Accessibility and the U.S. Election Assistance Commission
The Promise of HAVA

To improve the accessibility and quantity of polling places, including providing physical access for individuals with disabilities, providing non-visual access for individuals with visual impairments, and providing assistance to Native Americans, Alaska Native citizens, and to individuals with limited proficiency in the English language.
The EAC’s Mandate

To promote methods of voting and administering elections which—

“will be the most convenient, accessible, and easy to use for voters, including . . . individuals with disabilities, including the blind and visually impaired, and voters with limited proficiency in the English language”
Two Main Accessibility Prongs

Physical accessibility

Language accessibility
EAC Commitment

- Resolution Reaffirming Mandate and Commitment to Reach Full ADA and HAVA Compliance (7/2105)
- July 28, 2015 Washington, DC, public meeting on ways to improve accessibility
- April 27, 2016 Boston, MA, public hearing to receive testimony from voters with disabilities
- June 2, 2016, College Park, MD, summit on language access in elections
Public Meeting Takeaways

• There is likely to be an increase in the number of individuals with disabilities within the next few years, as the “baby boomers” grow older and live longer. This will require substantially more emphasis on serving voters with accessible voting needs.

• The number of those reaching retirement age swelled more than 50% in the last 12 years according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

• The category of voters most likely to participate in elections is the 60 and older segment of the population.

• Current estimates are that 30 -35 percent of all voters during the next 25 years will need some form of assistance at the polling place whether that is seating, wheelchair accommodations, visual needs, or clear and easy-to-understand instructions.
Public Hearing Takeaways

• Checklists are important, but clear communication directly with voters with disabilities is more important.

• Building accessibility into your services from the beginning ensures proper access. Adding accessibility after the fact increases cost and is usually not done well.

• Well-implemented accessibility functions and features improve the voter experience for all, not just voters with disabilities.

• Serving voters with disabilities better is not just a matter of more training. Better training focused on understanding the needs of voters with disabilities in your community, including involving the voters in the training, is what is needed.

• Universal design principles must be a part of next iteration of voting system standards.
Tools/Resources

• #BeReady16 Page – click on red bar and then on Accessibility page
6 Tips for Making Voting Accessible

The U.S. Election Assistance Commission has collaborated with local election officials to develop a series of helpful tips for election management. This series provides ideas and suggests best practices to help you run efficient and effective elections.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Help America Vote Act (HAVA) ensure that Americans have the same opportunity to participate in the voting process. These tips and examples can help you make voting accessible.

1. Know the challenge
   A disability is a condition (such

10 Tips for Voters With Disabilities

Before you vote in the next election, know the voting process in your State. The following tips from the U.S. Election Assistance Commission examine the options available to help voters with disabilities vote privately and independently.

1. Learn more about voting
   Call, visit, or e-mail your State or local elections office well in advance of election day. Visit the elections office’s Web site for

Contact your local office well before election day. Many States now offer online voter registration on their Web sites. After you register, double-check the accuracy of your registration, such as your address and party affiliation. Link to State elections office.

Consider contacting your local elections office about voting options for voters with disabilities. The election office can provide information about accessible machines and other voting methods. On election day, alert poll workers about your needs.
Voting Rights Card

YOUR FEDERAL VOTING RIGHTS

As a Voter with a Disability, you have the right to:

- Vote privately and independently
- Have an accessible polling place with voting machines for voters with disabilities

You may either:

1. Seek assistance from workers at the polling place who have been trained to use the accessible voting machine, or
2. Bring someone to help you vote

You may request your local election officials to tell you about any voting aids, voting assistance, and absentee ballot procedures that are available.

Ensure your right to accessible elections

For more information, contact the
U.S. Election Assistance Commission
By phone at 866-737-1471
By email at beread@eac.gov
# Checklists

**ADA Checklist for Polling Places**

This 25-page document is an updated technical assistance publication on polling place accessibility for voters with disabilities. The publication includes information about key areas of a facility that must be accessible to voters with mobility or vision disabilities, options for low-cost temporary measures for removing barriers, and a survey to guide election officials in evaluating the accessibility of facilities used or
Additional Materials

Quick Start
MANAGEMENT GUIDE
ACCESSIBILITY

ELECTION MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES
ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION
Accessibility in the VVSG

- Join the EAC/NIST accessibility group focused on ensuring that access is included throughout the new iteration of the VVSG

http://www.nist.gov/itl/vote/nist-voting-public-working-groups.cfm
Language Accessibility

- Federal legal requirements for language assistance
- Outreach to voters and community leaders
- Recruiting, training, and retaining bilingual election workers
- Tools and best practices for effective language assistance

THE U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION & DEMOCRACY FUND ACTION
WELCOME YOU TO THE

2016

Summit on Language Access in Elections
Language Resources


Questions?

More information:

EAC.gov
BeReady16@eac.gov
1-866-747-1471
cmccormick@eac.gov

Connect with us:

U.S. Election Assistance Commission

@EACgov Facebook.com/EACgov