



**The Catskill Center for Independence
Project HAVA presents...**

Working with Voters with Disabilities





Interacting with people...not disabilities.

- Use Person First Language
 - Person with a disability; person who uses a wheelchair; person who is blind.
- This affirms the individual and confers respect.



Avoid outdated terms and negative terminology

– Do Not Say:

- handicapped
- victim
- sufferer
- invalid.

-Instead Say:

- Person with a disability
- Cancer survivor
- Person with AIDS
- Person who uses a wheelchair



HAVA's Disability Access Requirements for Voting Systems.

- Accessible voting systems used in federal elections.
- At least one accessible system for each polling place.
- Same opportunity for access and participation as other voters –a private and independent vote.



How Voters Vote

- Anyone can use the accessible voting system or ballot marking device (BMD).
- How a person chooses to vote is up to the person, not the poll workers.
- Dissuading a voter from using a BMD is discriminatory.



Voting is a Civil Right; Discrimination is Illegal

- Without knowing it, poll workers can inadvertently be violating a persons civil rights by the questions they ask.
- Asking a voter what type of disability they have is unnecessary and illegal.



HAVA's Voting Information Requirements

- Specific information posted at each polling site to include:
 - Sample ballot
 - Hours of operation for polls
 - Voting instructions, including how to cast a provisional ballot
 - Instructions for first time voters
 - Applicable Federal and State laws

Accessible vs. Handicapped



Accessible is an empowering word.



Not So Politically Correct

- Don't Use:
 - Physically challenged
 - Mentally challenged
 - Differently-abled
- People with disabilities do not like these terms.



In the Vernacular

- Using common everyday language is perfectly fine. For example saying:
 - “See you later” to someone who is blind or
 - “I hear that!” to someone who is deaf is part of normal speech.
 - Relax , converse normally, use some sensitivity.



Speak directly to the person

- When interacting with an individual with a disability who is accompanied by an interpreter or assistant, speak directly to that person, **NOT** their assistant.



Habits of Speech

- Some people who are blind can hear perfectly well – no need to shout!
- Some people who are deaf cannot hear perfectly well – no need to shout!



More on Communication

- Lip readers need to see lips: face the person, don't turn away, don't over exaggerate mouth movements.
- ASL interpreters are not required at polling sites; paper and pencil would suffice for communicating.



A Person's Equipment is Part of Their Personal Space

- Never lean on someone's wheelchair or move it without permission.
- Sit down next to individual who uses a wheelchair; this allows a comfortable and relaxed exchange.



When in doubt...ask!

- If you are not sure how to assist a person with a disability,
 - Ask that individual how best to help.
 - Allow the person to direct you.
 - Respect their answer even if it is a refusal.



Other Considerations & Things to Think About

- Service Animals
- Alternate Accessible Formats
- Policy Modifications



Service Animals :

- Are allowed in polling places.
- Should not be distracted from their work.
- Are NOT pets; they are working animals.



Service Animals Continued:

- Can be other animals besides dogs.
 - Miniature ponies
- No proof required; no special license needed.



Alternative Accessible Formats

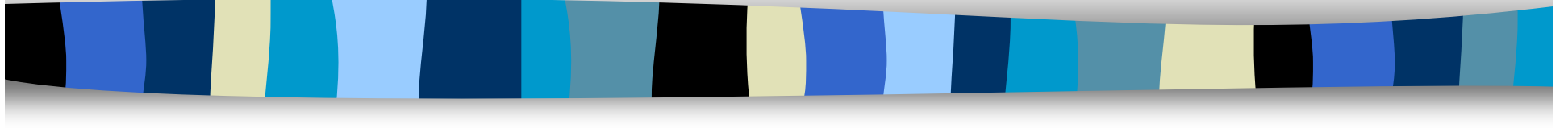
- Material provided to the public must be provided in alternative accessible format. It is the law.
- Examples: large print, audio, Braille, electronic (CD/disk).
- Types of documents: registration forms, sample ballots, provisional ballots, & more.



