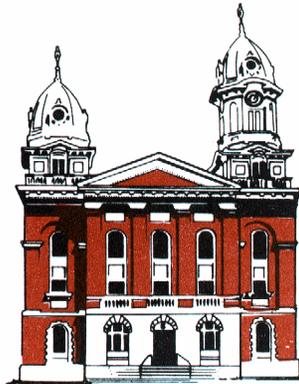


# *County of Venango Plan*

*To comply with the  
Help America Vote Act*



*October 15, 2004*

*Board of County Commissioners*

*Susan M. Smith, Chairperson*

*Larry E. Horn*

*Gary R. Hutchison*

## Table of Contents

Introduction	Pages 3 - 4
County Plan Overview	Pages 4 – 5
Elements of the County Plan	
County Plan Element 1 <i>Proposed use of grant funds</i>	Pages 6 – 9
County Plan Element 2 <i>Monitoring and reporting of performance of goals</i>	Page 10
County Plan Element 3 <i>Voter Education, Election Official and Poll worker training</i>	Pages 11 - 12
County Plan Element 4 <i>Complying with Voting System Guidelines and processes</i>	Page 13
County Plan Element 5 <i>Establishment of an Election Fund</i>	Page 13 - 14
County Plan Element 6 <i>Proposed Budget for activities and programs</i>	Page 15
County Plan Element 7 <i>Maintenance of Expenditures</i>	Page 16
County Plan Element 8 <i>Adopted Performance goals and measures</i>	Pages 17 – 20
County Plan Element 9 <i>Complaint Procedure</i>	Pages 21 – 22
County Plan Element 10 <i>Effect of receipt of federal funds</i>	Pages 23
County Plan Element 11 <i>Proposed ongoing management of County Plan</i>	Page 24
County Plan Element 12 <i>Process for making changes to the County Plan</i>	Pages 24 – 25
County Plan Element 13 <i>Process used to develop the County Plan</i>	Page 25
County Plan Element 14	Page 26

## **Introduction**

In October of 2002, the United States Congress enacted the Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) in an effort to correct the problems encountered in the State of Florida during the November 2000 Presidential Election. This Act is applicable to all Federal elections held in the United States and requires or authorizes the following:

1. Create standards for all voting systems used by the States.
2. Require voting systems to be accessible to individuals with disabilities and those using alternative languages.
3. Require the use of provisional ballots.
4. Implement identification requirements for those who vote for the first time after registering by mail.
5. Require States to implement a statewide voter registration database.
6. Provide for a board to establish standards for what constitutes a vote.
7. Require States to conduct educational programs for voters and election officials.

HAVA authorized the creation of the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to administer the Act and provides for four Federal funding programs to accomplish the various requirements of the Act. Title I of HAVA, administered principally through the General Services Administration (GSA), provides for payments to States for election administration improvements (Section 101) and replacement of punch cards and lever voting machines (Section 102). Title II (Section 251) of HAVA, administered by the EAC, is to assist the State in meeting the new uniform and nondiscriminatory voting system, election technology and election administration requirements imposed by Title III of HAVA. Funding administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Section 261 of HAVA) is for the purposes of assuring access for individuals with disabilities.

As a result, the Department of State was required to submit to the EAC a comprehensive State Plan that outlined the course of election reform efforts in Pennsylvania detailing how the Commonwealth intends to carry out the requirements of the Help America Vote Act. The Secretary of the Commonwealth appointed a 15 member board that included a cross section of representatives from the following sectors throughout Pennsylvania: county election directors; chairpersons of political parties; representatives from the disabled veterans organization and the blind and visually impaired organization; and two individuals from the public at large assist in the development of this State Plan. Their directive was to develop a Plan that complied with the requirements of HAVA that modernized Pennsylvania's voting systems; guaranteed all registered electors the opportunity to vote; and ensured that voting systems are easy to use and provide equal opportunities for all citizens of the Commonwealth in their goal to provide the most fair and equitable election system possible.

The State Plan that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania filed with the EAC mandates that each county submit a County Plan to the Department of State describing the programs and activities the county intends to undertake using a grant of Federal funds that the Commonwealth has received as its requirements payments under Title II of HAVA. The County of Venango submits this plan in response to that mandate.

