

IFSP State Council Meeting

June 28, 2024, 12:00 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

Registration Link: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/e65d3156-00eb-4343-b96f-42b52946eef9@620ae5a9-4ec1-4fa0-8641-5d9f386c7309>

Attendees: Heather Hines (DBHDS); Rhonda Gaines (DBHDS); Rachel Vamenta (DBHDS); Lynne Fetter (DBHDS); Deanna Parker (DBHDS); Rachel Loria (dLCV); Becky Tallarico (VA Relay); Angela Lello (Northern); Christi Stafford (Central); Donna Robel (Eastern, VCU CFI); Erika Rogers (Western); Jen Reese (Northern, VCU CFI); Jen Rockwell (Northern); Joan Brunner (Eastern, VCU CFI); Lisa Richard (Southwest, VCU CFI); Monica Mann (Central); Nickie Brandenburger (VCU CFI); Rebecca Stickler (Western, VCU CFI); Renee Soniat (Central, VCU CFI); Shawn Kirk (Central); Tia Webb (Western); William O'Connell (Eastern)

Hamilton Relay link: <https://www.streamtext.net/player?event=HamiltonRelayRCC-0628-VA42170>

I. Introductions and agenda

- a. Staff introductions and welcome
- b. Icebreaker: What is your favorite summer snack?
- c. Educational presentation: Rachel Loria, disability Law Center of Virginia
- d. Communications update
- e. Council update
- f. General program update
- g. IFSP State Plan update
- h. Wrap-up and adjourn

II. Educational presentation: Know Your Voting Rights

- a. Rachel Loria is a Senior Disability Rights Advocate at the disAbility Law Center of Virginia (dLCV). Some of her work focuses on voting rights.
- b. Rachel reviewed important General Election dates for 2024 and dLCV's voting work, including the annual polling place accessibility survey and efforts to address issues and advocate for change. Rachel also reviewed voting rights of people with guardians (and alternatives such as limited guardianship).
- c. Please see the attached PDF of Rachel's presentation following these minutes.
- d. To get in touch with dLCV, please call 800-552-3962 or 804-225-2042 on Monday, Wednesday, or Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. or go to www.dlcv.org/get-help. To get in touch with Rachel, please email rachel.loria@dlcv.org.
- e. Questions:
 - i. Rhonda: What if you can't physically complete the ballot form? Are you entitled to assistance?
 - Rachel: Yes, there is a form to fill out ahead of time. There should also be signs up telling you that you can fill out a form to get election staff to help you. dLCV is working on emphasizing the need for this with election workers.
 - ii. William: Where is my polling place?
 - Rachel will follow up with William after the meeting.

- iii. Rhonda: What if you're at the polling place and you need assistance, but all staff are busy and you are being ignored? How do you advocate for yourself? Is there a particular person you should ask for onsite?
 - Rachel: That would be when you would contact dLCV so that they can talk to the registrar and polling place to make sure that doesn't happen. On the day of, there are election assistance and advocacy organizations. Onsite, ask for the Election Chief.
- iv. Tia: Can someone with a disability have someone physically assist them with voting? Do they need to carry a card proving they've filled out the form?
 - Rachel: Yes. That is when you would need to fill out a form. The Board of Elections is working on that process right now. Rachel will provide more detailed information after the meeting.
- v. Deanna Parker: Is there a phone number that someone can call if they can't see anyone to assist, especially if voting from their car?
 - Rachel: Yes. On the curbside voting sign, there should be a phone number to call to get someone there, or a doorbell of some kind to ring to let the polling place know that someone needs to vote curbside. If there is not, call dLCV and we will contact the registrar so that can be rectified.

