Election Day Problem Solving Guide for Election Officials
Rutherford County, TN

Submitted by: Howard H. Penuel, Jr.
Administrator of Elections
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Murfreesboro, TN 37130
THE ELECTION CENTER
2007 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PROGRAM

"ELECTION DAY PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE
FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS"

What Do I Do If...

Submitted by: Howard H. Penuel, Jr.
ELECTION DAY
PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS
“What Do I Do If…”

In order for jurisdictions to conduct elections, volunteers must be recruited and become familiar with how to hold an election prior to each election. Training volunteers from all walks of life, of various ages, with varying degrees of intellect, interests and abilities can indeed be a challenge for the administrator. To support our training and to provide the election official a quick reference guide, we have found that supplying a manual entitled “Election Day Problem Solving Guide for Election Officials” answers many questions and prevents numerous phone calls to the office by the official throughout the course of an election day, from before the polls open to closing of the polls on election night and points in between.

Training the election official every couple of years for a couple of hours to perform flawlessly for a period of up to twelve or more hours under stressful situations is a challenge and also a dream of every jurisdiction in the United States. There is high probability that the election officials will not retain all of the information they were presented during training sessions.

Our county has tried various methods of training volunteers from the community who want to participate in the election process. Using in house staff members, classes are provided to all officials using the read the manual method reserving as much time as necessary at the end of the class for questions. Then we have used the power point slide show with instructions and commentary by the trainer. The most successful method for us has been with the use of a power point slide show covering election material, led by the trainer while the election officials follow along with their material.

This method of instruction allows the election official to refer to the manual, look at the power point slides and hear the words that are being read. We have found this method to be the most successful as far as retaining the information provided. We also found that many of the questions we receive from the precincts on election day were covered during the training process.

Under enormous pressure to set up the polling place, voting machines, and open the polls on time, the election official may overlook a simple action or task. The practice of having a reference manual with quick short answers and instructions has proven successful for solving some problems and situations in our county on election day. The guide lays out some 26 “What Do I Do If” situations with guidance covering such possibilities as: What to do when the media appear, voters name is not on the signature list; and voter leaves electronic voting machine without pressing the cast vote button just to name a few.

The “Problem Solving Guide for the Election Official” manual does not prevent all the phone calls to the office or solve all the numerous problems which surface on the day of the election, but the guide does give the election officials in the trenches a comfort zone or a cushion knowing they have a reference guide available before calling the office.
Rutherford County, Tennessee
Election Day Guide for Election Officials
Page 2

and more importantly, before performing some action which might later come back to haunt the official and the administrator. The Guide is provided to all election day officials with additional copies provided in the Election Day Precinct supply box.

This practice has been very successful in the past. Cost is minimal depending on guide pages and numbers of copies needed.

**Supporting Documents:**
“Election Official Problem Solving Guide”
RUTHERFORD COUNTY, TENNESSEE
ELECTION COMMISSION

ELECTION DAY

PROBLEM SOLVING GUIDE

FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

What do I do if..........

Friday, July 28, 2006
FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS

What Do I do if...?

1. Voter’s name is not on the signature list-

   GUIDANCE: Voter could be at the wrong precinct or maybe he or she has already voted. If voter indicates he or she attempted to register at the dept of safety, process the voter with a provisional ballot. If some other reason applies, call your office contact.

2. Voter applied for an absentee ballot-

   GUIDANCE: Signature list should read “voter has applied for absentee ballot.” Call your office contact and see if the voter has returned absentee ballot. If not, tell the voter he or she may vote by provisional ballot. If the absentee ballot shows up, the provisional ballot will be voided.

3. Temporary Military voter who has been mailed a ballot(sig list)...shows up at the poll to vote

   GUIDANCE: Vote military voter by provisional ballot. Provisional counting board will be the safety net against allowing ineligible voters to vote under this circumstance.