### **County Plan Overview**

Venango County's Plan will specifically describe the following:

- (1) How Venango County will use its grants from the requirement payments to meet the requirements of Title III of HAVA and carry out other activities to improve the administration of elections.
- (2) How Venango County will monitor and report upon its performance, consistent with specified performance goals and measures.
- (3) How Venango County will provide for programs for voter education, election official education and training, and poll worker training that will assist the county in meeting our requirements of Title III of HAVA.
- (4) How Venango County will adopt and follow voting system guidelines and processes that are consistent with the requirements of section 301 of HAVA.
- (5) How Venango County will establish an election fund for the purposes of administering the county's federally funded activities, including information on fund management.
- (6) Venango County's proposed budget for activities to achieve compliance with Title III of HAVA, to include a best estimate of: a) the costs of the activities required to carry out the requirements of Title III of HAVA; b) the portion of the requirements payment grants that will be used to meet those requirements; and (c) the portion of the requirements payment grants that will be used to carry out other activities.
- (7) In the use of the requirements payment grant, how Venango County will maintain the expenditures of the county for activities funded by the payment at a level that is not less than the level of such expenditures maintained by the county for the fiscal year ending prior to November 2000.
- (8) How Venango County will adopt performance goals and measures that will be used by the county to determine its success in carrying out the plan, descriptions of the criteria the county will use to measure performance the process used to develop such criteria; and a description of which official or employee is to be held responsible for ensuring that each performance goal is met.

- (9) A description of Venango County's policies and procedures for responding to complaints made under section 402 of HAVA and Section 1206.2 of the Pennsylvania Election Code, and adhering to requirements that may be imposed upon the county as a result of the disposition of such complaints.
- (10) How the receipt of Federal funds for election administration improvements and the replacement of the punch card voting machine will affect the activities proposed to be carried out under the County Plan, including the amount of funds that is estimated to be available for such activities.
- (11) How Venango County will conduct ongoing management of the County Plan.
- (12) When changes are made to the County Plan, how the alterations to the Plan reflect changes from the existing Plan and how the County succeeded in carrying out the County Plan before making alterations.
- (13) What process Venango County used in developing the County Plan.
- (14) Assurance that Venango County's Plan is in accordance with the applicable state and federal statutes governing voter registration and election administration.

# ELEMENTS OF THE COUNTY PLAN

## County Plan Element 1

*How Venango County will use its grants from the requirement payments to meet the requirements of Title III of HAVA and carry out other activities to improve the administration of elections.*

---

The requirements mandated by Title III of HAVA are divided into three sections: (1) Section 301 which relates to voting system standards; (2) Section 302 which relates to provisional voting and voting information requirements; and (3) Section 303 which relates to computerized statewide voter registration list requirements and requires for voters who register by mail.

### Section 301

Section 301 (d) of HAVA requires that all voting systems used in elections for Federal office meet certain requirements, as outlined below:

- a. The system must permit the voter to verify privately and independently the votes selected before casting a ballot and to privately and independently be able to change or correct a ballot before it is cast, to include receiving a replacement ballot.
- b. The system must notify the voter of an over-vote.
- c. The system must notify the voter of the effect of over-voting (which is that their vote for that particular contest will not be counted).
- d. The system must provide the voter with the opportunity to correct the ballot, if the voter has over-voted.

All voting systems must be accessible to voters with disabilities, including voters with visual impairment, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation, including privacy and independence, as for other voters.

All voting systems must meet all requirements of alternative language access of Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as well as other provisions of the Voting Rights Act to the extent applicable.

All voting systems must (1) produce a permanent paper record with manual audit capacity which must be available as an official record for purposes of a recount; (2) allow the voter to correct any error before the permanent paper record is produced; and (3) meet FEC guidelines (section 3.2.1) for voting system error rates, which are rates that are attributable only to system errors and not the voter's error.

All voting systems must have a uniform and nondiscriminatory standard that define what constitutes a vote and what will be counted as a vote.

*Planned Actions:*

The County of Venango intends to comply with the above requirements by replacing the punch card voting system that is currently being used in all 49 election districts with a single HAVA compliant precinct count electronic voting system that can be used by all voters, including individuals with disabilities.

Various county officials, including the County Board of Elections, the Director of Elections, and the Voter Registration and Election staff have had the opportunity to observe demonstrations of electronic voting systems that are being proposed to be in compliance with Title III of HAVA. These systems have yet to be certified by the EAC and the Commonwealth however Venango County has proceeded with receiving quotes for new electronic voting systems from various vendors in an effort to be in a position to choose which system will be the most suitable for Venango County electors and purchase it within a timely fashion.

In addition to purchasing a voting system that will accessible to voters with disabilities, in March of 2004, the County of Venango conducted a survey of all polling places to determine their accessibility under the guidelines issued by the Department of State under the Voter Accessibility Act. We involved the Board of Elections, a maintenance staff person, people from the community, which included a visually challenged individual that used a wheelchair, to help us conduct this survey. The results of this survey determined that all 49 polling places are handicapped accessible. However, handicapped parking signs were required at twenty-three of the polling locations. The County purchased and posted those signs in time for the 2004 Primary Election.