III. **Communications update: Led by the IFSP Communications and Program Coordinator**

- a. Getting input from Councilmembers
 - i. Typically, the IFSP emails Council drafts of documents to review prior to the meeting so the documents can be discussed. However, some people do not like to share their feedback during a meeting. Regional Councilmembers also need to be able to provide input, so State Councilmembers should take this information back to their Regional Councils to get their input. This gives the IFSP a sense of what is important to people with lived experience so the IFSP can bring the materials to a higher standard. There used to be a Communications Advisory Group, but program changes meant that IFSP could not continue it; this group is dissolved.
 - ii. Proposed solution: Communications and Program Coordinator will attend Regional monthly business meetings at minimum 3 times a year for 10-15 minutes to seek input from Councilmembers.
 - Program Manager: The IFSP will try this format to minimize additional meetings that Councilmembers would have to attend. Please feel free to provide feedback on this format going forward.
- b. Drafts of the Annual Satisfaction Survey and Annual Mailer were included for review in a meeting reminder email. There is a lot of information that IFSP must include in the mailer, but it can be arranged in a more meaningful way.
 - i. Renee: Information is beneficial, but it can be pared down to decrease overwhelm for families. Recommended the same document in two different formats for those who want less information at once.
 - Program Manager: Earlier this year, the IFSP created a one-page document to take to a couple of events.
 - ii. Tia: Families want to see instant information besides contacting IFSP or My Life, My Community. Who do we talk to? What phone number do we call? Where do we go?

- Community Coordination Supervisor: The two documents can work together. The information from the trifold is information for before the calls. The one-pager is an immediate resource to share in the community.
- c. Updating Council recruitment materials: This includes updating the Council recruitment video. Councilmembers would be sent questions ahead of time to answer during a short, recorded video call. Councilmembers who are interested in this should contact the IFSP.
- d. IFSP-Funding FY 2023 and 2024 debit card reminder emails: The IFSP sent one last reminder out to FY 2023 cardholders to activate their cards and use or remove the funding from their cards. Soon, reminder emails will be sent out for those whose cards were issued for FY 2024 to prepare for the beginning of the FY 2025 funding cycle.
- e. Please send Facebook post and IFSP Digest suggestions to IFSPCom@dbhds.virginia.gov.
 - i. Program Manager: IFSP Council members also put suggestions on their monthly reports during business meetings.
- f. FY 25 Updates to the Communications Plan:
 - i. The IFSP is changing the timeline for a couple things. IFSP typically shares annual funding program and satisfaction survey data during June State Council meetings. The IFSP is changing it to April State Council meetings.
 - ii. The Communications Advisory Group was removed from the Communications Plan because it no longer exists.

IV. Council update: Led by the IFSP Community Coordination Supervisor

- a. Mid-year State Council duty reminders:
 - i. State Councilmembers should take notes of information shared in these meetings to take back to the regional councils.
 - ii. State Councilmembers should review attendance requirements to ensure that they are fulfilling their volunteer commitments.
 - iii. Registration for regional and state meetings is required, but also required for meetings on Microsoft Teams. There is a cap on the number of people who can attend a meeting in Microsoft Teams.
- b. Upcoming 2024 meeting dates:
 - i. Next Coordinated Regional Council Meeting: Thurs., July 18th from 6 to 8:15 p.m.
 - ii. Next State Council Meeting: Fri., Aug. 23rd from 12 to 2:15 p.m.
 - iii. In-Person Event: Thurs., Sept. 26th at Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave, VA from 12 to 4 p.m.
- c. Council recruitment is coming up in August 2024. Materials are being prepared. New this year is an invitation for Councilmembers to be a part of the recruitment process. Orientation for new members will be in November. The IFSP hopes that current members will choose to return to Council next year.
- d. At the next State Council meeting, Council will review the Council Charter. Councilmembers will receive old charter and proposed changes to review.
- e. As the IFSP and Council are looking at new Councilmembers, the IFSP wants to make sure that they are focused on DBHDS mission and vision and can work within the IFSP's program capacity.

- f. The IFSP will send out an email to poll which Councilmembers would like to assist during the September Regional Council event as volunteers. The IFSP will reimburse for travel round-trip and for a hotel if a Councilmember is traveling more than 165 miles one way.

