

Celebrating All Abilities Virginia



SPRING/SUMMER 2020

Peeking out from behind the curtains. . .

A normal spring issue of this newsletter would include information about playgrounds and camps and all kinds of spring and summer events and activities.

But we all know that this isn't a normal spring and summer. It felt a little daunting to put out this little informational newsletter at a time when we are all inundated with big and scary waves of facts, figures and speculation; and perhaps also, panic and grief.

But some of the information included here is quite timely and I hope it will be helpful. There are several articles about schooling from home, dealing with IEPs in the virtual world, a reminder to reply to the Census and the Commonwealth Charitable Award.

One important item of note is that Governor Northam has signed bills that make Election day a holiday and allows for "Excuse-free" absentee voting. See page 11 for additional legislative tidbits.

And, as I indicated in the previous newsletter, I'm including in every issue this year reminders of how to make sure that your name is still on the voter rolls; that it hasn't been removed for address change, or not voting in previous elections, or whatever other various reasons that are out there.

You will also find additional voting resources that help you protect your right to vote.

While finishing up this newsletter, I stopped to take a break and watch the little duck family in the backyard pond of my condo complex. Several school age children, who would still have been in school, were feeding bits of bread to the momma and baby ducks, and shrieking with delight when they were followed by insistent little duck feet when they tried to go home.

I hope it's not too sentimental to make the observation that maybe the best portion of joy and learning is done out of school and work and in our own backyards.

Stay safe ~ and see you in the summer.

Laura Nelson, Editor

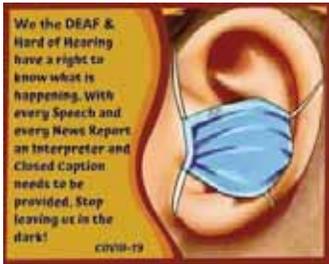


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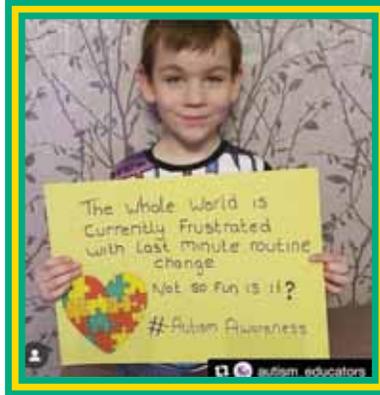
1



Thanks to **Day 2 Day ASL** at www.facebook.com/SignWithMeVA/ for this post.

Whenever you see any press briefing including the president without an interpreter OR a cameraman that doesn't keep them in view please file a complaint. Because someday this may be you or a member of your family.

Thanks to Richmond Autism Integration Network for this post www.facebook.com/RichmondAutism/



Specializing in autism services, RAIN passionately serves children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder and other related developmental disabilities by providing autism services (804) 754-0000

<https://richmondautism.org>



By: Claire Kopsky
Posted at 1:51 PM, Mar 31, 2020
WOODFORD COUNTY, Ky.

Excerpted with thanks from (LEX 18 - <https://www.lex18.com>)

A college senior from Versailles put her stir-craziness to good use with a project that will help the deaf and hard of hearing community.

Lawrence is a senior studying education for the deaf and hard of hearing at Eastern Kentucky University. Due to the virus, she is living back at home and doing her student teaching from home.

"I felt like there was a huge population that was being looked over," Lawrence said. "We're all panicking right now and so a lot of people are just not being thought of. So, I felt like it was very important that, even at a time like

this, people need to have that communication."

After a conversation with her mom, they put their craft skills to work.

To order one of Lawrence's masks, contact her her at dhhmaskproject@gmail.com.

"I'm not charging anything for them because I think that if you need them, then you need them and I don't think that you should have to pay for them," Lawrence said. "So we are sending them out for free whenever we have people asking for them and if they're foreign, then maybe we'll charge shipping, but other than that they're completely free."

Those who would like to help Lawrence with the cost of materials and shipping, she is accepting donations on her GoFundMe page.

College Student Makes Masks For The Deaf & Hard Of Hearing



With schools closing across the nation, parents and educators are in bit of a panic as they try to figure out how kids can learn and obtain their education from home.