The County of Venango is not required to provide voting systems or ballots in alternative languages because there is no single language minority that is 5% or more of the voting age population residing within the county. Currently, only Philadelphia County is mandated to comply with these requirements as stated in Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. Section 1973aa-1a). However, should an elector arrive at a polling place that does not read or speak English, poll workers are instructed to allow the elector to bring someone of their choosing with them in the voting booth that can provide assistance in casting their vote, as long as the required paperwork is completed prior to the assistance being given.

In 2003, the Department of State provided the County of Venango with Standards of what constitutes a vote when ballots are cast using the punch card system. We continue to use these guidelines when applicable.

## Section 302

Section 302 of HAVA required all states to implement provisional voting by January 1, 2004. Section 1210 of the Pennsylvania Election Code was then amended in December of 2002 to conform to Section 302 of HAVA. Section 302 mandates provides that an individual, who declares that they are a registered voter in the jurisdiction in which the individual desires to vote in an election for Federal office but the name of the individual does not appear on the official list of eligible voters in the election district, or an election official asserts that the individual is not eligible to vote, the individual must be permitted to cast a provisional ballot.

Section 1210 provides for an individual who claims to be properly registered and eligible to vote at the election district but who names does not appear on the general register and whose registration cannot be determined by the poll workers or county election officials be permitted to cast a provisional ballot. In addition, individuals who cannot produce identification as required, or who seek to vote pursuant to a judicial order, are permitted only to vote by provisional ballot.

### *Planned Actions:*

The County of Venango provided information through the news media regarding the purpose of and the procedures to be followed to cast a provisional ballot in the 2004 Primary Election. This same information was provided to the poll workers as part of their training program on provisional ballots, which included the review of forms to be completed and the postings and related literature that are required to be available at each polling location.

These procedures will again be reviewed with the poll workers at the upcoming trainings to ensure their understanding of and conformance with law as they administer the election process for the 2004 Presidential Election. In preparation for that, the County of Venango will:

- a) Order the forms and postings that have been prescribed by the Secretary of the Commonwealth regarding the procedures and instructions on how to cast a provisional ballot.
- b) Order special ballots, designated as “provisional ballots” in lots of 25 for each of the 49 voting districts
- c) Conduct poll worker trainings on October 12<sup>th</sup> and October 14<sup>th</sup> again reviewing the procedures to be followed and alerting the poll workers of the designated green color for all information that pertains to voting by provisional ballot.
- d) Provide voter education regarding provisional voting at public meetings, at the local schools and universities; at public forums that are coordinated with the League of Women Voter’s local chapter; and throughout the community with the assistance of the news media.

## Section 303

Section 303 of HAVA requires each State to implement, in a uniform and nondiscriminatory manner, a single, uniform, official, centralized, interactive computerized statewide voter registration list. This list must be defined, maintained and administered at the State level and contain the name and registration information of every legally registered voter in the State and assign a unique identifier to each legally registered voter in the State. This section also requires that State election systems include provisions to ensure that voter registration records are accurate and are updated regularly. The system must have the ability to remove registrants who are ineligible to vote from the official list of eligible voters that is consistent with the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 and include safeguards to ensure that eligible voters are not removed in error from the official list by reason of a failure to vote. The State has complied with this section by implementing the Statewide Uniform Registry of Electors (SURE) system in January of 2002.

### *Planned Action*

The SURE System has been in operation in the County of Venango since March 12, 2004. We currently have two winters in the Voter Registration Office that are used to process voter registration applications that are received through the mail or in person. Voter Registration staff have received training on the use of the SURE system and successfully made it through the 2004 Primary Election using the voter registration information processed through and stored on this statewide system.

The County will continue to work with Accenture (the vendor) and the Department of State in our efforts to promote efficiency in the processing of voter registration records.

## County Plan Element 2

*How Venango County will monitor and report upon its performance, consistent with specified performance goals and measures adopted under County Plan Element 8.*

---

The County of Venango is committed to complying with the Help America Vote Act, the Pennsylvania Election Code, and with all other applicable laws relating to all aspects of elections and election administration. We understand the importance of uniformity and consistency that the Commonwealth is striving to achieve so that every eligible elector is provided the opportunity to cast their vote and that their vote will be accurately recorded and counted.

### *Planned Action:*

The Director of Elections, with the concurrence of the Election Board, has established a listing of tasks to be accomplished in order to achieve each of these goals. Each task has an established deadline date by which it is to be accomplished, which will serve as an effective tool to ensure that we are progressing as planned. The Director of Elections will be responsible for the overall implementation of the Plan with the authority to make assignments to staff as is appropriate.