V. General program updates: Led by the IFSP Program Manager

- a. IFSP-Funding Regulations and Guidelines
 - i. An email recently went out to everyone on the email list about our final regulations published on June 17th. There is a 30-day public comment period open until July 17th. After that, the emergency changes from 2023 will be permanent.
 - ii. In January, State Council worked on the Funding Guidelines together. The draft guidelines are currently going through the approval process. Then, they will be posted to Town Hall. Goal is to have changes approved prior to the next funding cycle. Under the new guidelines, those unfunded priority one applications will be randomized along with priorities two and three. The IFSP determined that if any funds are remaining in priority one, then that funding would go to priority 2 and 3. The language has also been clarified so that applicants understand that funding approval is not based on what they applied for. The IFSP clarified the language around requests for reconsideration. IFSP had to change the process for awarding funding to account for the appeals process in case the IFSP ever has to overturn a denial decision.
 - iii. Questions:
 - Jen Reese: Do people who are approved for waiver slots after they apply for the funding get to keep their awarded funds?
 - a. Program Manager: IFSP must check in the period of time between application and issuance of funds to ensure that no one who received a waiver slot will be issued funds. Once the funds are issued, they belong to the person.
 - b. Jen suggested to make that clear to applicants.
 - Tia: For appeals, does something has to have changed that is documented to make IFSP turn over a denial decision?
 - a. Program Manager: There is no judgment required on the team's part. The process is only based on numbers (CNS scores) and randomization. When someone appeals, the IFSP determines whether the process was followed.
 - b. Communications and Program Coordinator: We will also have a list of applicants who never registered their funding cards in previous years. That would disqualify applicants.
- b. Department of Justice Settlement Agreement
 - i. They are working with the courts currently on details and agreements. The IFSP has come into sustained compliance with all its 17 indicators (targets). Sustained means over two study periods. The IFSP thanks all internal and external partners for their work in helping the IFSP come into compliance. The IFSP will continue to do the work we have been doing; staff will be able to dedicate more time to do the work.

- c. Community Events
 - i. In March, the IFSP Program Manager attended a Life after High School transition fair in the Western region with Thea Blech-Caulder. In June, the IFSP Program Manager also attended the I'm Determined summit at JMU (Western region).
 - ii. Please let the IFSP know what events you are attending, and share pictures!

VI. State Plan Review: Led by the IFSP Program Manager

- a. Councilmember feedback is important!
- b. The IFSP is not making any major changes to the Plan this year.
- c. The IFSP Program Manager reviewed each goal with State Council and shared proposed changes. There were no comments from State Councilmembers.
- d. Councilmembers may email any feedback to IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov.

VII. Wrap-up and adjourn

- a. Next Coordinated Regional Council Meeting: Thursday, July 18th from 6 to 8:15 p.m.
- b. Next State Council Meeting: Friday, August 23rd from 12 to 2:15 p.m.
- c. In-Person Event: Thursday, September 26th at Blue Ridge Community College in Weyers Cave, VA from 12 to 4 p.m.
- d. Reminder: 2025 Council recruitment begins August 2024.

Note: This meeting was scheduled to run until 2:30, but ended early around 1:55 p.m.



disABILITY LAW CENTER
OF VIRGINIA
Protection & Advocacy for Virginians with Disabilities

Voting Rights Training

June 28th

Rachel Loria

Senior Disability Rights Advocate
disAbility Law Center of Virginia

Legal Disclaimer

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- This presentation is designed to provide general legal information and is not intended to provide legal advice.
 - This presentation does not create an attorney-client relationship with the disAbility Law Center of Virginia.

What is the disAbility Law Center of Virginia

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- The disAbility Law Center of Virginia (“dLCV”) provides services ranging from general information about legal rights, individualized technical assistance, advocacy services, and legal representation in selected cases.
 - Although we would like to help resolve every disability-related problem that comes to our attention, dLCV does not have enough staff or resources to provide advocacy services for everyone who contacts us for assistance. To ensure that dLCV’s limited resources are used wisely, we adopt annual “Goals, Focus Areas, Objectives and Case Selection Criteria” to determine the types of cases we will address.

