

# Creating an Accessible Political Campaign



## Tips for Reaching Voters with Disabilities

## **Idahoans with Disabilities Vote**

- ⇒ **More than 15% of voting age Idahoans have a disability**
- ⇒ **More than 15 million people with disabilities reported voting in the 2012 Presidential election**

Source: 2014 Annual Disability Statistics Compendium; Rutgers University, Disability, Voter Turnout, and Voting Difficulties in the 2012 Elections, 2013

### **Public Events: debates, forums, town hall meetings, etc.**

Physical accessibility: Prior to scheduling, confirm location is accessible.

#### **ASK:**

- ⇒ Is accessible parking available close to the entrance?
- ⇒ Is the route from the parking spaces or the drop off/pick up area to the front door at least 36 inches wide?
- ⇒ Is the route inside the building from the accessible entrance to the bathrooms and the actual event at least 36 inches wide, including doorways?
- ⇒ Are the bathrooms accessible? Is there a stall that is wide enough for someone in a wheelchair to turn around?
- ⇒ Visit the site if possible to ensure that it is, in fact, accessible.
- ⇒ If the accessible entrance is different from the main entrance, confirm that signs (temporary signs are okay) direct people to the accessible entrance.
- ⇒ During the event, confirm that all routes remain accessible.
- ⇒ Contract with a reputable sign language interpreter(s) for signing during the entire event.
- ⇒ If the event is being filmed for television, make sure that it will be

# Technology and Mass Communication

## Television

Closed Captioning: Scrolling text across a television screen

- ⇒ Provides access to your information to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, non-native English speakers, and/or people in loud places such as airports
- ⇒ Captioning is sometimes required by law. In any case, it can be a good way to get your message out to people who may otherwise not have access to the information

Resource: The Described and Captioned Media Program (DCMP) is funded by the U.S. Department of Education and administered by the National Association of the Deaf. The DCMP website (<http://www.dcmp.org>) offers information about captioning.

## Email

- ⇒ Avoid using images in e-mails because automated screen reader programs used by people with a vision impairment will not be able to tell what the image is. Or, provide a description each image used.
- ⇒ E-mail is often the preferred mode of communication for many who have sensory impairments.
- ⇒ If you have a phone line for the general public, include an email address as well for alternate communication.
- ⇒ Communicating with PDFs: While many types of assistive technology are now able to access PDFs, it is a good idea to check out this web site for tips on making your PDFs more accessible: [www.adobe.com/accessibility.html](http://www.adobe.com/accessibility.html)

## Mail

Be sure that your staff knows how to handle a request for accessible materials such as Braille materials and large print. Ask the individual if they use a screen reader. If so, ask if you can email materials or send them on a CD or flash drive. Large Print material can be created using a standard office printer. Use standard Roman or Sans Serifs fonts, such as Arial ensuring the font is at least 18 point.

## **Know How to Communicate**

- ⇒ The more relaxed you are, the more relaxed the individual will be.
- ⇒ Talk directly to the person, not to the aide, friend, family member or interpreter.
- ⇒ Use a normal voice; do not raise your voice unless requested.
- ⇒ Make eye contact.
- ⇒ If the individual does not understand you when you speak, try again.
- ⇒ If you don't understand the person, ask them to repeat what they said.
- ⇒ When talking to a person who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at the same height.

## **Use Your Disability Awareness**

- ⇒ Don't let well intentioned actions create barriers to individuals with disabilities.
- ⇒ Unless you are shaking hands in greeting or the individual has requested specific assistance, do not touch the person or a person's cane, wheelchair (not even to push it), or other device without permission.
- ⇒ You may have to gently touch a person who is deaf to get their attention.
- ⇒ Guide dogs and other service animals are working animals. Do not touch them unless you have permission.
- ⇒ A noisy or dark environment is sometimes difficult for people with vision, speech, hearing, or hidden disabilities.
- ⇒ Be aware of paths of travel. Describe the surroundings, especially obstacles, if needed.
- ⇒ If you don't know, just ASK

## **Idaho Resources:**

**Northwest-ADA Center, Idaho:** [dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com](mailto:dananwadacenteridaho@gmail.com)

ADA TA Hotline: voice and text 208-841-9422

Website: <http://www.nwadacenter.org/idaho>

**Idaho Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired:**

208-334-3220

Website: <http://www.icbvi.state.id.us>

**Idaho Council for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**

208-334-0879 V, 208-473-2122 VP/V

Website: <http://www.cdhh.idaho.gov>

**Idaho State Independent Living Council**

208-334-3800

Website: <http://www.silc.idaho.gov>

**Idaho Assistive Technology Project,** [idaheat@uidaho.edu](mailto:idaheat@uidaho.edu)

800-432-8324

Website: <http://www.idaheat.org>

**Idaho Council on Developmental Disabilities**

208-334-2178

Website: <http://icdd.idaho.gov>

## **Learn More...**

Website Accessibility

**W3C Web Accessibility Initiative—Designing for Inclusion**

Website: <https://www.w3.org/WAI/users/Overview.html>

## Northwest Center Idaho

The Northwest ADA Center is funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR), and is part of the ADA National Network. The ADA National Network Centers are a national platform of ten centers comprised of ADA professionals and experts charged with assisting businesses, state and local governments, and people with disabilities as they manage the process of changing our culture to be user friendly to disability and the effect the variety of health conditions can have on society. The Northwest ADA Center is a part of the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine at the University of Washington, and collaborates with the Center for Technology and Disability Studies, a program within the Center for Human Development and Disability and the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine.

The Idaho State Independent Living Council aspires to promote a philosophy of independent living, including a philosophy of consumer control, peer-support, self-help, self-determination, equal access, and individual and system advocacy in order to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and the integration and full inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of society. State Independent Living Councils were established under the authority of Title VII Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.



This publication is intended solely as informal guidance and is neither a determination of your legal rights or responsibilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act or other laws, nor binding on any agency with enforcement responsibility under the ADA and other disability related laws.

This publication is not meant to address any or all legal obligations of campaigns or candidates.

The Idaho State Independent Living Council (SILC) and the Northwest ADA Center Idaho do not endorse the products listed in this document, nor is Idaho SILC or NW-ADA Center Idaho responsible for the content found via the links in this document.

This publication was funded in part with a grant from the Administration on Community Living, Department of Health and Human Services. The views in the publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the funding source.