The Venango County Election Board holds monthly public meetings, at which election and voter registration business is discussed and acted upon, if required. We intend to add to the monthly agenda, a progress report on the County Plan that will give us an on-going opportunity to review the status of the tasks to be accomplished and discuss any issues of concern regarding our ability to meet the goals as outlined in the Plan.

In addition, the County will submit reports to the Department of State regarding the activities we've conducted with the requirements payment grants that will include a listing of expenditures made with respect to each category; the number and type of articles of voting equipment we've acquired; and an analysis and description of the activities we've conducted and how such activities conform to the State Plan and the County Plan.

### County Plan Element 3

*How Venango County will provide for programs for voter education, election official education and training, and poll worker training that will assist the county in meeting the requirements of Title III of HAVA.*

---

*Planned Actions:*

Poll workers include the Judge of Elections; the Majority Inspector; the Minority Inspector; and the two Clerks

The County of Venango, with the assistance of the Department of State, will develop training programs for all of the 245 poll workers regarding the correct procedures to be used at the polling place.

Poll worker training sessions are already a routine procedure in Venango County that we schedule prior to all Primary Elections. The Director of Elections and her Administrative Assistant conduct these trainings. During calendar year 2004, Venango County did and will conduct two poll worker training sessions – one that was held in March and another that will be held in October. We conduct two training sessions at different times at two different locations to accommodate the poll worker's schedules to ensure that all of the poll workers can attend. For the 2004 Primary, training sessions were held on April 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm and on April 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. For the upcoming 2004 Presidential Election, training sessions will be held on October 12<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm and on October 14<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm. Once the Department of State establishes a training program for poll workers that provides a consistent and uniform procedure to be followed that ensures compliance with HAVA and all other pertinent election-related laws, we will revise our training program to conform with their program.

The training sessions include a detailed overview of:

- a) Delivery of Election Supplies and Ballots
- b) When and how the Polling Place should be set up
- c) Procedures for assigning and carrying out work duties
- d) HAVA procedures
  - i. Provisional Ballots
  - ii. Voter Identification Requirements
  - iii. Complaint Procedures
- e) Voter Assistance
- f) Absentee Ballots
- g) Watchers at polls
- h) Electioneering at polls
- i) Proper documentation and completion of various forms
- j) Write-In procedures
- k) Procedure for closing polls
- l) Tallying ballots
- m) Securing ballots for return to counting center

County election officials include the Board of Elections which is usually comprised of the County Commissioners and the Voter Registrars. This gives them the opportunity to get a better understanding of what the poll workers' responsibilities are, as well as receive a refresher on the new rules and regulations imposed by HAVA that directly impact the administration of the election process. In addition, election officials are provided with hands-on training on the set-up and repair of the vote recorder and booths. Because Venango County uses the punch card system, the Election Board must serve as the on-call assistance team that goes out to the polling places to repair machines and/or replace ballot pages within the vote recorder.

Voter education includes the general public, with special emphasis being placed on the Republican and Democratic Party officials; organizations that represent the disabled community; schools and universities; and the local chapter of the League of Women Voters.

The poll worker training is publicly advertised. We encourage the general public to attend so that they too are informed about the procedures to be followed at the polling place and what they are required to do in order to be eligible to vote. In addition, we publish the proclamations that list the positions to appear on the ballot; the polling place locations; the date and time of the upcoming election and any questions that may appear on the ballot. Voter alerts are published in the local newspapers informing the general public about the date and time of the public testing of the election equipment; the phone number for the TDY system; the availability of alternative ballots; and provide contact name and number for the county election office for any additional questions the general public may have regarding the election process. In addition, we have a county web page at [www.co.venango.pa.us](http://www.co.venango.pa.us) that lists the Election/Voter Registration Office staff, contact numbers and e-mails so that the general public has a convenient way to obtain information from our offices.

We intend to hold a public forum at one of the school auditoriums within the County, to display the various electronic voting machines that are being proposed to replace the punch card voting system. We will invite three vendors to bring their equipment and present a short presentation on the use of their machines. We will work with the news media to promote this forum and encourage public attendance. The League of Women Voters has already been contacted and has agreed to assist the County Election Office in presenting this forum. We will also actively involve the various political party officials and community groups in this process to ensure wide participation and buy-in to a newly proposed voting system. These efforts will be publicized in the newspapers, the radio stations and on the local television stations.

These educational processes will include printing of flyers and posters regarding the various election/voter registrations procedures and regulations so that the voter has a hard copy they can take with them for future reference. Printed information will also be valuable when our office sets up voter registration booths at community events and provides educational forums to schools and universities regarding voter education.