Mission of dLCV

The disAbility Law Center of Virginia's mission is to advance independence, choice and self-determination; protect legal, human and civil rights; and eliminate abuse, neglect and discrimination of people with disabilities through zealous and uncompromising legal advocacy and representation.

About our Voting Work...cont.

- Mandated through Help America Vote Act (HAVA) to Educates individuals, communities, poll workers and boards of election about the voting rights of people with disabilities;
- Monitors and investigates complaints about polling place accessibility and privacy;
 - Collaborates with other voting rights advocates for systemic change for people with disabilities;
 - Assists and represents individual voters in state-based administrative grievance processes.

Voting Registration!

- First day of in-person early voting at your local registrar's office: **Friday, September 20, 2024.**
- Deadline to register to vote, or update an existing registration: **October 15, 2024** (*Voters may register after this date, through Election Day, and vote using a provisional ballot*).
- Deadline to apply for a ballot to be mailed to you: **October 25, 2024.** Your request must be received by your local voter registration office by 5:00 p.m.
- Voter registration offices open for early voting: **Saturday, October 26, 2024.**
- The last day of in-person early voting at your local voter registration office: **Saturday, November 2, 2024** at 5:00 p.m.
- <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/>

Research Your Candidates!

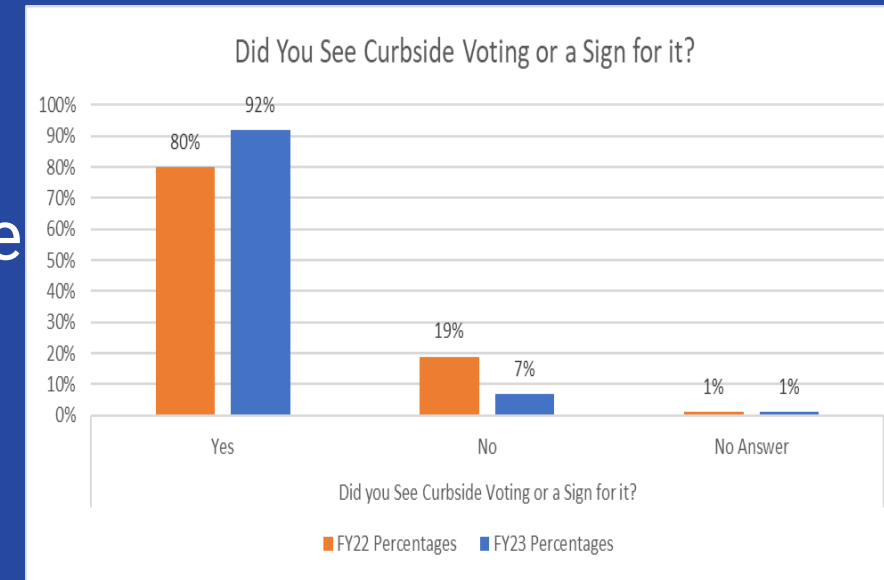
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- <https://www.elections.virginia.gov/casting-a-ballot/candidate-list/>

Details about Survey:

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- <https://www.dlcv.org/voting-rights>
 - Last year we surveyed 550 locations
 - This year, we surveyed 579 locations
 - dLCV receives support from community members and volunteers who we prepare to complete the surveys
 - All of accessibility information in our survey is based on federal and state legal code.

Curbside Voting

- Curbside voting enables voters to cast a ballot in-person outside of a polling place or voting location.
- Voters may use curbside voting from their vehicle
- Elections workers bring the ballot and any other voting materials needed to cast a ballot privately and independently.
- Signage should be available that advertises curbside voting for voters who need this service.