Visit <https://kidsactivitiesblog.com> for a long list of education companies offering free subscriptions due to school closings

check out our **PRINTABLES** library



~ FOUND ON FACEBOOK ~



New Airline Seat Design Will Allow Disabled Passengers to Fly in Their Own Wheelchairs

March 19, 2020

Excerpted from article by Molon Labe Seating at

<https://www.aviationpros.com/engines-components/aircraft-airframe-accessories/interiors/press-release/21130472/molon-labe-seating-new-airline-seat-design-will-allow-disabled-passengers-to-fly-in-their-own-wheelchairs>

Molon Labe Seating of Denver, Colorado has unveiled a prototype of a new airline seat that will allow Passengers of Restricted Mobility (PRM's) to fly on airlines in their own wheelchairs.

Our design is based on the proven Side-Slip Seat design but it is modified from a standard economy-class triple seat to a very wide economy-class double seat.

There is significant regulatory and legislative pressure and momentum to allow wheelchairs to fly on planes. In September 2019, the US Department of Transportation announced the formation of the Air Carrier Access Act Advisory Committee (ACAA Advisory Committee), established pursuant to the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018. The goal of this committee is to essentially improve the air travel experience of passengers with disabilities and increase its access to air travel. The FAA Reauthorization Act also included the mandate to perform a study on the feasibility of in-cabin wheelchair restraint systems and the subsequent accommodations needed.

Molon Labe has launched a GoFundMe campaign to expedite the design, engineering,

The GoFundMe campaign is here:
Hastag: #flyingwheelchairs GoFundMe Campaign link: gofundme.com/f/flyingwheelchairs analysis and certification of this seat.



Look for the next issue of Celebrating All Abilities to be posted during the summer of 2020.

Send story ideas, interesting links, and events to

Laura Nelson, Editor at

CelebratingAllAbilities@gmail.com

**THANK YOU FOR
FOLLOWING US ON FACEBOOK**





Census 2020

You Count! Be Counted.

The 2020 Census is here, and it is important that people with disabilities and their families are ready to be counted!

Every 10 years, everyone in the United States is counted through the census. It is important that everyone is counted because the census data impacts many key things. For example, the census data is used to figure out how much money state and local governments get for Medicaid, housing vouchers, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and education programs. When there isn't enough money, services and programs for people with disabilities can be cut. Census data is also used to determine how many representatives each state gets in the House of Representatives. Even with many self-isolating, it's easy to complete. It takes just a few minutes to fill out and can be done safely right in the comfort of your home

Check out the resources from The Arc to make sure you and your community are ready to be counted! ■

The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes. Visit <https://thearc.org>

Resources From The Arc

The Arc has developed resources to support individuals and organizations in understanding what the census is, why its important for people with disabilities, and how to complete it.

To review these documents, visit <https://thearc.org/census/>

- ***You Count! Be Counted.***

Plain language, English (PDF)

Plain language, English (Word Doc)

- ***Tu Cuentas! Se Contado.***

Plain language, Spanish (PDF)

Plain language, Spanish (Word Doc)

- ***Get Your Community Counted: A Guide for Organizations***

English (PDF) | English (Word Doc)

- ***Haga Que Su Comunidad Sea Contada: Una Guía Para Organizaciones***

Spanish (PDF) | Spanish (Word Doc)

- ***How Are Group Homes Being Counted in the Census?***

Census Group Home Fact Sheet (PDF) | Census Group Home Fact Sheet (Word Doc)

Remember!

April 1:

This is Census Day,

a key reference date for the 2020

Census—not a deadline. This day is used to determine who is counted and where in the

2020 Census. When you respond, you'll

tell the Census Bureau where you live as

of April 1, 2020, and include everyone

who usually lives and sleeps in your home.

You can respond before or after that date.

We encourage you to respond as soon

as you can.

To access the Census online, visit <https://my2020census.gov>

U.S. Department of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Census Bureau Director Steven Dillingham Statement on 2020 Census Operational Adjustments Due to COVID-19

In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the U.S. Census Bureau is adjusting 2020 Census operations.

APRIL 13, 2020 — The 2020 Census is underway and more households across America are responding every day. Over 70 million households have responded to date, representing over 48% of all households in America. In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the U.S. Census Bureau is adjusting 2020 Census operations in order to:

- *Protect the health and safety of the American public and Census Bureau employees. Implement guidance from federal, state and local authorities.*

- *Ensure a complete and accurate count of all communities.*

The Census Bureau temporarily suspended 2020 Census field data collection activities in March. Steps are already being taken to reactivate field offices beginning June 1, 2020, in preparation for the resumption of field data collection operations as quickly as possible following June 1.