4. Voter has moved outside your precinct...

   GUIDANCE: Fill out a failsafe form, send the white copy with the voter to the new location, keep the yellow copy, mark the voter off the signature list and new precinct will add them to the back of their signature list.

5. Election Day Voting Machine loses power while voter is marking ballot ...

   GUIDANCE: When the power returns, reprogram the voters ballot and ask the voter to begin the voting process again.

6. First time voter who registered by mail shows up to vote...

   GUIDANCE: Must show ID bearing signature. Match ID signature with his application signature. Other forms of ID acceptable are listed in your training manual and provide in your expandable folder.

7. Election Official does not show up on Election Day

   GUIDANCE: If you have a no show, call the RCEC office with name. We will send you a replacement ASAP.

8. Poll watcher creates a disturbance

   GUIDANCE: Ask the poll watcher to step outside the polling place so you can discuss the issue. Inform the poll watcher that his or her actions are causing a disturbance inside the polling place which is disturbing the voting process. If the poll watcher continues to cause a disturbance, call our office immediately and we will call the city
or county police. Do not attempt to forcefully remove the poll watcher from inside the polling place.

9. Provisional Voter refuses to complete Mail-In Voter Registration application...

GUIDANCE: Tell the voter that Tennessee law requires that a provisional voter first completes a registration form before being allowed to vote by this method. Unless a registration form is completed, and accompanies the provisional ballot envelop, the provisional counting board will reject the ballot. A voter has to be registered to vote in the county in which he or she resides.

10. Necessary Election Day supplies are missing...

GUIDANCE: Notify your office contact with a list of what supplies you are missing and someone from the office will deliver the supplies to you.

11. Polling place is locked upon your arrival

GUIDANCE: All polling places were notified to expect the arrival of election officials at 6:00 a.m. If no one has arrived to open the polling place by 6:00 a.m. and if you don’t have a point of contact with a good phone number, contact us and we will get someone to open the polling place for you.

12. Electrical failure caused by Thunder storm

GUIDANCE: One or more voting machines must be operable (with batteries) in case of lack of electricity. Use this battery operated machine for voting until the power returns.

13. Candidate continues to campaign inside the 100” campaign free zone

GUIDANCE: Call our office.

14. Election day official violates the campaign boundary by continuously discussing issue/candidates on the ballot

GUIDANCE: If the election official continues to discuss the candidates inside the polling place, call our office and we will decide what action to take.

15. Voter leaves Electronic Voting Machine without pressing the cast vote button

GUIDANCE: First try to catch the voter before he or she leaves the polling place. If the voter has left the polling place, officer and someone from the opposite party enter the booth together, and if selections (intent) have been made, Push the cast vote button. If no selections have been made, void the application, and cancel the ballot to prepare the machine for the next voter.

16. Voter refuses to mark which primary election they wish to vote in (says this is private)

GUIDANCE: Inform the voter that in order to vote in a Primary in Tennessee the voter must choose either the Democratic Primary or the Republican Primary. Voter does not have to choose a party before voting in a General Election.

17. Voter refuses to cast vote on a machine after long delay even after directed to

GUIDANCE: We can't make the voter do anything, but we can explain that unfortunately delays happen and we apologize for any inconvenience. If the voter
leaves without pushing the cast vote button, officer and another EO from opposite
party enter the booth and proceed as in number 15.

18. Polling place is running short on paper ballots
   **GUIDANCE:** Contact the Election office when you see that you are getting short
   and before you run completely out of paper ballots.

19. Disturbance occurs inside precinct
   **GUIDANCE:** Officer should tell the person causing the disturbance that he or she
   is causing a disturbance inside the polling place and the actions must stop
   immediately or we will be forced to call the Election Office. If the action does not
   stop, Election Office will summon law enforcement

20. Your precinct is closed down by police officials for security reasons.
    **GUIDANCE:** Call the Election Office immediately upon being closed down. The
    Election Commission will determine a course of action after consultations with
    local and state officials.