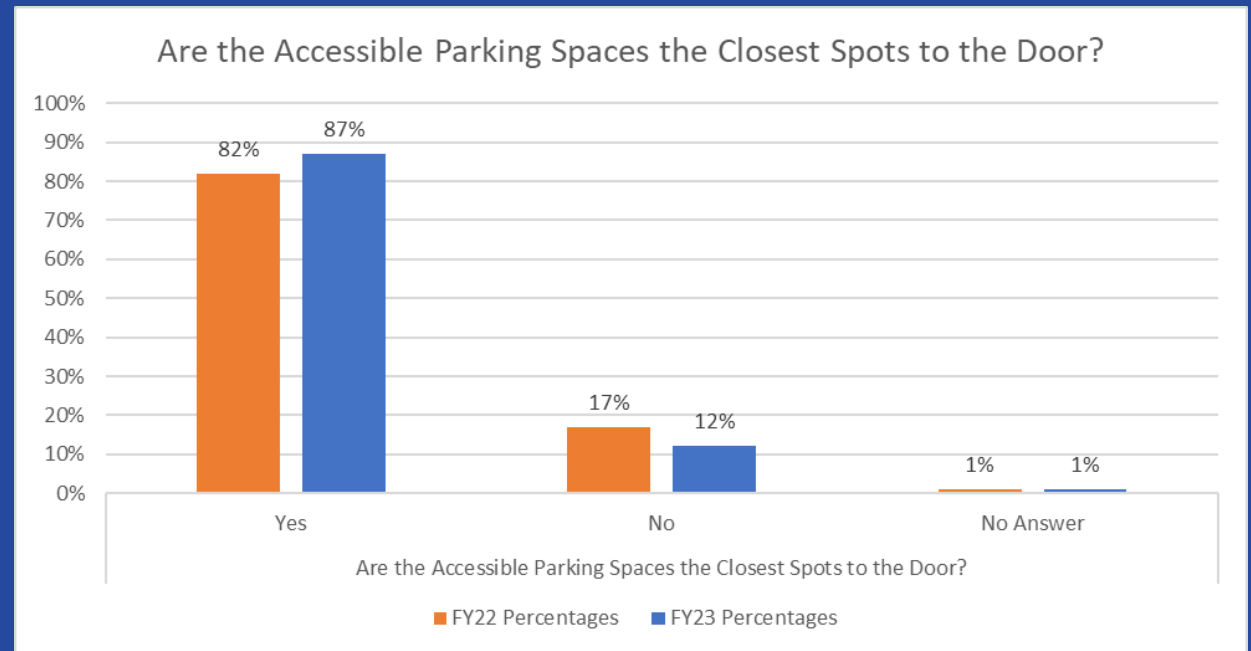


Curbside Voting Issues

- Lack of signage for Curbside Voting
- Long distance for poll workers to walk to get inside and get the materials.
- Signs blowing over
- Malfunctioning Equipment (doorbell)
- 85% reported that there were no obstacles
- This information will be used in
- General Assembly

Parking Closest to the Door

- Accessible parking should be clearly marked and closest to the door. Signs should be mounted into the ground to eliminate signs falling over.



