

VOTING ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE (VAAC)

Overview

What is the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)?

The Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) is an advisory committee comprised of local government and local community members. The purpose of the Humboldt VAAC is to assist the Office of Elections in ensuring polling places meet accessibility guidelines determined by the Secretary of State (Elections Code, Section 12280).

Mission Statement

The Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) of Humboldt County is an advisory committee that seeks to set reasonable, achievable goals for making polling places within the County of Humboldt accessible to all voters, to establish realistic time lines for identifying accessibility issues and developing mitigation measures, to secure necessary funding to achieve identified goals, and to provide ongoing review of polling places.

What is the role of Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC)?

Members of the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) meet periodically to review site accessibility surveys conducted by the Office of Elections, advising county elections officials on the placement of voting equipment, recognition of barriers to participation by elderly voters and voters with disabilities, and mechanisms to eliminate or mitigate the impact of these barriers to accessibility. Members additionally evaluate inaccessible polling places or voting areas to determine if application of specific temporary modifying measures would make the polling place accessible.

Background Summary

For decades the Office of Elections has reviewed polling places for accessibility and submitted survey reports to the Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) advisory group for review and input. In 2005, the Office of Elections developed a four-year ADA Compliance Plan based on the randomly selected survey review by Tri-County Independent Living Incorporated. In 2013, the Office of Elections spearheaded a comprehensive polling place review to update usability statuses and mitigation necessary for use.

Over the last year several facilities notified the Office of Elections they could no longer serve the community as polling places for voters. The Office of Elections researched potential replacement polling places in these communities and conducted many surveys for accessibility. These surveys are the immediate focus of the VAAC.