## **County Plan Element 4**

*How Venango County will adopt and follow voting system guidelines and processes that are consistent with the requirements of section 301 of HAVA.*

---

*Planned Actions:*

All voting systems used in Pennsylvania must be examined and approved by the Secretary of the Commonwealth before they can be purchased by the County for use in any elections occurring after January 1, 2006 . In accordance with section 222(e) of HAVA, the EAC requires that the current Federal guidelines in effect are those adopted by the Federal Election Commission in 2002. Therefore, any voting system deemed to be HAVA compliant must meet the 2002 voting system standards.

To date, no electronic voting systems have been approved by the Secretary of the Commonwealth. Consequently, until these are approved, the County of Venango cannot purchase a voting system that is HAVA compliant. It is our intention to continue to conduct research and hold public forums on the availability and use of various electronic systems, so that we can make a well-informed decision as to which voting machine will be most suitable for the electors of Venango County.

## **County Plan Element 5**

*How Venango County will establish an election fund for the purposes of administering the county's federally funded activities, including information on fund management.*

---

The State Plan mandates that the County establish a separate Election Fund, in the treasury of the County government, to be used exclusively to carry out the activities for which the requirements payments have been made to the County. The County will deposit these grant moneys into a separate interest bearing account, known as the County Election Fund, under the County's name in a bank in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The County Election Fund shall include:

1. Amounts appropriated or otherwise made available by the County for carrying out activities for which the requirements payment grant has been awarded by the Department of State.
2. The requirements payment grants received by the Department of State.
3. Other amounts as might be provided for such purposes to the County or otherwise appropriated for such purposes under law.
4. Interest earned on deposits of the fund.

The Election Fund shall be managed in accordance with County Policy that requires the submission of requisitions for all purchases that are then converted to purchase orders for approval by the Department Manager and the Board of Commissioners. The purchase orders are forwarded to vendors who in turn fill the orders and submit an invoice for payment. Upon receipt of the items purchased, the Department Manager releases the purchase order that indicating to the accounts payable department that a check can now be issued from the fund. This process provides a good recordkeeping system that will be instrumental in preparing the reports that the Department of State is requiring to document the expenditure of funds and at a minimum will include:

1. A list of expenditures made with respect to each category of activities described in section 251(b) of HAVA (42 U.S.C. section 15401(b)).
2. The number and type of articles of voting equipment obtained with requirements payment grant funds.
3. An analysis and description of the activities funded with requirements payment grant funds to meet the requirements of Title III of HAVA and a description of how such activities conform to the State Plans and the County Plan.

The County shall maintain records with respect to the grant of HAVA funds that are consistent with sound accounting principles, including records that fully disclose the amount and disposition of the receipt of funds, the total cost of the project or undertaking for which the funds are to be used, and the amount of that portion of the cost of the project or undertaking supplied by other resources.

The County shall fully cooperate with all audits that might be conducted by Federal, State or local officials or agencies that have the authority to conduct such audits, in a manner consistent with section 902(b) of HAVA (42 U.S.C. Section 15542(b)) and all other applicable laws, as well as in a manner consistent with the applicable rules, policies and directives of all Federal, State and local agencies having jurisdiction and authority with respect to the subject matter.

## County Plan Element 6

*Venango County's proposed budget for activities to achieve compliance with Title III of HAVA, to include a best estimate of: a) the costs of the activities required to carry out the requirements of Title III of HAVA; b) the portion of the requirements payment grants that will be used to meet those requirements; and (c) the portion of the requirements payment grants that will be used to carry out other activities.*

---

The County of Venango plans to replace the punch card voting system currently being used at all 49 polling places, for a total of 205 machines. This includes the computer that is used to program the ballot; the printer; the 205 voting booths, the 205 vote recorders, and the central tabulation machine. We have received a written quote from Unilect that includes the purchase of the electronic voting units, the voting booths, poll control units, freedom voter units (for ADA vision impaired voters) the central election system for tabulating the votes; the required software, installation of the system and training of poll workers and election staff. It is our intention to purchase this equipment in April of 2005.

<b>Funding</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Amount</b>
HAVA Section 102	Purchase of 115 Touch-Screen Voter Units	\$281,750
HAVA Section 102	Purchase of 115 Suitcase-Style Privacy Voting Booths	\$ 28,750
HAVA Section 102	Purchase of 52 Freedom Voter Units Add-ons (ADA Vision Impaired Adaptation) to include 3 Election Day back-up units.	\$ 26,000
HAVA Section 102	Purchase of 1 Central Election System, including workstations, 2 infoPackERs, software, modem, cabling, installation, training and warranty	\$ 35,000
HAVA Section 102	Purchase of 52 Poll Control Units, to include 3 Election Day back-up units.	\$ 20,500
HAVA Section 101		\$ 90,000
County Funds		\$ 35,100
HAVA Section 101	Educating voters concerning voting procedures, voting technology and voting rights.	\$ 5,000
HAVA Section 101	Training related expenses for poll workers regarding the new voting system	\$1,453.44