21. Voter has lost their voter registration card and requests a new one
    **GUIDANCE:** List name and address on voter replacement card list, and return with
    signature lists and or have the voter contact the Election Commission office
    during normal duty hours and make the request.

22. Individual with a national news agency appears wanting to conduct Exit Polling
    **GUIDANCE:** Individual should have some form of NM ID and should be registered
    with the Administrator. It is permissible for this person to conduct exit polling as
    the voter leaves the polls only. Person should remain at least 10 feet away from
    the polling place exit.

23. Candidates representative refuses to stand back from voting machine as it is being tallied
    **GUIDANCE:** Explain to the individual that we are doing our best to provide the
    most accurate information as soon as possible, and will post the results as soon as
    they are tallied. To do this everyone has to step back and let the EO complete
    their tallying. If the individual continues, call us.

24. Election Official becomes sick and can't continue working
    **GUIDANCE:** First call 911, then call our office.

25. The voting machine malfunctions
    **GUIDANCE:** Check the power cords, batteries etc. If you still can't get the
    machine to work, do not try to fix the machine. Call us and we will send a machine
    tech to your site. Meanwhile, continue the voting process with the other voting
    machines.
26. Officer of election must bring the results back to the EO alone.

**GUIDANCE:** If you determine that no one is available to accompany you, call us and we will send someone to accompany you back to the office. Do not return election results to the office alone.

7/28/2006

RCEC
Use of High School Students as Election Officials
Rutherford County, TN

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THE ELECTION CENTER
2007 PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE PROGRAM

THE USE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AS ELECTION OFFICIALS

Submitted by: Howard H. Penuel, Jr.
THE USE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AS ELECTION OFFICIALS

In an effort to have a sufficient number of poll workers on election day, Tennessee State Election Law allows county jurisdictions to recruit 17 year old high school students. Rutherford County, Tennessee practices the use of these young adults as registrars, machine operators and other duties necessary prior to the election, during the day of the election and after an election if needed. With proper management the practice of using students as election officials has proved very successful.

The use of these students as election officials serves two purposes. High School student’s experience Democracy at work and at the same time earn spending money for their work.

To ensure proper management of student election officials, a senior staff member under the Administrators supervision is assigned to coordinate this practice. Appointments are then made with High School principals whereby the Administrator and project manager together discuss with the principal our proposal involving student responsibilities and then ultimately gain approval for their best students to participate. Normally, the Principal will assign the recruiting of student election officials to a teacher who becomes the point of contact for the project manager. Historically, all principals have been supportive and sympathetic of our plan. Of course, the plan is strictly voluntary, but we normally are furnished with more volunteers than we need. This is a good thing since this overage creates a reserve pool of officials we can pull from when no shows occur on election day.

Normally, the students have a choice of what they would like to do; either work as a registrar or a machine operator. Periods of instruction are offered on various evenings after school and on Saturdays to accommodate the student's school schedule. Make up training is also offered on an assigned date for those who may develop a conflict.

During the instruction period, it is important to advise the student about the seriousness of their responsibilities as an election official. It is also important to emphasize how important it is to arrive at the polling pace at the assigned time, in fact, we even encourage the students to set two alarm clocks early in the morning on election day.

By and large, the majority of today's students who volunteer to work as election officials do an excellent job. We are told by senior election officials how well they perform and hope we continue to use the students as election officials. We've been well pleased with this practice and highly recommend this practice to other jurisdictions providing the law allows.
National Participant

Count Me In!
Community Outreach Program
Martin County, FL

Submitted by: Vicki Davis
Supervisor of Elections
Martin County Florida
135 SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Stuart, Florida 34995
COUNT ME IN!
A Community Outreach Program
For Minority Populations

Vicki Davis
Supervisor of Elections
Martin County, Florida

Election Center
Professional Practices Program
2007
Count Me In!

