

## **Mason County Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee Plan:**

In the interest of improving access to voting and voting materials to persons with disabilities, the County Auditor's office and the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee shall take the following steps:

### **Polling Places, Accessible Voting Unit, and Ballot Drop Boxes thru-out the county:**

Mason County conducts all elections by mail. Based on current staffing levels and available resources, the Auditor's office will be designated as a polling place where ballots are issued and where the accessible voting device for the disabled will be available.

The eSlate accessible voting device will be located in the Auditor's office to increase the opportunity for citizens with disabilities to be able to fully participate in the voting process. The disability access voting equipment (AVU) will be available at the Auditor's office during business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday, beginning at least eighteen days prior to every election until 8:00 p.m. election night. The Auditor's office provides accessibility, privacy and voting independence. The Auditor's office meets HAVA and ADA requirements and is accessible to individuals with full-range disabilities.

Additional locations throughout Mason County may be considered as a polling place where voters can access the AVU. Committee members will continue to suggest and review future locations for installing additional ballot drop box locations throughout Mason County.

Mason County currently has six ballot drop boxes installed throughout the county. All boxes are easily accessible by vehicle, Mason Transit, or on foot.

### **Ballot drop-box locations:**

- New! Kamilche – Outdoor box with drive by access at Fire District #4 Kamilche Station.
- Belfair – outdoor box available next door to John L. Scott building; parking available and easy access
- Hoodsport – outdoor box available at the Hood Canal Chamber of Commerce; parking and ramp available
- Shelton - Timberland Regional Library; outdoor box with drive-by access
- Shelton - Auditor's office outdoor box available; parking and ramp available, ADA compliant.

- Shelton - Auditor's office inside box available; parking and ramp available, elevator, ADA compliant
- Allyn – Port of Allyn; parking available and easy access

### **Education and Voter Outreach:**

- Provide large print ballots to voters who are visually impaired – when requested.
- Provide information regarding our eSlate accessible voting device (AVU) by posting pertinent information on the Auditor's website and with the local media.
- Periodically send letters, brochures and visit appropriate organizations in Mason County informing and educating them of the availability of accessible voting for the disabled.
- Demonstrate the accessible voting device to appropriate organizations – to encourage participation.
- As staffing allows, staff a booth at local events to demonstrate and provide information to the community on the AVU - Allyn Days, Mason Area Fair, Taste of Hood Canal, Farmers Market, etc..
- As staffing allows, provide additional opportunities to vote on the AVU during election time at the Senior Center, North Mason Resource Center, local Libraries, and Retirement Centers.
- Address and recommend ways to better serve voters with cognitive issues and language barrier issues.
- Improve options for voting to those who are currently homeless or displaced.
- Continue to conduct registration drives at St. David's Community Center and provide the opportunity at this location to vote by ballot or by using the AVU.
- Continue to research best practices on the best ways to reach individuals who may benefit from voting on the AVU.

## **Progress from Last Year:**

- We collaborated with Community Lifeline at St. David's Parrish Hall to provide voter registration services before the evening's community meal and one week later, during the same time frame, a bi-lingual voting center. At the voting center we provided ballots, accessible voting, provisional ballots, a local voters' pamphlet and voter registration services.
- We encouraged new members to join us and have added to our committee Amy Davis from the League of Women Voters and Chuck Orthmann, a citizen who has an established relationship with the currently homeless or displaced community that we are trying to reach. We welcome them to the committee and are excited about their contribution.
- Installed a new drive by ballot box serving the southern end of the county and the Squaxin Island Tribal area. We collaborated closely with the Squaxin Island Tribe and Fire Protection District #4 to find the best location for this drop box which is located at the Fire Station in the Kamilche area, 3660 SE Old Olympic Hwy Shelton.
- Earned an excellent rating after a formal review of our elections administration by the Secretary of State's Office and our Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee was specifically mentioned as exceptional. Additionally, Mason County was asked to make a presentation at the Annual Elections Conference in Spokane about our numerous outreach programs to the homeless or displaced populations.

## **New Goals:**

Explore voter registration opportunities on the local transit or at the bus stations. Look at peak ridership times and meet citizens, who are perhaps more transitory, in a location where they feel comfortable and give them an opportunity to register to vote.

When the new transit center open downtown, coordinate with the users of that facility to register new voters.

Work with the North Mason Resource Center in Belfair to help register those currently displaced or without permanent housing in the north end of the county.

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