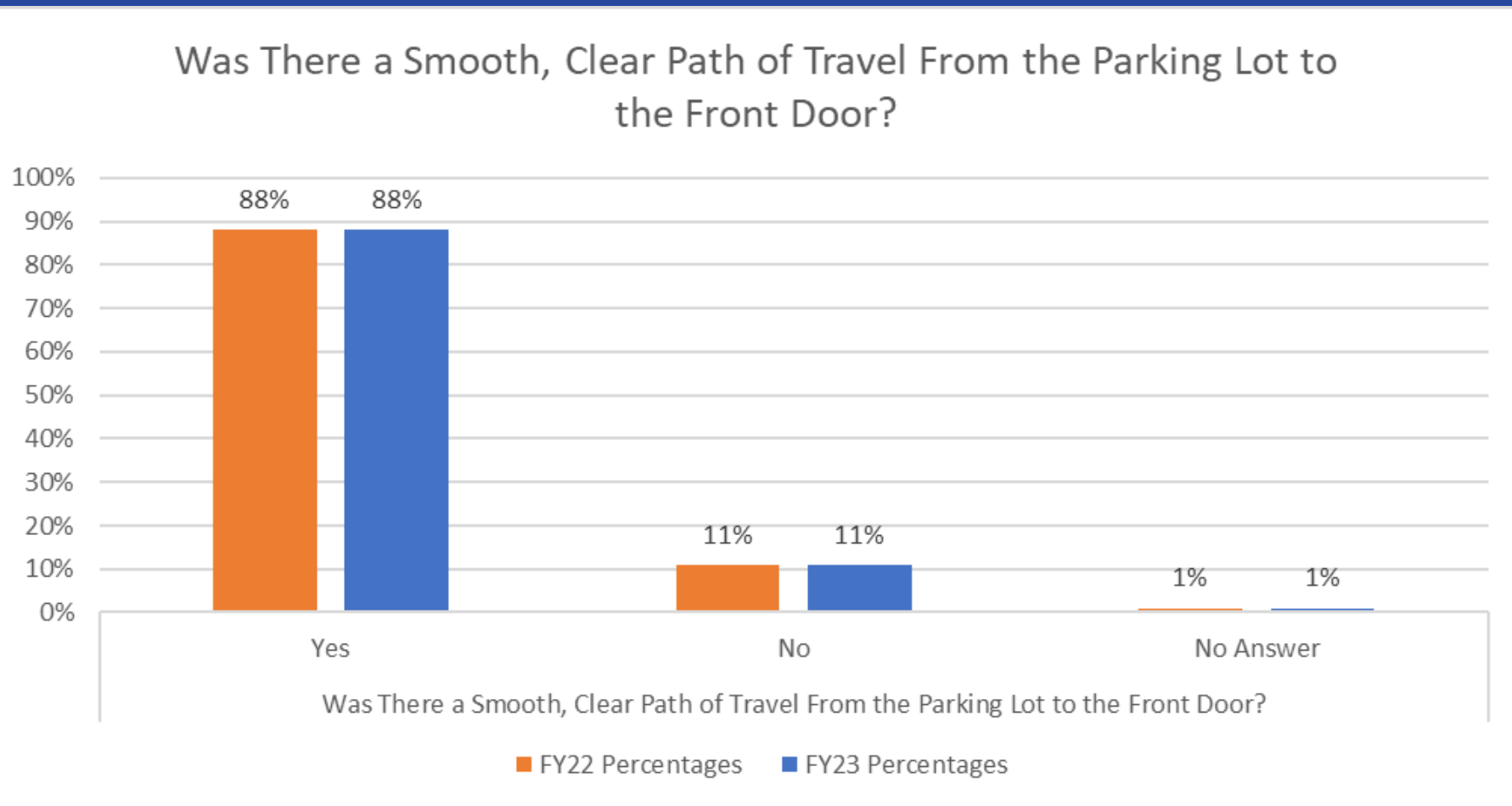
Photos of Parking not Closest to Door



Path of Travel

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- There should not be any obstacles along the path of travel that would be barriers to accessing the polling place. The path to the door should be firm and stable (not gravel).

Clear Path of Travel?

