RAAV Poll Worker Training Project

Training poll workers on disability, accessibility, and accommodations

Amanda Beals,
Paraquad

Melanie Bull,
Tennessee Disability Coalition
**Problem:** People with disabilities continue to face barriers on Election Day

**Cause:** Poll worker knowledge of accessibility and disability accommodation is lacking

**Solution:** Work with voters and election administrators to develop and pilot improved poll worker training materials and best practices
Voter Experience Surveys

- Phone Survey of 1,200 voters with disabilities in Missouri and Tennessee

- Major Findings:
  - Polling places continue to be inaccessible
  - Voters feel that poll workers do not know enough about available accommodations
  - Voters feel that poll workers are uncomfortable with and not knowledgeable about accessible voting equipment
County Clerk Interviews

- Interviewed 10 County Clerks from Missouri

Observations:
- Most common poll worker training is PowerPoint and lecture
- Average amount of time allowed for training is 1 ½ to 2 hours
- Many Clerks opposed to collecting formal evaluations
- Lack of funding prevents County Clerks from making some improvements
County Clerk Interviews

- Interviewed 10 County Clerks from Missouri
- Needs Expressed by Administrators
  - Poll worker retention of information
  - Interactive, hands-on trainings are well-received but hard to implement
  - Checklists and visual aids
  - Need More Workers
  - Accessible signage and placement of signage
What We Know about Training Adults

- Use Mixed Methods
- Adults Learn More by Participating
- Distribute Handouts
  - Route Maps-Clear Objectives
- Repeat and Reinforce
Training Focus Areas

- Voting Machine Use
- Polling Places - Accessible Set-Up
- Accommodations: Curbside Voting
Lesson Plans

Voting Machine Features Checklist

- Show poll worker what the accessible machine looks like.
- Show poll worker where they can find technical support information in case of malfunction.
- Show poll worker accessibility equipment that can be used with the machine (headphones, keyboards, buttons, etc).
- Explain how this equipment is used (headphones for audio ballot, function of each key on the keypad).
- Show poll worker where to plug headphones in.
- Show poll worker how to start the machine and initiate a ballot.
- Show poll worker introductory screen and review options on initial screen.
- Instructions
  - High Contrast
  - Large Print
- Show poll worker how to run through a full ballot in regular voting mode:
  - Move through contests
  - Select contest
  - Move through candidates
  - Select candidate
  - Review summary of ballot
  - Change a vote
  - Cast vote
- Show poll worker how to run through a full ballot in audio mode.

Sample PowerPoint Slides and Notes

Handouts/Checklists for Poll Workers
Paraquad and Tennessee Disability Coalition

- Election Day Job Aid
  - “Election Day Picture Guide”
    - Modeled After St. Louis City’s Guide
  - Step by step picture guide focused on:
    - Polling Place Set-Up
    - Using Accessible Voting Machine Features
    - Curbside Voting
  - Available at Polling Places on Election Day
Ideal Polling Place Map

1. Parking
   a. Accessible parking is clearly marked
   b. Access aisle next to accessible parking is 8 feet wide (van) or 5 feet wide (car)
   c. Parking spots are reasonably level
   d. Parking can be created using cones

2. Accessible Route
   a. Accessible routes located and marked with signage
   b. Route does not contain steps
   c. Curb cut located if curb present
   d. Routes are free of debris and clutter

3. Entrances and Doorways
   a. Accessible Entrance located and marked
   b. Doorway at least 36” in width (If no, prop open)
   c. Doorway has handle that is easily opened with closed fist and not excessively heavy (If no, prop open)

4. Voting Area (On Back)

Pictures from US Dept. of Justice; ADA Checklist for Polling Places
Ideal Polling Place Map

1. Pathways
   a. Clear and free of debris and clutter
   b. At least 36” wide

2. Entrances and Doorways
   a. Doors that are heavy or narrow are propped open

3. Voting Machine Set-Up
   a. There is enough space between machines and walls for maneuverability (especially wheelchair maneuvering)
   b. At least one accessible voting station is set up (lower than other voting stations)

4. Sign-In Tables
   a. Ample space in front of table for maneuverability
   b. Height of table is 28-34 inches

5. Tables and Chairs
   a. There is an extra table and chairs available for voters who request them

Pictures from US Dept. of Justice: ADA Checklist for Polling Places
Using the Electronic Voting Machine

AccuVote
- This is the Electronic Voting Equipment at your precinct. It is set up for all voters and has features that improve accessibility.