## County Plan Element 7

*In the use of the requirements payment grant, how Venango County will maintain the expenditures of the county for activities funded by the payment at a level that is not less than the level of such expenditures maintained by the county for the fiscal year ending prior to November 2000.*

---

The County understands that we are responsible for maintaining its pre-November 2000 expenditure effort for the activities that it will use the requirements payments to comply with HAVA. The County operates on a calendar year. The actual expenses for calendar year 1999 for voter registration and election administration were \$113,243.00 and for calendar year 2000 the actual expenses were \$106,995. Venango County's budget for calendar year 2004 has escalated to \$156,552.00 in preparation for the increased activities and expenses that we anticipate will occur during a Presidential Election.

Consequently, the County of Venango plans to maintain our level of funding for election and voter registration expenses during calendar year 2000 going forward, and we intend to use the requirements payments specifically for activities that help us comply with HAVA. In addition, the County will undoubtedly assume some additional costs during this process as the estimated cost just for the purpose of purchasing new voting system equipment exceeds the requirements payments that we will receive from the Department of State.

## County Plan Element 8

*How Venango County will adopt performance goals and measures that will be used by the county to determine its success in carrying out the plan, descriptions of the criteria the county will use to measure performance the process used to develop such criteria; and a description of which official or employee is to be held responsible for ensuring that each performance goal is met.*

---

### *Planned Action:*

The Venango County Board of Elections will adopt performance goals and measures to be used to monitor the County's progress and success in carrying out the activities outlined in the County Plan. In an effort to comply with HAVA, we have established four major goals to be achieved using the requirements payments, which include:

- (1) Presenting the proposed voting system to the electors in Venango County;
- (2) Purchasing a new electronic voting system;
- (2) Training election officials, election staff, and poll workers, on the HAVA and the operation of the new voting system; and
- (3) Educating the general public on the HAVA and how to use the new voting system.

We have established the following performance goals:

### **Goal #1: To inform the community on the newly proposed electronic voting systems**

Objective #1            To schedule a public forum, with at least three different voting machine vendors to present their system to election officials, poll workers, political party officials and voters.

Date to achieve:        December 17, 2004

Objective #2            To publish literature on the new voting systems and HAVA procedures to be placed in public places, such as the libraries, county, city, and other municipal facilities, medical facilities, universities, etc.

Date to achieve:        January 10, 2005

Objective #3            To work with the local newspapers, radio stations and local television stations to prepare the publicity regarding the public form.

Date to achieve:        January 15, 2005

Objective #4            To coordinate efforts with the League of Women Voters and other community groups to showcase the new equipment.

Date to achieve: January 17, 2005

Objective #5 To hold the public forum.

Date to achieve: February 10, 2005

*Responsible Officials:* The Director of Elections, with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant and the cooperation of the Board of Elections.

**Goal#2: To purchase a new electronic voting system for casting and counting votes**

Objective #1 To obtain quotes from various voting machine vendors for consideration by the County Board of Elections.

Date to achieve: September 1, 2004

Objective #2 To meet with the Property Manager to review the storage and transportation needs for the new voting equipment.

Date to achieve: February 16, 2005

Objective #3 To prepare the requisition and purchase order for acquiring the electronic voting system, once we receive notification by the Department of State that the electronic voting machines we are considering to purchase have been certified by the EAC as well as by the Department's standards.

Date to achieve: March 10, 2005

Objective #4 To receive the new voting equipment that will consist of:

- 115 Touch Screen Voter Units
- 115 Voting Booths
- 52 ADA Vision Impaired Adaptations
- 8 Poll Control Units
- 1 Central Election System

Date to achieve: April 15, 2005

*Responsible Officials:* The Director of Elections, with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant and the cooperation of the Board of Elections.

**Goal #3: To conduct training programs with the county election officials, staff and poll workers regarding the use of the new electronic voting machines and review HAVA procedures.**

Objective #1 To hold meetings with county election officials and staff to revise the Election Day procedures that will change as a result of the new system.

Date to achieve: July 15, 2005

Objective #2 To hold trainings on the operation of the new electronic voting machine equipment, to be conducted by the Vendor, with county election officials and staff.

Date to achieve: July 29, 2005

Objective #3 To hold trainings on the operation of the new electronic voting machine equipment, to be conducted by the Vendor, with the 245 poll workers, to be conducted over a three day period to ensure attendance by all.

Date to achieve: August 31, 2005

*Responsible Officials:* The Director of Elections, with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant and the cooperation of the Board of Elections.