A Community Outreach Program for Minority Populations

RESEARCH: Traditionally, voter turnout among minorities (African-Americans, Hispanics, Latinos and persons with disabilities) has been low on Election Day. The Hispanic/Latino population in Martin County had historically poor voter registration and Election Day turnout. Statistics for African-American residents were similarly low both in registration and voter participation. Not wanting to disenfranchise eligible voters in Martin County, the Supervisor of Elections initiated a voter registration outreach program to minority populations. Partnerships with the local NAACP chapter, the Latin Chamber of Commerce and four local organizations that provide services to special needs residents assisted with identifying voter needs and program development.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTIVES: To increase minority voter registration and Election Day turnout, five objectives were created: (1) Educate minorities on voter registration requirements, voting options and voting equipment; (2) Identify obstacles (real or perceived) that result in low voter participation; (3) Establish/strengthen relationships with local minority organizations; (4) Inform/familiarize voters with available services and activities provided through the Supervisor of Elections Office; (5) Implement the program with a budget of $4,000.

IMPLEMENTATION: Phase one of the voter registration outreach program was to assemble civic leaders and administrative staff of local minority organizations in order to develop program strategies and gain support. Churches and community events were selected for voter registration drives and voting machine demonstrations. Radio PSA’s were recorded by prominent African-American local leaders. Additionally, in an effort to engage visually and hearing impaired residents, staff developed voter drives that included sample Braille ballots and specially equipped voting machines. Clients from agencies that included Helping People Succeed, 20/200 Fellowship, Association for the Rights of the Challenged and Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of the Treasure Coast were thrilled to receive this first-time advocacy. An informative quarterly newsletter was produced and mass mailed.

The second phase of the program focused on meeting the needs of our Spanish-speaking voters. At this time, our county is not required to provide bilingual voter materials; however, the Supervisor of Elections was concerned about the lack of Hispanic/Latino voter turnout. Taking a pro-active approach, staff met with the local
Latin Chamber of Commerce and participated in a state-wide bilingual task force. As a result, voter materials are now available in Spanish; voter drives have been held in Hispanic/Latino neighborhoods, radio PSA’s were created and broadcast in Spanish prior to the 2006 Elections, and participation in a recent Latin Chamber of Commerce Expo generated much interest and raised awareness among this minority group. Additionally, the Supervisor of Elections Office website is in the process of being translated into Spanish.

EVALUATION: The outreach program achieved each of its objectives. Comparing minority voter registration for the 2002 and 2006 Governor’s election, there was a 17% increase. Using the same demographics and election races, voter turnout also increased by 5%. Significant among the statistics were two 75 year old gentlemen who had never registered to vote in their lifetime. Staff registered 55 new voters with special needs, including a blind woman that did not know she could cast her vote independently in spite of her disability. Three thousand voter guides were distributed; the outreach coordinator attended 42 community events demonstrating voting machines and registering voters. Four thousand newsletters were distributed to targeted businesses, agencies and individuals. Representatives from the NAACP, Latin Chamber of Commerce, Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services of the Treasure Coast, and Coalition for Independent Living Options are active members of the Supervisor of Elections Community Advisory Committee. Partnerships and outreach activities continue to expand throughout Martin County, creating “unity in our community.”

BUDGET: The program successfully remained below the budget. Cost for creating radio PSA’s ($1,500), Newsletter ($900), Printing for voter guides, posters, flyers ($600), Postage ($390), Latin Expo fee ($125). Total cost = $3,515
County registers ARC members to vote

BY IKE CRUMPLER
ike.crumpler@scripps.com

STUART — County election officials took their show on the road Friday, visiting the Advocates for the Rights of the Challenged and getting an enthusiastic welcome.

"Should roundabouts be used for traffic, yes or no?" Kherri Anderson, community outreach coordinator, asked Lori Mesinger as she stood before the booth.

"Yes," the 42-year-old Stuart resident answered earnestly.

"There you go," said Anderson. "Congratulations, you voted."

"I did it!" Mesinger exclaimed.