In-person activities, including all interaction with the public, enumeration, office work and processing activities, will incorporate the most current guidance to promote the health and safety of staff and the public. This will include recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing practices.

Once 2020 Census data collection is complete, the Census Bureau begins a lengthy, thorough and scientifically rigorous process to produce the apportionment counts, redistricting information and other statistical data products that help guide hundreds of billions of dollars in public and private sector spending per year.

In order to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau is seeking statutory relief from Congress of 120 additional calendar days to deliver final apportionment counts.

Under this plan, the Census Bureau would extend the window for field data collection and self-response to October 31, 2020, which will allow for apportionment counts to be delivered to the President by April 30, 2021, and redistricting data to be delivered to the states no later than July 31, 2021.

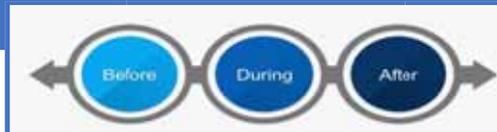
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Contact
Public Information Office
301-763-3030
pio@census.gov

IEPs During the COVID-19 PANDEMIC



School divisions must make every effort possible to meet required timelines by scheduling and holding your student's IEP meeting online or by phone. Here are some helpful hints for IEP meetings and service delivery.



1

Before the Meeting

Get ready for the call. Make sure your device is fully charged. If your first IEP, or yearly IEP meeting, is supposed to take place during this time, make sure the teacher and school have your current email address and phone number.

Your IEP Meeting Will Not Be In Person **2**

The law and regulations are still in place when developing and reviewing an IEP, evaluating a student, and for eligibility. How schools will meet these requirements will look different. Work with the school to figure out the best way to have the meeting (by phone, by Zoom, etc.) and when they will get the paperwork to you. The school still must hold the meeting at a time that is convenient to you.

3 What Will Your IEP Meeting Be Like

The only difference will be the location. The same people should be at the meeting. If you find out that a team member is not present, discuss this with the team and decide if you will allow them to be absent from the meeting and that you have their input on your student. If you agree that they can miss the meeting, you must do it in writing. You should have the same documents in advance of this meeting as you would for an in-person meeting. Prepare as if it were any other meeting. Remember, that even if the school calls it a "planning meeting" or an "interim meeting" if the IEP is going to be changed, it is an IEP meeting.

During the Meeting **4**

Prepare notes and be ready to talk about your concerns. Have all your paperwork organized and find a quiet place so you can stay focused. Decide what services are most important to your student to prevent him from falling too far behind. Remember a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is still required, but you will want to be reasonable during this time of crisis. **REMEMBER, no changes to an IEP can be made without your consent.** If you do not agree with the changes, you do not have to sign the IEP.

5 After the Meeting



Make sure to email a follow up to your student's teacher. Copy the special education coordinator (which may be the principal). State your understanding of everything that was said and agreed to during the meeting. Include your concerns and your contact information in case the teacher needs to discuss something in your email. Don't forget to inform them when you expect to get any IEP paperwork.

Tips and Considerations for Your Student's IEP and Services During Covid-19

If the school tries to hold a planning meeting to change the IEP and you are not allowed or able to participate, send a letter (or email) to the school telling them you do not consent to any changes made to the IEP outside of a regular IEP meeting in which you are included and provide input.

If you agree to temporary changes to the IEP, make sure the changes only last while school is closed. **Ask for the pre-COVID 19 IEP to be frozen** so that when school opens, the previous IEP will still be in place. Be sure you put it in writing and tell the school that you want the letter in your student's school record.

Your student is still entitled to individualized services based on his/her needs. The school cannot say, for example "no one is getting speech therapy." However, remember with **social distancing** some things, like in-person therapies, will not be possible. **If you don't feel like you have the skills to help provide instruction to your student at home**, make sure that the IEP team knows this so that they plan appropriate instructional strategies that do not rely on you.

You still have the right to disagree with the services offered or provided. Tell the school you want your concerns written into the **Prior Written Notice**. If they don't do it, send your concerns in writing after the IEP meeting. Ask that your letter be placed in your student's record. This will preserve your rights later.