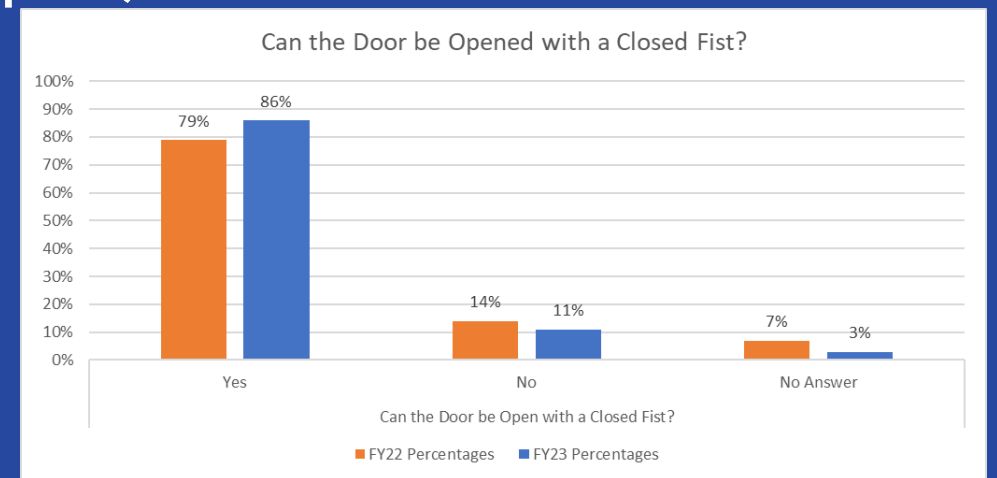


Photos of Inaccessible Path of Entry



Accessible Doors

- Doors should be held open by cones or election staff if they cannot be opened with a closed fist.
- If there is a cone holding the door open or a staff member holding the door open, this is acceptable



Photos of Inaccessible Doors:

