

King County HAVA Grant

Pursuant to the federal HAVA law, many counties have switched to new ballot tabulation systems. These changes began across the country in 2005. King, along with many counties, submitted grant applications to the Secretary of State's Office for this new equipment.

In the 2005-06 time frame, and through much consultation with the King County Council, the King County Citizens' Elections Oversight Committee, and other stakeholders, King County Elections decided to submit a grant for new central count modules (PCS and Assure) of their current voting system – Premier GEMS. This involves new hardware (scanners) and an upgrade to the GEMS reporting software. The Accessible Voting Units hardware will remain the same, with an upgrade to its firmware. The Secretary of State's Office awarded that grant in June 2006, for \$1.5 million.

Also pursuant to HAVA, the federal Election Assistance Commission took over jurisdiction of certifying voting equipment beginning 1/1/2007. As of 1/1/2009, the EAC has not certified any voting equipment, whether new or a system upgrade. The modules of the voting system that will work best for King County Elections, given the county's size and the high rate of absentee voting, is relatively new and has not yet been certified. Because the EAC has not certified any voting system across the country, from any company, King County has not been able to implement this new system.