DOCUMENT! You know the services your student had before COVID 19. Keep track of what he/she receives during the pandemic and track his/her progress and access to materials and instruction. You can ask the school how you can record progress data. By keeping track of progress, the data will be available when school starts so the team can decide if **Extended School Year (ESY) or compensatory (make up) education are needed after the crisis ends.**

If you think your student needs ESY or compensatory education, **you can ask for an IEP meeting to be held as soon as schools reopens**, even if that is during the summer. You can also ask for needed evaluations to be conducted during the summer if school is open. You do not have to wait until the fall.

Think carefully about saying no to services the school offers if they are reasonable as it could affect your ability to get ESY or compensatory education when school resumes. The school can say that they tried to provide services, but the parent refused.

Resource: <https://www.ndscenter.org/wp-content/uploads/NDSC-COPAA-slides-04-09-20.pdf>



WHERE CAN I FIND HELP?
partners@peatc.org OR 800-869-6782

The contents of this factsheet were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, #H328M140013-18. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer. PEATC is not a legal services agency and cannot provide legal advice or legal representation. Any information contained in this factsheet is not intended as legal advice and should not be used as a substitution for legal advice.



Reprinted with thanks from <https://themighty.com>

Over the last month, schools across the world have moved online to stop the spread of COVID-19. While this has been a huge adjustment for all, it can be particularly difficult for students with disabilities. As a teacher and a person with a disability, I know that online learning is not “one size fits all.” Here are some tips to help you or your child with a disability be able to learn and thrive online!

1. Communicate with teachers.

Teachers are overwhelmed; they have been forced to convert their curriculum to fit an online class, learn various online platforms, and correspond with a lot of anxious parents and students. Additionally, many schools no longer have the support of resource instructors. In all the chaos and without seeing you or your child’s face every day, they may have forgotten all the accommodation details. Write a polite and thorough email to remind teachers of all IEP accommodations, including extra time on tests, alternative formats, or reduced assignments. Be prepared to send a few reminder emails too.

2. Establish a realistic learning strategy.

After clicking through the online class, you might realize that it

does not work with your screen-reader or that the assignment count and format will not work well for your child with an intellectual disability or attention deficit disorder. Time to make some swaps! If the site is completely accessible or if, like many college students, you don’t have all the adaptive technology that your school would normally provide, come up with alternate assignments. For instance, instead of completing several daily modules for an English class, ask your teacher if you can listen to a literary audiobook and write an essay about it instead. For students for whom the assignment count is unattainable, consider emailing the teacher to ask which assignments could be cut or asking for double-time to submit them.

3. Create a personal schedule.

We all learn differently and one of the silver linings of online learning is the ability for students to control their day-to-day academic schedule. With the exception of scheduled Zoom lessons, this means that math class doesn’t have to be at 8:00 a.m. If your child loves science, then let that be the first class of the day to motivate them to get out of bed. Try to mix up the subjects so that your child isn’t left doing their least favorite classwork in the evening when energy and focus are dwindling. Alternatively, take medicine into consideration.

For individuals with chronic pain or attention deficits, schedule the coursework that requires the most time or focus when meds have kicked in.

4. Take breaks.

Learning a new online platform, tackling a long list of assignments, working around distractions, and not seeing friends and teachers in person can be stressful. Take lots of breaks. This sudden change is hard on everyone, especially individuals with anxiety disorders. Go outside, walk the dog, dance, play a sport — just get some fresh air and movement. It can boost your mood, help you focus on work later in the day, and you can consider it P.E.

5. Use outside sources.

Let’s face it — most online textbooks aren’t exactly riveting. Luckily, the web is your oyster. When your child can’t focus on the chapter about plate tectonics, find a documentary on YouTube or another streaming service. The graphics and dramatic voice of the narrator make the subject much more interesting. In my classes, I always tell my students they can find an audiobook version of the assigned reading on YouTube to help them retain the plot. Khan Academy offers lots of tutorials and is also an excellent resource

that allows students to learn at their own pace.

6. Pursue a passion project.

While we teachers miss interacting with our students and being right there to help them learn, many educators appreciate the autonomy online learning gives students. Instead of having a fixed schedule of classes and a set class period in which to finish an assignment, students can now arrange their own schedule and work at their own pace.

Let's take this one step further. In the time between classwork or if you are completely homeschool-

ing, let the child decide what they learn. Have a son who is obsessed with Minecraft? Have him read about and collect rocks and minerals. Your daughter won't stop singing "Frozen" songs? Have her research Norway. Students are far more engaged when they have a hand in picking the lesson. This is certainly something that needs to come back with us when we re-enter the classroom.