After registering many of the 38 ARC members, who range in age from their early 20s to mid-70s and have a range of developmental disabilities, and equipping them with a pocket Constitution, county staffers led them through mock ballot questions. In the past, ARC members registered at the courthouse, part of the nonprofit's mission to foster their independence and community inclusion.

Though in use since 2002, the electronic machines command a continual educational effort at various venues, said Vicki Davis, supervisor of elections. But helping ARC members have a personal value for Davis, who has an aunt in the program.

"She always looks forward to being able to cast her vote," she said.

Participants practiced the political process themselves by voting for officers of an advocacy group that meets with legislators. Kelly Bolster of Stuart, who won the vote for president, described her registration experience as "excellent."

"I'm learning new skills," she said.

Because of their developmental difficulties, some might be skeptical of ARC members' ability to cast informed votes.

"Nonsense," said Sarah Alloway, program administrator.

"They have the same rights that everyone has," she said. "They do have access to newspapers and with assistance they are informed on state positions."

More so, in many cases, than the young people Anderson encounters when running registration drives on college campuses.

"The students will say to me, 'What's a Democrat? What's a Republican? What's Bush?'" she said. "You won't think that at 18, 19 years old they would know the difference between the political parties."
October 2006

Vicki Davis
Supervisor of Elections, Martin County
135 SE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
Stuart, FL 34995

Dear Vicki,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services of the Treasure Coast, Inc. and all individuals in our community who are deaf, hard of hearing or deaf-blind, we wish to thank you for your leadership and efforts to attain and promote equal voting access in our community.

We appreciate you taking the time to provide a very informative seminar to the deaf community. Additionally, your ongoing efforts to improve accessibility at the polls and to educate the poll workers on sensitivity issues for all individuals with disabilities including those who are deaf and hard of hearing are to be applauded.

Again we thank you for your efforts, support and concern for the disabled community.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Kottler, Jr.
Executive Director
COUNT ME IN!

Voter training with clients from Deaf & Hard of Hearing Services, Inc.

Voter education and registration at ARC (Association for the Rights of the Challenged)

Booker Park Migrant Community Indiantown

Community Outreach partnership with the Latin Chamber of Commerce
National Participant

Inspector Integrity Initiative
a.k.a. Private I’s
City of Kalamazoo, MI

Submitted by: Scott Borling, City Clerk and
Virginia M. Vander Roest, CERA,
241 W. South St.
Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Inspector Integrity Initiative  
*a.k.a.* Private I's

**Purpose**

To secretly evaluate election inspectors and precinct procedures from a voter's perspective.

**Program Overview**

The Inspector Integrity Initiative - Private I's program was modeled after mystery shopping programs many businesses use to evaluate their employees and customer service. Using a simple questionnaire voters were asked to evaluate a range of basic procedures and services. This information clearly showed weaknesses in the precinct on Election Day.

**Logistics**

A few weeks prior to an election, letters requesting participation in the program are mailed to random voters who typically vote in the type of election to be evaluated. The letter clearly states the Election Division is not soliciting votes on Election Day but requesting participation if they are already intending to vote. Included with the letter is a postage paid postcard for the Private I to return indicating interest in participating as well as preferred method of receiving the survey.

Three or four days prior to the election the survey is either emailed or postal mailed to the Private I with instructions on how to proceed on Election Day. The survey can be returned electronically or with a postage paid envelope provided by the Clerk. After the surveys are returned, the Election Division compiles the data and uses the information for training improvements.

**Incentives**

To show appreciation, donations of $5 gift cards were solicited from local businesses. Voters that participated in the program were given a gift card as a token for completion of the survey. In addition, any election inspector that was noted as exceptional by the Private I was also given a gift card.

