



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

Susan J. Beals
Commissioner

March 21, 2025

VIA ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

Julie Triplett, disAbility Law Center of Virginia

Julie.Triplett@dlcv.org

Rachel Loria, disAbility Law Center of Virginia

Rachel.Loria@dLCV.org

Dear Ms. Triplett and Ms. Loria:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the disAbility Law Center of Virginia's 2024 polling place accessibility site survey. The Virginia Department of Elections (ELECT) and Virginia's elections community are committed to ensuring that all qualified voters have equal access to cast their ballots.

Over the last three years, ELECT has implemented several measures to make elections more accessible in the Commonwealth including but not limited to dedicated ADA-related resources and training, improved website accessibility, and additional reporting from localities regarding polling place accessibility compliance. In anticipation of the presidential election in November 2024, ELECT took steps to provide increased training and resources to Virginia's general registrars and local electoral boards. These efforts included but were not limited to:

- Updated and revised guidance documents and forms regarding accessibility with feedback from dLCV.
- Invited dLCV to present at the Virginia Elections Workshop (VEW) in July 2024.
- Improved online ADA training resources for general registrars and officers of election with feedback from dLCV.

In early 2025, dLCV provided ELECT with the results of their November 5, 2024 survey of polling place accessibility, which showed that most polling places appeared to be accessible and did not have major barriers that would prevent voters from accessing the building. The results of dLCV's 2024 survey are being shared with general registrars and local electoral boards across the Commonwealth, so they may individually assess some of the topics addressed in the report and incorporate them into already existing best practices. Additionally, ELECT will conduct additional outreach to the localities specifically mentioned in the report to address the issues presented. These localities will be required to complete a training course that reinforces accessibility standards.

While there are always ways to improve accessibility, ELECT feels confident that voters will find their polling places and ELECT's website even more accessible in 2025. ELECT will continue to monitor accessibility both internally and externally while committing to the following efforts over the next year:

- ELECT has invited dLCV to exhibit at the Virginia Elections Workshop (VEW) in July 2025.
- ELECT staff is working to implement WCAG 2.1 Level A and AA website and document standards, per federal regulation.
- ELECT will partner with dLCV and other disability advocacy groups to encourage and recruit more individuals with disabilities to participate as officers of election in their localities.
- ELECT will continue to provide information and resources to local election officials to improve accessibility awareness and best practices. In 2025, this may include:
 - Enhancements to Officer of Election training regarding audio ballot voting equipment.
 - Artwork designed for "need assistance" signage for localities to display at polling places.
 - Additional resources for use at the local level regarding polling place readiness.
- ELECT will continue to work with dLCV to provide additional training regarding accessibility and effective communication with individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility remains a top priority for the Virginia Department of Elections and local election officials in providing accurate, fair, open, and secure elections to the citizens of the Commonwealth. ELECT looks forward to future collaborations with dLCV and appreciates your agency's advocacy for the rights of Virginia voters with disabilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Beals". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" being more prominent than the last name "Beals".

Susan Beals
Commissioner of Elections