



## Catskill Center for Independence

### PROJECT HAVA

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### ALTERNATIVE ACCESSIBLE FORMATS

- **What** is an alternative format?

An alternative format is just what it sounds like. **It is providing information in a way that is different from the way it is usually provided.** For example, written materials are generally provided in black type on a white background in a 12-point font. Alternative formats to materials printed the usual way would be:

- Large print (up to 24-point font)
- Cassette tape recording
- Computer disc
- Braille
- Electronically (email or web site)

- **When** must materials in an alternative format be provided?

Any time elected officials or board of elections representatives provide or distribute printed information it must also be made available in alternative format, upon request.

- **Why** is this required?

First of all, **it's the law.** More importantly, a significant number of the population has a disability that impacts their ability to see or read. Individuals who are blind, legally blind, have low vision, or have a learning disability may all need an alternative accessible format. According to the US Census Bureau, there are almost **800,000 New Yorkers (>5%) who have difficulty seeing newsprint or are unable to see newsprint at all.** By not providing materials in alternative accessible formats this entire segment of the general population are excluded from accessing important information.

Below are examples of some types of election-related material that must be available in alternative accessible formats. For additional information the American Council of the Blind distributes a publication called "A Guide to Making Documents Accessible to People Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired" and can be accessed at: <http://www.acb.org/accessible-formats.html>. For additional information contact Project HAVA.

**Voter Registration Forms** - Should be made available to all local registration sites, authorized National Voter Registration Act sites and all designated participating agencies under 5-211 of the Election Law.

**Sample Ballots** - For posting on wall in full size or a smaller sample available at each Election District table.

**Voters' Bill of Rights** - For distribution on demand. Sufficient supply needs to be made up in advance based on recent experience of demand (plus an additional quantity).

**Public Notices** - Posted and distributed however written notices are and may include items such as notices of change in location of polling site and electioneering warnings.

**Absentee Ballots** - A sufficient supply needs to be made up in advance based on recent experience of demand (plus an additional quantity). Applicants for absentee ballots should be informed of the availability of absentee ballots in alternative formats, whether or not they indicate a permanent disability on the application.

**Instructions on How to Vote/ Operate Voting Machines** - Preliminary information is needed before using the machine and duplicate copies of the actual machine instructions need to be provided as well so that people can become familiar with navigating the machine features before entering the polling booth. This probably could be required of and produced by the vendors.

**Provisional Ballots** - An adequate quantity should be made available in each election district (ED) as indicated by past usage (plus an additional quantity) at the sign-in tables.

**Instructions for Provisional Ballots** - Should be available in a number slightly larger than the number of provisional ballots (in order to ensure extra copies for each poll worker as well as for others that may inquire, but don't immediately need to use a provisional ballot).

**Oath Forms for Persons Providing Assistance to Voters With Disabilities** - Section 8-306(5) of the Election Law provides for an oath by any person other than an inspector who assists any voter who requires assistance by reason of "blindness, disability or inability to read or write." Where counties, towns and villages provide for such oaths in written format, copies should also be available in alternative formats.

**Non-Partisan Election Guides** - Where made available by election officials, these guides' availability in alternative formats should be indicated. It may be possible to work with the authors of such guides to obtain copies in accessible formats.

**Directional Signage in Braille** - Should be made available at least for interior directional signage at polling sites.



**“EVERY DAY IS INDEPENDENCE DAY!”**