a weekly paper it can be tricky. Maybe this process could be looked at and made a little more managable.	2/1/2013 6:13 AM
27	As a newer Assesor with very little experience in a certification, our company provider proved more than adequate and whenever I was stumped with an in house question, our field rep was always available and willing to give advice and help when needed.	1/31/2013 3:43 PM
28	There was an issue with condo sketches that our rep advised us of early in the process. Our multi unit condo buildings do not have sketches. We have the square feet entered from the as-builts of each unit. This caused a lot of confusion and would have been inconvenient to stop and try to sketch all the units without much warning. Thankfully our town only had approximately 150 units that would have needed to be corrected, but larger communities would have had difficulty meeting that requirement on such short notice. Unfortunately we did not have the staff to attend any of the workshops offered, so if the condo sketch issue was brought up, we were not aware of it until after the certification process began. The actual tax rate setting went well, but the valuation certification process seems to be getting more difficult as the years go by. The new growth process is better than in the past, and Walter is always very helpful in the process.	1/31/2013 11:59 AM
29	We had our information into BLS the second week of August and did not receive certification of values until November 30. This put us into the end of December to have the recap accepted. We were on time, but our town kept getting put aside to deal with others who had gotten their values in later, but who do not issue preliminary bills. We should have had our values certified by the end of September, so that we could conduct public disclosure and get the recap in without Christmas and New Year's looming in the near future.	1/31/2013 10:02 AM
30	STAFF VERY PROFESSIONAL, FRIENDLY AND HELPFUL. PARTNERS IN THE PROCESS. HAVE FOUND THAT ATTENTION TO THE SUMMARY OF YEAR TO YEAR CHANGES IN GATEWAY, AND SENDING A DETAILED NARRATIVE WITH THE NEW GROWTH, SPEED THINGS ALONG AND REDUCES UNNECESSARY WORK ON OUR PART AND THAT OF DLS.	1/31/2013 9:44 AM
31	These questions answered by both Assessor and Assessor's Clerk. The clerk is the one using the programs. She is going through her first recert process and has not ever set a tax rate. Unfortunately, there is no other staff in the office and there was no overlap with previous person in position (assistant assessor). We do find the DLS staff extremely helpful (mostly we deal with Don Reynolds or Linda Bradley who are extremely patient and helpful), however other issues that are not DLS issues -- limited amount of staff in our office (only one 20 hour clerk) and resources, which greatly effect the ease of doing the job. We do find the distance we need to travel to some trainings difficult. Perhaps, Bridgewater State, or some place like that in SE Mass would be greatly appreciated.. Would also be helpful if DLS had more travel time to come out for teaching/helping.	1/31/2013 9:40 AM
32	I have been an Assistant Assessor since 1984 starting off in the days when Ed Collins and Jane Malme were active. I have always felt comfortable working with BLA and BOA and welcomed their suggestions and review and have never felt that the assessors were "the enemy" until the last few years which I think is unfortunate, because I do not believe that is the intent of the BLA. Preliminary certification used to take a few weeks. Now it a minimum of 6 to 8 weeks which makes it difficult for Assessors to complete the process to issue bills in timely fashion. I think the BLA needs to review the level of documentation it requires and it's certification review process.	1/31/2013 9:30 AM

DLS Assessors Survey

#	Responses	Date
33	It's unfortunate, but I believe the entire process needs to be reevaluated. As a former appraiser, with over 17 years as an assessor, I have never seen so much division between the BLA, and the local assessors (and even the vendors for that matter) The field advisors are caught in the middle, and are not the problem. Half the time they are not sure what Boston expects of them. The problem is in Boston. I feel that there is way too much "us vs them". There should be collaboration, not division. I believe that experienced assessors should be left to do their jobs, instead of DOR looking for problems. The assessors are afraid to complain for fear of retribution and having their certification held up. As an example, there is too much emphasis on residual land analysis, especially when there are adequate land sales. Residual land analysis assumes that everything with the building is 100% accurate, including depreciation. I believe that there may be too much worry about job security and job justification with BLA that drives certain certification standards, bogging down the local assessor with unnecessary busy work. I understand that there should be oversight in general terms, but the nit picking needs to stop after the basic statistics meet the certification standards. Each community should be rated, ie: if there is a good track record, and there are no changes in the office to personnel and software, the assessor should be left to do his or her job with less oversight than with a community that has a new assessor or software conversion. My plea is to take action to streamline the process. Certification should not take weeks and weeks (often times months). I believe there will be similar feedback to this one. I think that there needs to be changes by either moving people out of key positions or change the philosophy of these people by letting the local assessor do their jobs. Lastly, thank you for providing us the opportunity to convey these messages in an anonymous manner.	1/31/2013 8:01 AM
34	With the help of Sandra Brusco our advisor and Terry Williams our revaluation went exceptionally well this year.	1/31/2013 7:47 AM
35	Under Frank Rossi, the DLS was actually trying to ASSIST the local assessors. Once the management changed in 2007, that helpful approach not only disappeared, the Boston staff actually seemed to become hostile, and sometimes vengeful, when asked for explanations or process guidance. The whole blow-up over the land valuation approach in 2007 was a perfect example of that change. No upfront information about the changed requirements was disseminated and, when we asked about it, were told just to "DO IT" or you won't get certified. And after hearing that, we still received no guidance about HOW to do it to Boston's satisfaction. I must stress that I have had no reason to specifically complain about my field representative, Grace Sandell, who has done her best through all this, but they are obviously being cowed by the Boston staff into keeping their mouths shut and following orders under threat of potential reprisal. I would guess that the veteran representatives don't like this situation any better than the local assessors do but do want to keep their jobs.	1/31/2013 7:33 AM
36	Our Assessor left last June and a new one has not yet been hired, so it was a particularly difficult time for the office staff and the Board, but the staff at DLS was very understanding and very helpful. Their helpfulness and professionalism could not have been any better.	1/31/2013 7:24 AM
37	Are the vendors given more or different information at their annual meeting than the local assessors receive when they attend one of the certification preparation workshops?	1/31/2013 7:21 AM
38	There always seems to be something that comes up at certification time that was not discussed at the workshop. Overall for the scope of the reval project we think the DLS does a good job monitoring it. This state has come a long way in the past 20 years in developing the reval process.	1/31/2013 7:14 AM
39	I would like more Community specific BLA Certification Directives with more input from our Field Reps.	1/31/2013 7:09 AM
40	More Bureau of Local Assessment advisors so that they can spend more time with assessors. Give them opportunity to visit towns more than once or twice before final. I find dealing with them by e-mail extremely difficult--face to face with conversation is far more efficient from my standpoint. Make sure data quality studies are done early. Make sure assessors know what Boston is "picking on" this year preferably a year ahead of Reval. Make Gateway more user friendly--it's an awesome tool but is unwieldy to use.	1/31/2013 7:08 AM
41	I was disappointed with the how our revaluation was handled this year. We were ready and had to wait on our advisor for preliminary certification and again for final certification. Once the final certification was approved - the actual setting of the tax rate was done in a fast and efficient manner.	1/31/2013 6:50 AM
42	The DLS reps are always there to assist with recertification questions and willing to work out problems should they arise.	1/31/2013 6:30 AM