Policy Modifications

- May be permanent
 - responding to call button, maintaining clear path of travel
- or temporary
 - portable ramps, cones for parking, signage

Physical Access of Polling Sites

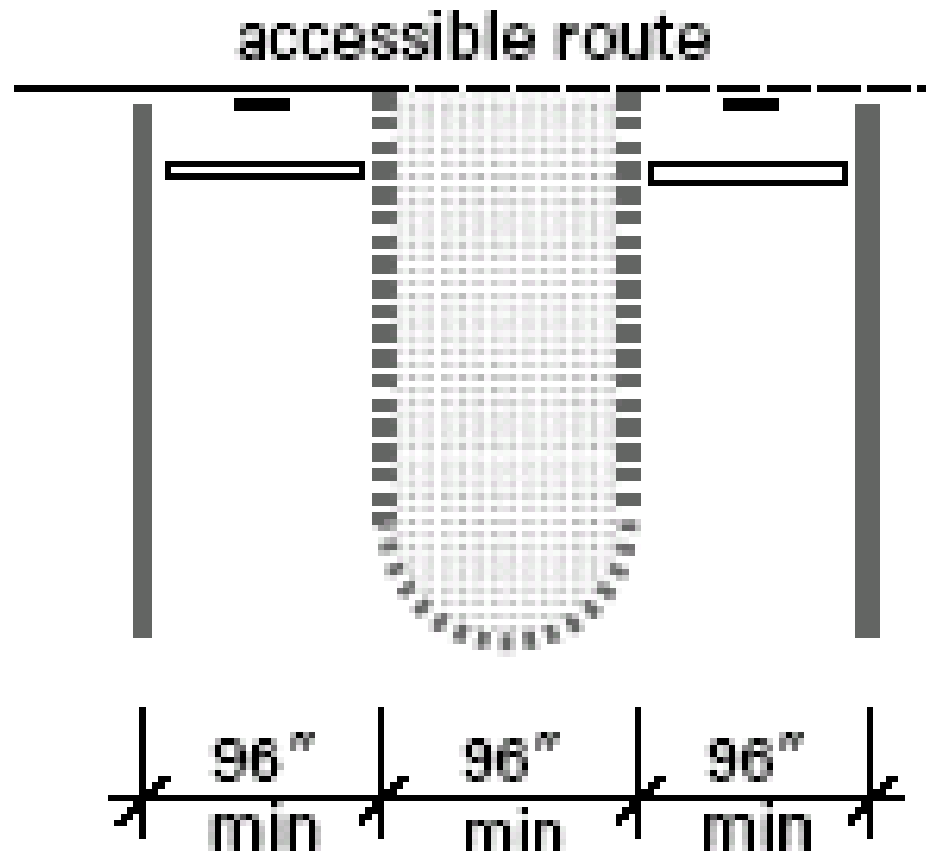




Priorities for accessible voting

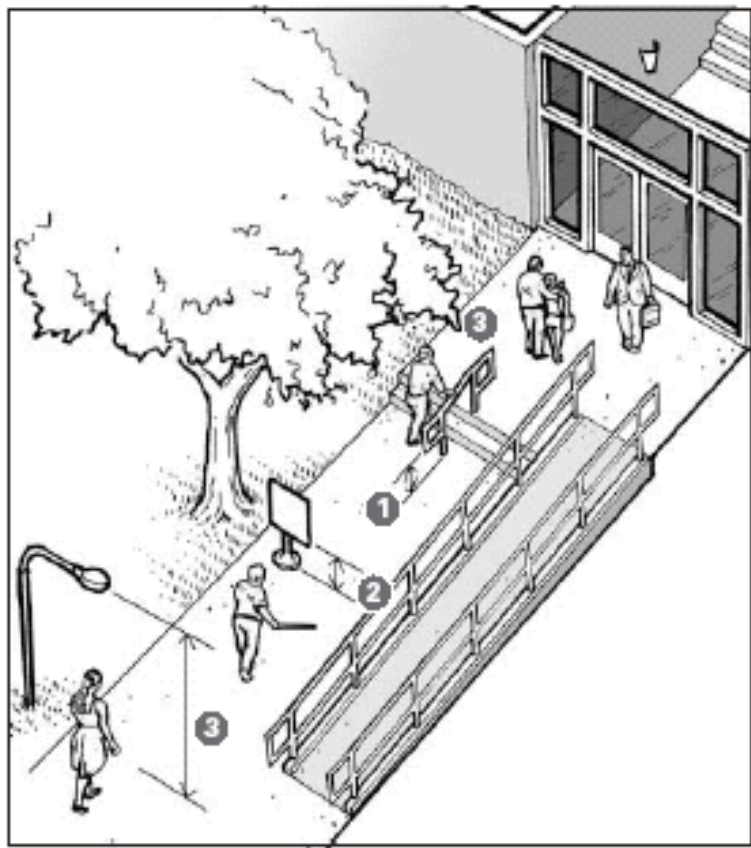
- Getting to the polling place
- Entering the polling place
- Using the polling place

Parking



Two 8' wide designated accessible parking spaces can share one 8' wide access aisle.