**Participation**

Over half of the voters contacted participated. Less than 10% of those that participated did not complete the survey. Those that participated were very enthusiastic and provided valuable insight into the precinct processes and procedures.
Dear Private I –

Thank you for participating in the Inspector Integrity Initiative. We greatly appreciate you taking the time to complete this survey. This survey will assist us in evaluating our poll workers and poll operations. Please answer the following questions discreetly. Don’t bring this sheet into the poll. It’s a good idea to take it with you and leave it in your vehicle. You can answer the questions immediately after leaving the polling location. Try to answer the questions based on fact and not opinion. Complete the comment section after each question, only if you answered NO. In addition, please note any poll worker that you feel went above and beyond during your visit. As soon as you’ve completed the form, return it to our office by May 11, 2007. Thank you again!

-City Clerk’s Office

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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. What time did you arrive at the polling location?</td>
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<td>2. Upon arrival did you see a sign outdoors that indicated you were at a polling location?</td>
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<td>3. Were signs displayed inside the polling location directing you to the precinct?</td>
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<td>If no, was it obvious where to go?</td>
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<td>4. Were you greeted politely upon entrance of the precinct?</td>
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<td>5. Was your name found on the precinct list easily?</td>
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<td>6. Did anyone ask you if you needed instructions or assistance at any time during your visit?</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>7. Did you feel your vote was kept secret at all times?</td>
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<td>8. Was the precinct location set up efficiently &amp; accessible to all voters?</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>9. Were precinct workers all wearing name badges?</td>
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<td>10. Was someone clearly in charge?</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>11. During your observation, do you feel all voters were treated equally and without bias?</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>12. Were you addressed politely upon departure and offered an &quot;I voted&quot; sticker?</td>
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<td>Comments</td>
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<td>13. What time did you leave the polling location?</td>
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<td>Additional Comments</td>
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Future Vote Initiative: Catalyst for Tomorrow’s Future Voters Today
Montgomery County, MD

Submitted by: Margaret A. Jurgensen
Election Director
Post Office Box 4333
Rockville, MD 20849
**“FUTURE VOTE INITIATIVE”**

*Catalyst for Tomorrow’s Future Voters Today*

Montgomery County Board of Elections  
Montgomery County, Maryland  
Nancy H. Dacek, President  
Margaret A. Jurgensen, Director  
Gilberto A. Zelaya II, Ph.D., Community Outreach Liaison

During the 2006 Maryland Gubernatorial Elections, the Montgomery County Board of Elections developed the Future Vote Initiative to train and assign 6th-12th grade students to county precincts for the purpose of assisting voters, becoming prepared and engaged as a future voter and actively participating in the election process through Election Day support. In 2004, MCBOE approved and launched the Future Vote Initiative pilot, as conceived by Dr. Gilberto Zelaya II, Community Outreach Liaison. By 2006, the program was expanded to all 238 voting precincts in the County. Although 18 years is the voting age in the United States, in Maryland, children up to age 12 are permitted to accompany their parents or guardians into the voting booth, leaving a 6-year gap of no Election Day opportunity for polling place based civic experience. Initially, for the County’s 50 largest precincts in the 2004 presidential election, Dr. Zelaya trained 250 students on the parameters of Election Day assistance for both voters and election judges, covering legal requirements, performance expectations, and requiring a signed affirmation of participation.

Before Election Day, participating students attend a mandatory 2-hour training session, accompanied with a parent/guardian. In the training sessions, students and their parent/guardian learn polling procedures and have an opportunity to explore commonly misunderstood voting procedures, how to address adults and how to assist voters who might need special help. Student participants and their guardians are instructed to develop an “Action Plan for Participation” which includes: directions to their assigned precinct, snack/meal preparation, Chief Election Judge Introduction prior to a shift, and a written Student Reflection to be submitted to school personnel and Board of Elections’ staff. On Election Day, students serve a 4-hour shift and are placed in precincts determined by their home addresses. In addition, students dispense voting-related literature, pick up trash, indicate restrooms and polling-room exits and help voters in wheelchairs. Students are required to be sensitive and polite with all voters, including those with special needs, and, if possible, provide information and/or assistance in a second language or in American Sign Language (35% of participants had bilingual skills).

