

The webinar will begin shortly...

All attendees will receive a copy of this PowerPoint presentation and a link to the recorded webinar.





Better Voter Engagement Strategies for People with Disabilities

May 21, 2019

About Nonprofit VOTE

Founded in 2005, Nonprofit VOTE partners with America's nonprofits to help the people they serve participate and vote.

We are a leading source of nonpartisan training, materials and other resources for nonprofits doing voter engagement work.

For more information, visit us online at
www.nonprofitvote.org



Agenda

- Voters with disabilities and the law
- The current state of poll access
- Avenues for voters with disabilities and nonprofits to advocate for accessibility
- Story from the field: Disability Rights Texas
- Question & Answer session

NDRN

- National Disability Rights Network
- The nonprofit membership organization for the federally mandated Protection and Advocacy (P&A) Systems for individuals with disabilities

The P&A Network

- Established by Congress to protect the rights of people with disabilities through legal support, advocacy, referral, and education.
- In all 50 states, DC, Puerto Rico, US Territories, and the Native American Consortium (Hopi, Navaho and Piute Nations in the Four Corner region of the Southwest).
- Largest provider of legal advocacy services to people with disabilities in the US.

PAVA

- Protection & Advocacy for Voter Access
- Federal mandate to the P&As
- Established under HAVA to “ensure the full participation in the electoral process for individuals with disabilities, including registering to vote, casting a vote, and accessing polling places.”

Why Our Vote Is So Important

- 35.4 million people with disabilities were eligible in 2016
- Disability voter turnout is 6% behind non-disabled Americans
- That's about 3 million missing voters
- That's enough voters to win any election

Notable Voting Accessibility Laws

- Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act (VAEHA)
- Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Help America Vote Act (HAVA)
- National Voter Registration Act (NVRA or Motor Voter)
- Voting Rights Act (VRA)

VAEHA and the Start of Voter Access

- Passed in 1984, six years before the ADA became law.
- Requires all polling places be physically accessible to people with disabilities for federal elections.
- Allows for another way of casting a ballot if no accessible location is available.
- Requires states to provide registration and voting aids for voters with disabilities and older adults.

ADA and Voter Access

- Architectural access standards apply
- <https://www.ada.gov/votingck.htm>
- Same-day modifications can be used
- To check a specific polling site:
 - Contact your local elections official
 - Contact your P&A

HAVA and the Voting Booth

- Private and independent ballot
- Replacement of punch card systems
- Voluntary Voting System Guidelines
- US Election Assistance Commission
 - www.eac.gov

NVRA/Motor Voter

- Section 7 requires state governments to offer voter registration to any eligible person who interacts with offices that provide services for people with disabilities.

Voting Rights Act

- Section 208 provides for voters who need assistance to vote by reason of blindness, disability, or inability to read or write.
- Any such voter may be given assistance by a person of the voter's choice, other than the voter's employer or agent of the employer or officer or agent of the voter's union.

The Current State of Poll Access

- US Government Accountability Office:
<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-18-4>
- Surveys in 2000, 2008, and 2016
- Must be requested by Congress

Path of Travel: Parking to Booth

- Accessible polling places:
 - 2000: 16%
 - 2008: 27%
 - 2016: 40%

The Voting Booth

- Voting stations with at least one impediment:
 - 2000: not studied
 - 2008: 46%
 - 2016: 65%

Types of Impediments

- Not set up for privacy:
 - 2008: 23%
 - 2016: 28%
- Not wheelchair accessible:
 - 2008: 29%
 - 2016: 42%

Types of Impediments (Cont)

- No earphones:
 - 2008: 6%
 - 2016: 9%
- Voting system powered off:
 - 2008: 5%
 - 2016: 7%

The Bottom Line

- Polling places are slowly becoming more accessible.
- Voting stations are becoming less accessible.

Options for Voters

- Curbside voting
- Early voting
- Absentee balloting
- Ballot machine delivery
- Relocation of polling place

Beyond the Polls

- Inaccessible voter registration systems (<https://www.aclu.org/issues/disability-rights/access-denied>)
- Inaccessible websites and sample ballots
- Inaccessible absentee and mail voting
- Insufficient transit systems
- Emergency hospitalizations

Researching Your Options

- Your state elections website
- Your local elections officials
- Your P&A: www.ndrn.org
- www.electionary.info

When Voting Goes Wrong

- Call your P&A: www.ndrn.org
- Call Election Protection:
www.866ourvote.org
- NAD's ASL Hotline
- The Arc's voter app

Chat us your questions.

We're happy to answer your questions on the webinar. If you have requests for specific resources we will try to include those in the webinar round-up email with the recording and slides.



Background: Disability Rights Texas

- DRTx is the P&A in Texas
- 16 years experience working in non-profits (case manager, trainer, job coach and house parent).
- If I wanted to get things accomplished and connect clients with resources, I needed to partner with other local non-profit groups.
 - Chances are if my agency did not do a certain task or reach a certain group, another agency did. There is always a benefit to collaboration.
- I have always seen voting and civic engagement as a way to invest in one's community. Voting is a great first step to help clients take ownership of solving larger, macro-scale problems.

Partnering with the Disability Community

- P&As have resources and materials to help educate voters with disabilities and help them prepare to vote.
- P&As have access authority in many places that voter outreach is typically missed.
- Many state agencies are required to provide voter registration services. P&As help make sure the agency is providing all the services it is required to.

PAVA Work in Texas

- Texas is a big, and mostly rural state. Accessible transportation is a barrier:
 - Partnered with the League of Women Voters and created a state wide listing of free/low-cost, accessible transportation options
- Serve as a polling site
- Voter rights and registration trainings to case manager groups
- Connect county election offices with local groups to assist in voter outreach and improvement of polling sites
- Collaboration with school district special education departments

The Bottomline: How To Be An Ally

- Know the barriers and anticipate answers
- Make your websites and print materials accessible
- Train your volunteers
- Stop advocating for inaccessible elections innovations
- Collaborate with disability advocates in your state (www.ndrn.org)

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Thank You

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