Distance learning has been a huge change, and for the disability community, it means having to come up with even more workarounds. Someday we will

return to normal face-to-face lessons and teachers will review all the material taught online. But at this time, individuals with disabilities need to make the curriculum fit their needs and with the support of teachers and families, we can all keep calm and keep learning!

For more on parenting during quarantine, check out the following stories from our parenting community:

Creative Activities to Try With Your Kids While We're Isolated at Home

<https://themighty.com/2020/03/creative-activities-children-home-coronavirus-covid-19/>

How We Can Promote Continuity in Special Education Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic

<https://themighty.com/2020/04/special-education-covid-19/>

What to Do When Your Child on the Autism Spectrum's Routine Is Disrupted by the Coronavirus

<https://themighty.com/2020/03/covid-19-autism-routine-disruption/>

LET'S NAVIGATE COVID-19 TOGETHER

Join The Mighty's Coronavirus group to connect with other Mighties living through the pandemic. Read the latest updates, share helpful tips, or give and receive virtual support.

<https://themighty.com/new-join-groups-on-the-mighty/>

The Mighty is a safe, supportive community for people facing health challenges and the people who care for them.

Find your community

We've got you. Our communities talk each day about more than 6,000 topics — from health conditions to weekly challenges.

Be part of the conversation

Celebrate wins, ask for help, or be the support someone needs to get through the day. We take it day-by-day together. Visit <https://themighty.com> for more information.



VOTE.

It's your right.

A Guide to the Voting Rights of People with Mental Disabilities

Bazelon Center for
Mental Health Law

Autistic Self-Advocacy
Network

National Disability
Rights Network

Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP

Washington DC
2016

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The guide was written by Bazelon Center Director of Policy and Legal Advocacy Jennifer Mathis and Senior Staff Attorney Lewis Bossing; Autistic Self-Advocacy Network Legal Director & Director of Public Policy Samantha Crane and Policy Analyst Kelly Israel; National Disability Rights Network Disability Advocacy Specialist for Voting Rights Michelle Bishop; and attorneys from the law firm Schulte, Roth & Zabel LLP, including Craig Stein, Joseph Suh, Boris Ziser, Alexander J. Buonocore, Atul Joshi, Sean D. Locklear, Richard Mertl, S. Beverly Prewitt, Wayne Teigman, Jacob B. Wentworth, and Ashley S. Whang, with assistance from Daniel L. Greenberg and Joseph Soileau.

The guide is available for download via www.bazelon.org/issues/voting. Print copies are available from the Bazelon Center; inquiries to pubs@bazelon.org or (202) 467-5730 ext 1311.



Governor Northam Signs Sweeping New Laws to Expand Access to Voting

Legislation expands early voting, makes Election Day a state holiday

RICHMOND—FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • April 12, 2020

RICHMOND—Governor Ralph Northam has signed landmark new laws to repeal Virginia’s voter ID law, make Election Day a state holiday in Virginia, and expand access to early voting.

“Voting is a fundamental right, and these new laws strengthen our democracy by making it easier to cast a ballot, not harder,” said Governor Northam. “No matter who you are or where you live in Virginia, your voice deserves to be heard. I’m proud to sign these bills into law.”

Governor Northam signed these bills:

• **House Bill 1 and Senate Bill 111**, sponsored by House Majority Leader Charniele Herring and Senator Janet Howell, respectively, allow early voting 45 days prior to an election without a stated excuse. *Virginia currently requires voters who wish to vote absentee to provide the state with a reason, from an approved list, why they are unable to vote on Election Day.*

• **House Bill 19 and Senate Bill 65**, sponsored by Delegate Joe Lindsey and Senator Mamie Locke, respectively, remove the requirement that voters show

a photo ID prior to casting a ballot. Voter ID laws disenfranchise individuals who may not have access to photo identification, and disproportionately impact low-income individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities.

• **House Bill 108 and Senate Bill 601**, sponsored by Delegate Joe Lindsey and Senator Louise Lucas, respectively, make Election Day a state holiday, which will help ensure every Virginian has the time and opportunity to cast their ballot. In order to maintain the same number of state holidays, this measure repeals the current Lee-Jackson Day holiday, established over 100 years ago to honor Confederate generals Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson.

