

January 14, 2009

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Disability Advisory Committee, Meeting Minutes, January 13, 2009

The Disability Advisory Committee had a virtual meeting to discuss our proposed Voting Accessibility Grant Application for the January 16, 2008 grant cycle.

Persons contacted were:

Kristina Swanson, Cowlitz County Auditor  
Amea Paxton, Chief Deputy Auditor  
Carolyn Myers, Elections Supervisor  
Sharon Weinhold, Voter Outreach Coordinator  
Heather Ferguson, Disability Advocate  
Sunnie Smith, Manager of an Adult Home  
Audrey Jolley, DisAbility Resources  
Maurine Coon, LCOD/LCCB  
Bernie Altman, Mental Health Ombudsman  
Judy Chamberlin, DisAbility Resources  
Karla Black, DisAbility Resources  
Linda Jaques, LCCB  
Geri Rister, the ARC  
Diane Tischer, Wahkiakum County Auditor  
David Lord, Advisor/Consultant

Each member was contacted and given a copy or summary of the Voting Accessibility Grant Application. The members had an opportunity to review/discuss the application and provide suggestions, comments, or concurrence with the application as written.

**Voting Accessibility Grant Application, Improve Voter with Disability Education and Participation.**

The Disability Advisory Committee members are very supportive of this grant application. It is their opinion that, with these improvements, voters with disabilities and elderly voters will be able to become more knowledgeable of and involved in the election process.

One member observed that this accessibility enhancement is another form of outreach and way to encourage voters with disabilities to learn about the election process, participate in the process, and vote. Many voters with disabilities are interested in serving the community. However, the logistics of doing so sometimes precludes their service. Approval of this grant will take away some of the logistic barriers.

Another member followed to say this is a very important effort to help people with disabilities learn, participate, and vote. It is something “abled” people take for granted, and will help insure all people, regardless of age or disability, can participate.

Another member thought members of organizations like AARP, Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), and Community Action Program (CAP) might be interested in touring the Elections Office and getting an overview of the election process. That could lead to their participation in the process, which in turn would increase the number of participants and improve the administration of elections.

A hearing impaired member was particularly pleased with the initiative. She said so many people have hearing impairments and the microphone and headphones will help them hear and understand the proceedings. It will help a lot of people!!

The members agreed this would bring the conference room in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, greatly improve the accessibility of the conference room, and give persons with disabilities a better opportunity to learn about the election process, participate in the process, and vote.

Sharon Weinhold  
Cowlitz County Elections