Exterior Accessible Route:

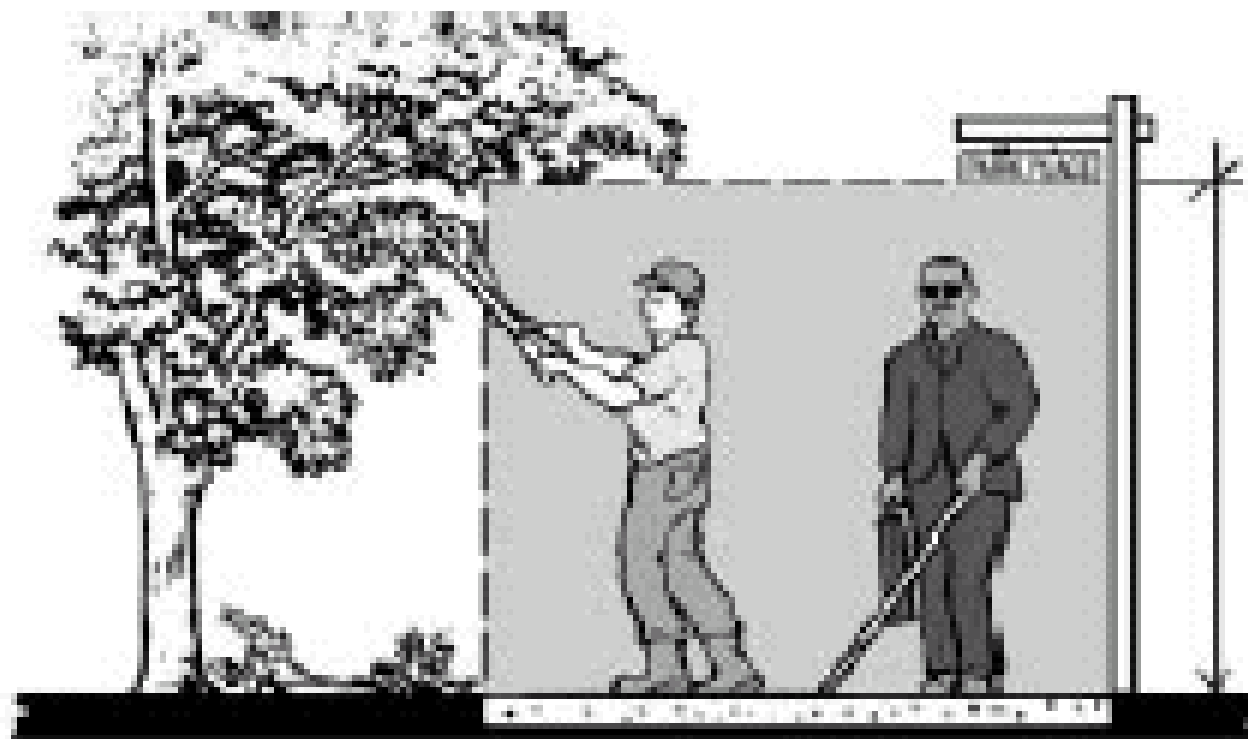


Must connect accessible parking to accessible entrance and be a minimum of 36" wide.

Signage



Barriers

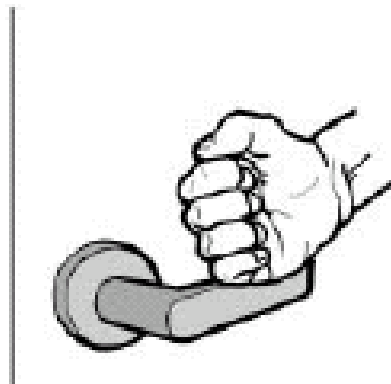
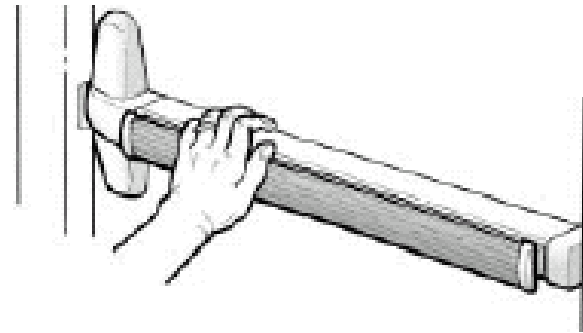
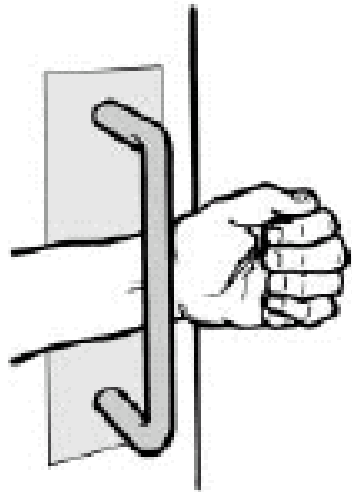


Entrance



A minimum clear width of 32" is required for the doorway at the accessible entrance.

