



ADMINISTRATION ON
INTELLECTUAL AND
DEVELOPMENTAL
DISABILITIES



Administration for Community Living, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
<http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/programs/aidd>

Fact Sheet: Help America Vote Act

Help America Vote Act (HAVA) programs are designed to establish and improve participation in the election process for individuals with the full range of disabilities. Signed into law on October 29, 2002, HAVA assigns responsibility for the administration of the law's disability provisions (sections 261 and 291) to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, who delegated the responsibility to the Administration on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (formerly known as the Administration on Developmental Disabilities). Currently, funding is awarded to eligible Protection and Advocacy Systems (P&As) under section 291 as well as entities providing training and technical assistance to P&As. In previous years, HAVA funds allocated under section 261 were also awarded to the Secretary of State or Chief Election Official in each eligible state or territory.

Improving Voting Accessibility

HAVA grantees make polling places accessible for individuals with disabilities (including path of travel, entrances, exits, and voting areas), provide information on the location of accessible polling places, and adopt voting procedures that enable these individuals to vote privately and independently. Grantees also educate election officials, poll workers, and election volunteers on the rights of voters with disabilities and best practices in working with them.

P&As provide assistance to state and other government entities by surveying polling places, identifying potential modifications to make specific polling places accessible, and developing criteria for identifying accessible polling places.

Ensuring Full Participation in the Electoral Process

In each eligible state and territory, P&As work to ensure that individuals with disabilities have the opportunity to participate in every step of the voting process. P&As educate individuals about voter registration and their legal rights pertaining to voting, provide voter registration opportunities, and help individuals access the polls on election day. Individuals interested in filing complaints may also be assisted and represented by the P&As.

Providing Training and Technical Assistance to Protection and Advocacy Systems

Eligible nonprofit organizations receive discretionary grants to assist P&As in developing proficiency in the use of voting systems and technologies for individuals with disabilities and demonstrating and evaluating the use of such systems and technologies. P&As also receive training and technical assistance for providing non-visual access in the voting process. These grants are authorized under section 291 of HAVA as a seven percent set-aside of the total appropriation for P&As. After receiving training and technical assistance, P&As may inform others on the availability of accessible voting equipment and its use.