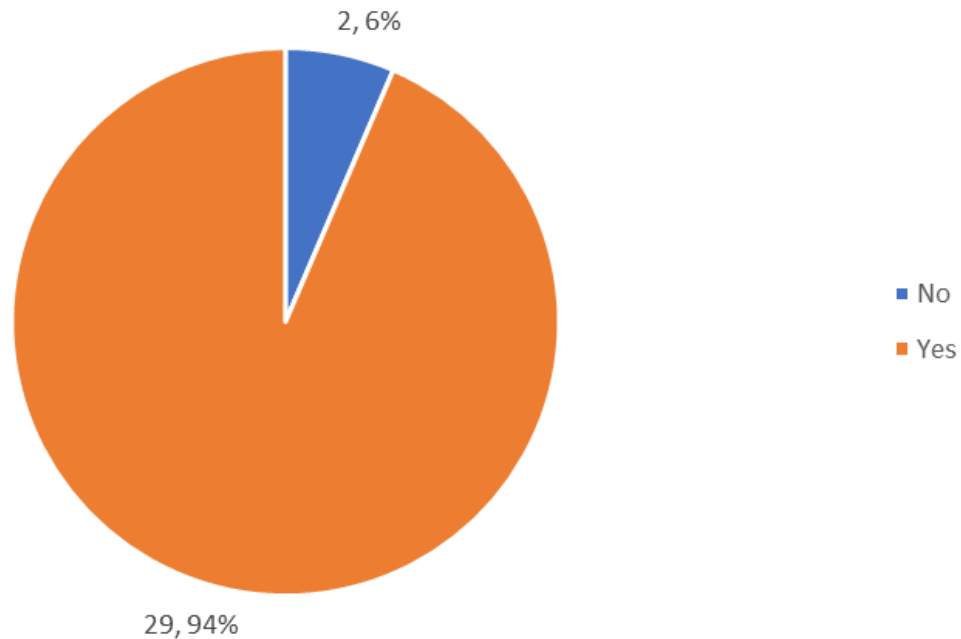


Audio Ballot Equipment

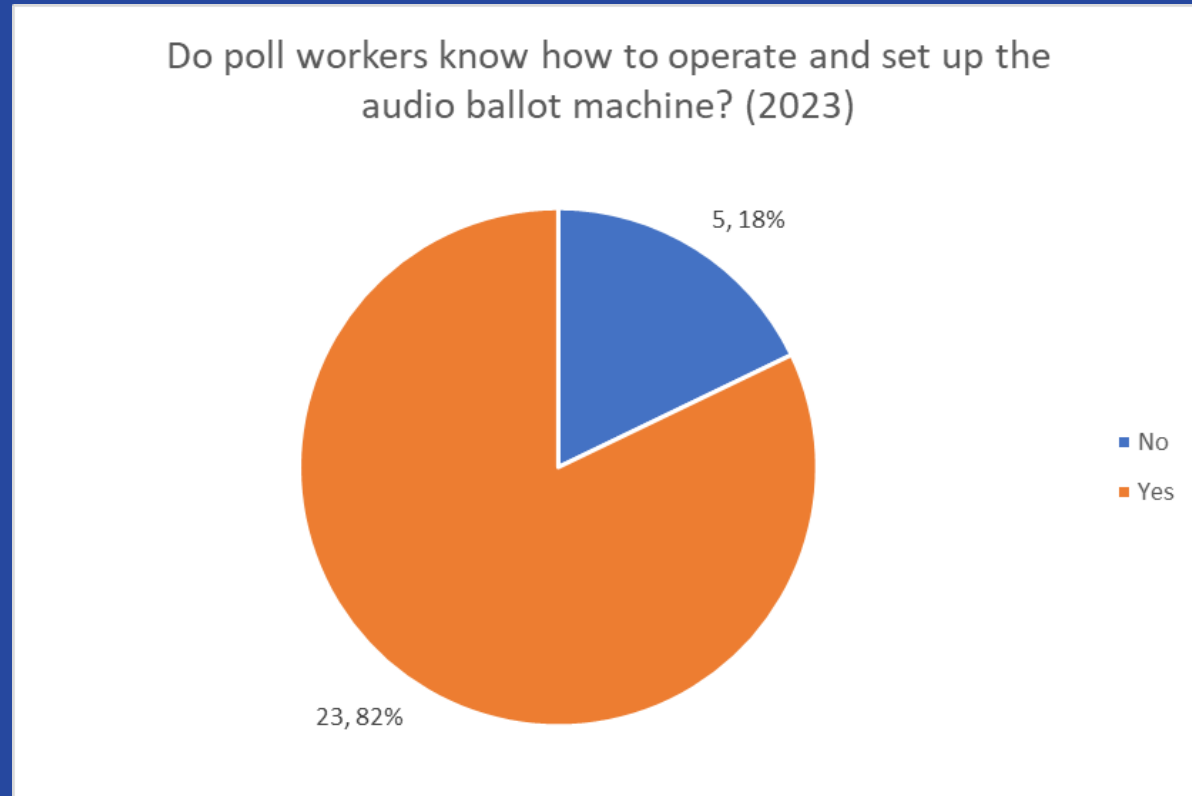
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- § 24.2-626.1. Acquisition and use of accessible voting devices.** The governing body of any county or city shall provide for the use of a voting or counting system in all elections that shall:
- 1. Provide for at least one voting system equipped for individuals with disabilities at each polling place, including nonvisual accessibility for the blind and visually impaired, in a manner that provides the same opportunity for access and participation (including privacy and independence) as for other voters;
 - Please note, this same section also focuses on language access.

Audio Ballot Equipment?

When you are voting at your own precinct, is there audio ballot voting equipment? (2023)



Do Election Staff know how to use it?



- Data shows that 82% of staff know how to use the machines

Right to Vote?

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- If you have a legal guardian and not a limited guardianship, you do not have the right to vote. If you believe you may still want to vote, consider limited guardianship or alternatives to guardianship.
 - <https://www.ndrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Primer-on-Voting-Rights-of-Individuals-Subject-to-Guardianship-AC071223.pdf>

Scenario 1: General Etiquette

Individual is waiting in line to vote. The line is quite long, and he has waited for one hour. He is an amputee and uses two crutches to walk.

He has recently just gotten his rights restored, and this is his first time voting.

You see him with crutches and notice another person has accompanied him. You wonder if he needs a chair to vote.

- What do you do?
- What was done in this situation?



For Faster Assistance

www.dlcv.org/get-help

Call on Mon, Wed or Fri
8:30 am- 4:00 pm
800-552-3962 or 804-225-2042

CONNECT WITH US



ADDRESS

1512 Willow Lawn Drive Suite 100 Richmond, VA 23230

PHONE

1-800-552-3962 (toll-free) | 804-225-2042

WEBSITE

dLCV.org



dLCV.org/podcast



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