Accessible Door Hardware



Latch Side Clearance:



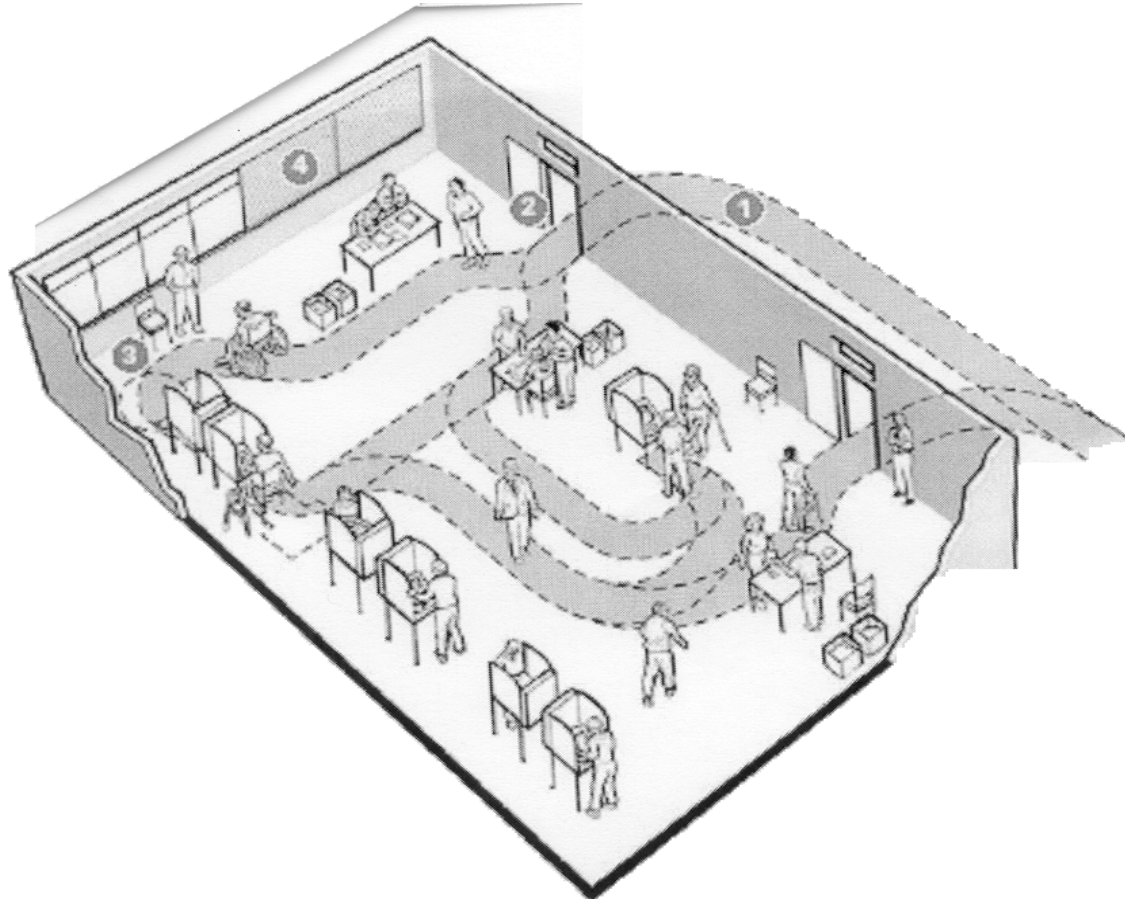
Allows voter in a wheelchair or other mobility device to pull the door open and then enter; 18" minimum required, 24" preferred.

Interior Accessible Route



By placing a large planter under the wall mounted object as a detectable warning, this man could avoid an accident.

Voting Area



Maintain a 36" wide clear path of travel throughout voting area.

Additional Barriers in the Voting Area:

- Chairs

- Lines



- Bake sales/dinners/craft fairs



Tips for Barrier-free Voting:

- Provide accessible parking
- Maintain 36" path of travel through out polling site
- Provide signage indicating accessible route
- Make certain bake sales/other events do not impede anyone's ability to vote on election day!

For More Information Contact Project HAVA at:

The Catskill Center for Independence

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1-888-NYS-HAVA

1-888-697-4282

**The Catskill Center for Independence &
Project HAVA thank you
for remembering...**

