Chester County Voter Services

2023 Improvements, Upgrades & Enhancements

Primary Election

L&A:
- Voter Services trained and deployed a larger team to conduct L&A.
- Voter Services hand marked ballots for L&A.
- Voter Services ordered a larger quantity of test decks to be able to complete L&A in a more efficient manner.

Mail Ballots:
- New design of Declaration Envelope with Orange strip
- Orange secrecy envelope
- Peel-n-stick secrecy envelope
- New educational video for mail-in voting
- New identifying mark (stamp) process at the drop-box
- New emergency ballot application stamp
- Upon return of mail-in ballots, the County expanded the initial intake review process.
- The ReliaVote operation (mail-in ballot sorting machine) underwent major improvements due to additional training and intergovernmental collaboration.
- The CURE process was streamlined.

In person Voting:
- Supply pick up chain of custody improvements.
- Poll Workers generally received payment on Election Day.
- Every polling place transitioned to new voting booths.
- New numbered list of voters to enhance reconciliation process.

Central Scan Operation:
- The Central Scan operation underwent several improvements due to additional training and intergovernmental collaboration.
- Delivery 1 was made on Monday, May 15th. The ballots were 24/7 under video surveillance and there was a security staff member stationed with them overnight.
- Central Scan Staffers received in person training in the weeks leading up to the election.
- Voter Services made a custom training video for all Central Scan Staffers.
- Central Scan Staffers received a training video the week prior to election day.
- Central Scan Staffers were assigned their task prior to starting their shifts.
- All Central Staffers were ready at 7AM to start processing ballots after the OATH was conducted.
• The legal team reviewed the ballots in the red CURE tray directly after 7AM.
• The ballots in the red CURE tray that did not move forward, Voter Services staff directly removed voter credit in SURE so voters could receive an email notification on Election Day morning to have an opportunity to still go to their polling place.
• The Pre-Canvass took place with a team at the OPEX machine.
• Previously, all 5 steps were completed by different teams/staffers. We consolidated step 1, 2 and 3 to one process with two staffers. This provided us with more accurate chain of custody forms, clarity in the process and efficiencies.
• Step 4 – flattening ballots techniques were thoroughly reviewed and implemented.
• NEW - A runner will supply the tabulation teams with a green mail tray while announcing the following-
  o The name of the precinct
  o Delivery number
  o The name of the tabulator which they are delivering it to.
  o The number of ballots as per the precinct chain of custody form.
• Joggers were purchased for every Central Scan tabulation station (A-E).
• Duplication process –
  o New stamp to place on original ballot to VOID that ballot.
  o New holepunch to disrupt the track mark of the original ballot.
Municipal Election

L&A
- Voter Services underwent detailed training to update and improve best practices for all voting machines, in person and central scan.
- The L&A check list was redesigned.
- Due to the ReliaVote move, the process and workflow were reexamined.
- Folded ballots were included in the Central Scan test deck.

Mail Ballots:
- Peel-n-stick declaration envelopes were introduced.
- Over the summer, we moved the ReliaVote machine from the Government Services Center to 313 West Market Street. All mail-in and absentee ballots were delivered to 313 West Market Street and processed there.
- The new space for the ReliaVote now includes security cameras covering the entire space.
- Covers for the mail racks were purchased and implemented.
- The CURE process was updated with email contacts wherever possible instead of sending a letter so that voters could CURE their ballots in an expedited manner.

Drop Box Program:
- Provided in person training sessions to drop box staffers.
- Introduced new ballot collection totes for the inside of the drop boxes.
- Provided head lights for ranger gear.
- Initiated waterproof paper for chain of custody forms.

In person Voting:
- Every polling place received at least one high-low table.
- Poll worker training continued to emphasize reconciliation and the accurate completion of the General Return Sheet.
- The General Return Sheet was redesigned.
- Voter Services developed a checklist to open and close the polls.
- The poll worker manual was updated by creating chapters.
- The poll worker manual was made available on the county’s website for poll workers as well as constituents to review and read the processes at the polls.
- A new file tote was deployed to organize the polling place documents in order of the day and in alphabetical order.
- Poll workers assisted voter services in preparing election materials.
- A new sign tube was utilized to deploy and return all yard signs for election day.
- The roamer program was fully reviewed and enhanced.
- All roamers attended an in-person training session.
• Voter Services created a technician program with 10 designated regions.
• All technicians attended an in-person training session.
• The technician team was fully equipped with secured sealed bags and in identifying uniform.
• Voter Services redesigned the call center and created a tier level system with additional representatives.
• Bilingual services were available via the call center.
• The call center was enhanced with software to log calls and track data.
• The election night return was redesigned.

Central Scan
• A new camera was installed in the tabulator area for closer view.
• Chester County Live Election Cams were made available on the website to observe the central scan area as well as the ballot intake area.
• A DS850 tabulator was replaced with a newer model, DS950 alleviating ballot scanning problems from “Machine A”.
• The Election Management System software was upgraded to version is 6.3.0.0 and was certified by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and the PA DOS last year.
• This election, we had teams assigned to ballot duplication so as soon as a precinct was done being tabulated, any problematic ballots moved to duplication. We allowed additional time for authorized candidate and party representatives to review the duplicated ballots, especially during scheduled legal review times.
• The chain of custody form was enhanced to include the OPEX and tabulator name to be able to identify trends with machines and/or personnel.
• We changed the instructions for the OPEX machines from “tap” the envelope to “bang” the envelope to better help ballots not get damaged going through the OPEX.
• Voter Services displayed additional reports to add further transparency.