**Goal #4: To educate the political party officials and the general public on the use of the new voting system as well as update them on HAVA procedures.**

Objective #1 If necessary, to publish additional literature on the new voting systems and HAVA procedures to be placed in public places, such as the libraries, county, city, and other municipal facilities, medical facilities, universities, etc.

Date to achieve: September 1, 2005

Objective #2 To work with the local television station in making a video on how to operate the new voting system that can be aired as their schedule permits with an emphasis on time slots for airing to occur more frequently directly preceding Election Day.

Date to achieve: September 30, 2005

Objective #3 To hold four public forums throughout the community (in the northern, southern, eastern, and western part of the County) in an effort to educate the general public on the use of the new voting machines.

Date to achieve: October 1, 2005

Objective #4

To keep a voting unit on display at the County Election/Voter Registration Office in an effort to provide demonstrations, as needed, beginning September 1, 2005.

Date to achieve: November 4, 2005

*Responsible Officials:* The Director of Elections, with the assistance of the Administrative Assistant and the cooperation of the Board of Elections.

## County Plan Element 9

*A description of Venango County's policies and procedures for responding to complaints made under section 402 of HAVA and Section 1206.2 of the Pennsylvania Election Code, and adhering to requirements that may be imposed upon the county as a result of the disposition of such complaints.*

---

### *Planned Action:*

Under these procedures, any person who believes that there is a violation of any provision of Title III – including a violation that has occurred, is occurring, or is about to occur - may file a complaint to the Department of State.

Complaint forms, with instructions, are available from the Department of State, including through its web site, as well as from the County Election Office located on the second floor of the Courthouse Annex. We also provide these forms in the supply boxes which are provided to poll workers at each polling place on Election Day so that they are readily available to electors.

Any complaint filed under this procedure shall be in writing and notarized, and must be signed and sworn by the person filing the complaint. Said complaint form must be submitted to the County within three business days of its receipt by the Department of State, for a response. The following procedure will then be followed:

1. Upon receipt of the complaint, the Director of Elections will date stamp the formal complaint and provide a copy to each member of the Board of Elections and the County Solicitor.
2. The Director of Elections will schedule a meeting with the Board of Elections and the Solicitor within 5 business days to review, conduct information gathering, and discuss the complaint in an effort to come to a mutual resolution with the complainant.
3. The Director of Elections will contact the complainant to schedule either an informal face-to-face hearing or a phone conversation in an attempt to resolve the issue.
  - a. If a phone conversation is acceptable, a conference call will be scheduled within the next 3 business days between the complainant and the Board of Elections to discuss the issue.
  - b. If a phone conversation is not acceptable, a face-to-face meeting will be scheduled with the next 3-5 business days between the complainant, the Board of Elections and the County Solicitor to discuss the issue.
4. The results of these discussions will be submitted in writing to the Department of State within the 20 day time period as permitted under section 1206.2(b)(2) of the Election Code.

5. If a resolution to the complaint has been reached, the administrative complaint procedure would end at that point.
6. If the resolution to the complaint has not been reached on a local level, the complainant may request an informal hearing through the Department of State, who will be responsible for contacting the County to allow the County Election Board the opportunity to participate in the hearing.
7. The Department of State will then issue a final determination and remedial plan, if necessary, no later than 90 days after the filing of the complaint.
8. The County will adhere to the final determination as issued by the Department of State and the Board of Elections will submit written documentation to the Department to confirm compliance with their determination.

## County Plan Element 10

*How the receipt of Federal funds for election administration improvements and the replacement of the punch card voting machine will affect the activities proposed to be carried out under the County Plan, including the amount of funds that is estimated to be available for such activities.*

---

### *Planned Action:*

The County of Venango has submitted applications to the Department of State in the total amount of \$488,453.44. We plan to use these funds to purchase new electronic voting equipment for the 49 polling places located throughout the County. We received a quote from Unilect in the amount of \$517,100 that will replace the 205 punch card voting units that we currently use.

The receipt of federal funds will help the County financially, by off-setting anticipated expenses that had been submitted as part of the 2005 capital budget in the amount of \$500,000. This will relieve the County of this financial burden and allow us to use these funds for other capital improvement projects that have become critical, such as the much needed major infrastructure renovations to the County Court House. The County will now be responsible for supplementing the costs of the new electronic voting machines for an amount that should not exceed \$30,000.00 which is in addition to the \$200,000 budget that is needed for operations of the Voter Registration/Election Office in the 2005 budget.

The purchase of a new electronic voting system is central to the plans and activities the County Board of Elections is proposing to implement in order to comply with the HAVA. It was determined that keeping the punch card system and purchasing one electronic voting machine for each voting precinct for handicapped voters would not be an efficient course of action for the County to take. As a result, the Board voted unanimously to replace the entire system with electronic voting machines allowing us to operate only one system and improve our efficiency and accuracy of tabulating votes.