Accessibilty Equipment
- The AccuVote comes with headsets and a keypad, which are used during audio voting.

Initiate Ballot
- To start the voting process, insert the voter’s card into the slot shown here.

Start Up Screen
- When the ballot is loaded, this screen appears. Notice the options at the bottom of the screen.

High Contrast
- If a voter requests high contrast, press “High Contrast” on the bottom right of the screen.

Large Print
- If a voter requests large print, press “Large Text” on the bottom left of the screen.

Adjust Screen Tilt
- If the voter complains of glare on the screen or requests the screen be tilted, adjust the screen by pushing the buttons on the back bar and lifting the screen up.

Proper Space
- When setting up the machine, make sure there is ample space between the machine and the wall for maneuvering.

Selecting Contest
- To move between contests, select the “Next” button on the bottom right side of the screen.

Select/De-Select Candidate
- To select and de-select candidates, just touch the name of the candidate you wish to select.

Review/Summary of Ballot
- When a voter is finished moving through the ballot, a summary screen will appear. Use the arrows to review choices.

Changing a Vote
- If a voter wished to change their vote in one or more contests, they will press “Reject Ballot.” All ballot choices will still be selected, the voter can change votes in the contest of their choice.

Cast a Ballot
- After filling out a ballot, press “Cast Ballot” to officially record votes.

Confirmation
- A confirmation screen will appear when ballot has been cast successfully.
Using an Audio Ballot

**Necessary Equipment**
To utilize the audio ballot, you will need headphones and a keypad.

**Initiating Audio Ballot**
To initiate the audio option, simply plug the headphones in.

**Moving Through Ballot**
The voter will use the keypad, similar to that of a telephone, to move through the ballot.

**Keypad Functions**
- 4 & 6: Move between candidates; 2 & 8: Move between contests; 5: Selects and deselects; 9: Casts vote; *7: Rejects ballot
- To adjust audio volume, use volume control on headphones.

**Moving Between Contests**
To move from one contest down to the next, the voter will press "8".

**Moving Between Candidates**
To move backwards between candidates, the voter will press "4".

**Select/De-Select Candidates**
To select or de-select a candidate, voter will press "*5".

**Repeat Instructions**
If voter needs instructions repeated, voter can wait and instructions will automatically repeat.

**Review/Summary of Ballot**
When voter has completed ballot, a summary screen will appear. The audio will read through every contest and selection.

**Changing a Vote**
If a voter wishes to change their vote, they will press "7" to return to the beginning of the ballot. The voter can then change their vote in the contest of their choice.

**Casting a Vote**
Once at the summary screen, the voter will press "*9" to cast a ballot.

**Confirmation**
Once the vote has been officially recorded, the audio will announce that the vote has been cast.
CHALLENGES

1. Training Time Constraints
2. Financial Constraints
3. Confusion with ADA Guidelines
4. Limited Evaluation Techniques
General Findings

- Poll workers find it helpful to have variety of training methodology

- Election Day Picture Guide was well received and used by poll workers
Election Day Picture Guides

- 51% Used Picture Guide
- 90% Guide was Helpful

Picture Guide Uses
- Voting Machines: 47%
- Polling Place Set-Up: 36%
- Curbside Voting: 13%
- Other: 4%
If you only take 3 things away with you today...

- Consider training based on teaching workers how to use job aids

- Work with community members, disability groups year round

- Train poll workers on how to use accessibility features of voting equipment, not just set up.. follow up with job aid
Regarding Polling Place Accessibility...

- Keep yourself and staff up to date on ADA, HAVA

- Troubleshoot accessibility issues well before Election
For Continued Growth and Improvement...

- Create and utilize networking opportunities
- Evaluate yourself, your staff, and poll workers

Message from the Community...

- Hire people with disabilities as poll workers and election staff
More information..

- Handout is available to give more detail on recommendations and resources for who to contact
Amanda Beals
Paraquad, Inc.
abeals@paraquad.org
314.289.4301

Melanie Bull
Tennessee Disability Coalition
melanie_b@tndisability.org
865.607.9042