• **House Bill 235 and Senate Bill 219**, sponsored by Delegate Joshua Cole and Senator David Marsden, respectively, implement automatic voter registration for individuals accessing service at a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office or the DMV website.

• **House Bill 238 and House Bill 239**, sponsored by Delegate Mark Sickles, and Senate Bill 455, sponsored by Senator Bryce Reeves, expand absentee voting timelines to ensure access to the polls.

• **House Bill 1678**, sponsored by Delegate Joe Lindsey, extends in-person polling hours from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM.

“We need more access to the ballot box, not less,” said Senator Louise Lucas. “I am so proud to be a part of new laws that expand access to voting and make our Commonwealth more representative of the people we serve. Today is an historic day.”

“Our democracy relies on equal access to the ballot box,” said House Majority Leader Charniele Herring. “I’m grateful to the Governor for his partnership in breaking down barriers to voting, and ensuring all Virginians have the opportunity to exercise this fundamental right.”

“Virginia’s photo ID law was designed to make it more difficult to vote,” said Delegate Joe Lindsey. “It is past time we repealed this law, and I’m grateful to the Governor for helping us get it done.”

###

Office of the Governor

Alena.Yarmosky@governor.virginia.gov



To see the full text of all bills, visit

<https://lis.virginia.gov/>

Click on “Bills and Resolutions” and input the House or Senate Bill number in the Search Box i.e., HB19



★ VIRGINIA ★
DEPARTMENT of ELECTIONS

Everything you need to know to vote in Virginia
www.elections.virginia.gov/index.html



You will need to show one acceptable photo identification card (photo ID) when you vote in person. This is

**See pg 11
for new
laws that
eliminate
need for
photo ID**

Hearing (VDDHH), and the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI). Your local Registrar's Office also has registration forms and should be able to accommodate any special need.



Accessibility

Is curbside voting still available for those who wish to use it?

Yes, curbside voting is still available for people ages 65 and older, or any person with a physical disability. The voter shall be afforded every opportunity to vote in a private and independent fashion, but voting equipment must remain in the view of the election officers.

Will I be able to get into the polling place on my own?

Federal and state laws mandate that all polling places, including all locations for in-person absentee voting, must be fully accessible to elderly voters and voters with disabilities; state law further requires curbside voting be available at all these locations for voters age 65 or over or with physical disabilities. See above discussion of curbside voting.

Voters with continuing disabilities may apply annually to receive absentee ballots for all elections within a given year using the Annual Absentee Ballot Application.

Is the voting equipment in my polling place going to be accessible?

State law and federal law (the Help America Vote Act) require every polling location in Virginia must be equipped with at least one accessible voting system that will allow all voters with a disability to vote the same private and independent manner as a voter without a disability.

I understand that with the changes in elections services I should not need assistance from anyone, but can I still have assistance if I wish to?

Yes, you can. If any voter who requires assistance in voting

Forgot your photo ID?
If you get to your polling place without an acceptable photo ID, you can vote a provisional ballot. You will be given instructions on what to do so your vote can count.

How and where can I register to vote?
Any person, regardless of their disability status, has the right to register to vote at any office or agency that provides such a service. These offices include but are not limited to: Department of Health (VDH), Department of Social Services (DSS), Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Services (DBHDS), Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS), Department for the Deaf and Hard of

due to a physical disability or inability to read or write can receive assistance if they request it. Any of the officers of election can advise you of your rights in this area.

Are people with cognitive disabilities allowed to register and vote?

Yes. A registered voter with cognitive disabilities can be eligible to vote if not adjudicated mentally incapacitated by a court of law.

What if I feel that my rights to accessible registration and voting have been violated?

Please document your complaint using the Voter Complaints area of our website. You may also contact your voter registrar or electoral board locally or the Department's Accessibility Coordinator Terry Wagoner at (804) 864-8937 or terry.wagoner@elections.virginia.gov. Contact information for your local voting administration can be found using our online tool at <https://elections.virginia.gov/LocalGR>.



Additional Resources

• *The Americans with Disabilities Act and Other Federal Laws ~ Protecting the Rights of Voters with Disabilities*

Posted on U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division – Disability Rights Section
www.ada.gov/ada_voting/ada_voting_fa.htm

• *Resources for Voters with Disabilities*

Page on U.S. