



Disability Rights Iowa

LEGAL PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY

Tips for Serving Voters with Disabilities

Use person first language:

Always put the person before the disability; avoid using derogatory outdated words.

Say this....	Not this....
Person with a physical disability	Crippled or handicapped
Man who uses a wheelchair	Wheelchair bound man
Girl who is blind	The blind girl
Woman who is deaf	The deaf woman
Boy with an intellectual disability	Retard, idiot, or moron
Individual without a disability	Normal or able bodied
Accessible parking	Handicapped parking

General Reminders:

- Assume competence and treat every voter with respect
- Do not single out voters with disabilities
- Remind all voters you are there if they need assistance
- Ask all voters if they have experience using the machines
- If you offer assistance – wait until the offer is accepted
- Individuals with disabilities are the best judge of what they can or cannot do
- Speak directly to the voter and not their companion if they have one
- Do not question a person about their disability
- Remember some disabilities are invisible
- Do not touch, pet, or distract service animals

Special thanks to The Protection and Advocacy System for South Carolina for letting DRI use their pollworker reference sheets.