Additional benefits to learning a valuable lesson in civic responsibility from trained election officials and assisting at polling places on Election Day, students earn Student Service Learning credits necessary for high school graduation. Although U.S. citizens may vote, student Election Day volunteers do not need to be U.S. citizens (20% were non-citizens) to take part in the program. Students in all academic settings, private, home-school, foreign student exchange program and special needs, are encouraged to participate.

The program intent is to increase current and future voter knowledge, educate and strengthen ties related to civic participation for Montgomery County’s youth and families by actively providing an opportunity for civic duty, community involvement, and emphasizing the importance of preserving participatory democracy. Simultaneously, this program empowers parents/guardians with information relevant to their participation in elections, includes Election Day expectations and responsibilities aimed at increasing voting knowledge and turnout in local and national elections. Parents/guardians are enthusiastic about the program, frequently gaining insight and knowledge about civic experience and their role or lack of involvement and understanding. Some decide to
vote and/or become an election judge and/or inform others in their community of the opportunity to vote and to serve through Future Vote.

In addition to Election Day precinct support, Future Vote participants and parents have been incorporated into BOE’s outreach efforts prior to the 2008 Presidential Elections. Parents and participants receive voter registration training enabling them to assist County residents interested in registering to vote and/or updating their voter registration records at local community events, fairs, supermarkets and/or public libraries. In addition to voter registration, Future Vote parents and participants will contribute with pre-Election Day preparations (e.g. auxiliary election judge recruitment tasks and/or color coding of voting equipment/electronic poll book) which broaden the overall voting experience and knowledge gained by participating in different aspects pertaining to Election Day preparation, coordination and implementation. At the present moment, over 1500 students have successfully participated through the Future Vote Initiative, assisting voters and election judges; an additional 2000 parents/guardians discovered elements of Election Day support through attendance, outreach efforts and/or auxiliary pre-Election Day preparations.

The Board of Elections has heard from students, election judges, voters and parents/guardians regarding the information, experience and vitality of this program and its enhancement to the voting process. This email was received from a 9th grade student, “Thank you for allowing me to participate in the gubernatorial elections this November. It was an enlightening experience and I was very lucky to be a part of it. The process on a whole was an immense success, and I think that I speak for all of my fellow ambassadors when I thank you for letting us get such a close look at the democratic system we live in”. A parent of a 6th grade student emailed, “It was his volunteering experience for our child and it was a great one. I want to add that we are not U.S. citizens and I found it particularly remarkable that he was allowed to serve like that. Let me say our child has lived in West Africa before coming to the U.S. and experienced a political “coup”. He knows what the militaries in the streets and the arbitrary mean. Now he has seen a democratic electoral process in action and thanks for creating a program that brought out the best of our future voters.” Election judges representing the two major political parties sent these emails to the Board of Elections, one stated, “Both our volunteers helped us very much. We were busy all day right up to the end of the election. Our volunteers help manage our lines and aided us in providing a good experience for our voters. Please send them back in 08!” and the second stated, “The students that we had were very helpful. We were very glad to have them. Thanks for coordinating this program. Your program and volunteers are truly reflecting community empowerment. Keep it up!”

Specific benefits include newfound insight and interest in civic participation; informed and energetic voters-to-be; technical and assistive support to voters; monitoring and improving line management and ensuring return of voter access cards used by voters to access a voting unit, a saving of time and money; as well as the long-range potential accumulative effect of preparing an otherwise untrained group of voters to become experienced voters, knowledgeable about voting procedures and discovering that throughout each of their lifetimes they may more knowledgeably choose to become an election judge or train and work in election administration, an oft-unrecognized opportunity. Other jurisdictions in the United States are becoming familiar with the concept of Future Vote as evidenced by a number of inquiries made to the Montgomery County Board of Elections to explore details of Future Vote. Each election is, then, a significant opportunity to expand civic participation, provide factual information to the increasing number of participants who assist voters and support election judges and potentially enhance our Democracy.