Prior to the actual purchase of the machines, the County will conduct on-going public relations campaigns to alert the electors of the County about the proposed voting equipment in an effort to encourage their input and participation in the final selection of the type of electronic voting system the Election Board will acquire. We have planned a public forum to showcase three different election systems that are being considered for use in Venango County. In addition, once the voting equipment is purchased, we will conduct four training sessions throughout the County to demonstrate how the new equipment operates and to allay any fears or apprehensions voters may have in using this equipment in the General Election in 2005.

## County Plan Element 11

*How Venango County will conduct ongoing management of the County Plan.*

---

*Planned Action:*

The County of Venango plans to use its County Plan as the basis for managing the activities necessary for implementation of the requirements of HAVA. The Director of Elections, under the guidance of the County Election Board, is responsible for the continuous management and implementation of the County Plan.

The Director of Elections will be responsible for tracking resource requirements; approving and tracking expenditures of HAVA funds; coordinating decision-making; and ensuring that implementation activities are on track. Voter Registration and Election staff will assist in the implementation of project activities and the reporting of progress to date; in the preparation and distribution of public relations materials and programs; and in the conduct of voter education and poll worker training efforts.

## County Plan Element 12

*When changes are made to the County Plan, how the alterations to the Plan reflect changes from the existing Plan and how the County succeeded in carrying out the County Plan before making alterations.*

---

*Planned Action:*

The County of Venango was not required to have a County Plan in effect prior to this initial plan.

When changes are being proposed to this 2004 County Plan, the County Board of Elections must be given sufficient time to review and approve those changes prior to their implementation. The Director of Elections will be responsible for submitting any proposed changes through a review process that will include:

- Proposed change must be submitted 60 days prior to implementation to the following groups for review and consideration:
  - Republican Party Chairperson for submission to committee members
  - Democratic Party Chairperson for submission to committee members
  - League of Women Voters Local Chapter
  - The County Solicitor
- Responses from those groups must be received by the Director of Elections within 20 days.

- The Director of Elections will then submit the proposed change with the responses to the Board of Elections for their review and consideration within the following 10 days.
- The Board of Elections will submit a draft of their version of the proposed change at the ensuing Board of Elections Meeting to solicit public comment prior to final adoption. A copy of the amended County Plan will be on display at the Voter Registration/Election Office; on the County's Web Page; and at the three public libraries in the County for a period of 10 days to afford the public the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed change.
- The Board of Elections will then take final action at the public meeting immediately following the 10-day public review process.

### **County Plan Element 13**

*What process Venango County used in developing the County Plan.*

---

*Proposed Action:*

The Director of Elections was responsible for developing and writing the County Plan. This was accomplished through input from the County Board of Election, the Voter Registration/Election Staff; and the County Solicitor.

Due to the limited timeframe established for submitting the County Plan, as well as the busy election season in which the Plan had to be developed, public comment is being solicited from various political and community groups on the draft of the County Plan that will be submitted to the Department of State by the October 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

The draft of the County Plan was completed on October 12, 2004, and will be made available to and/or on public display at:

- Republican Party Chairperson for review by committee members
- Democratic Party Chairperson for review by committee members
- League of Women Voters Local Chapter
- The Cooperstown, Franklin, and Oil City Public Libraries
- The Voter Registration/Election Office
- On [www.co.venango.pa.us](http://www.co.venango.pa.us)

Public comment will be accepted by the County Board of Elections for review and consideration until October 18, 2004. The Plan will then be presented at the October 20, 2004 public meeting of the County Board of Elections for final adoption.

## County Plan Element 14

*Assurance that Venango County's Plan is in accordance with the applicable state and federal statutes governing voter registration and election administration.*

---

### *Proposed Action:*

The County of Venango shall maintain its compliance with the following laws:

- (1) The Voting Rights Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. § 1973 *et seq.*).
- (2) The Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (42 U.S.C. § 1973ee *et seq.*).
- (3) The Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (42 U.S.C. § 1973ff *et seq.*).
- (4) The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C. § 1973gg *et seq.*).
- (5) The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12101 *et seq.*).
- (6) The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. § 701 *et seq.*).
- (7) The Pennsylvania Election Code, 25 P.S. § 2600 *et seq.*, and regulations and directives of the Department of State and other relevant authorities relating thereto.
- (8) Title 25 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes and regulations and directives of the Department of State and other relevant authorities relating thereto.
- (9) All other laws regulations, policies, and directives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and its authorized agencies and officials, including the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the Department of State, relating to all aspects of elections and election administration.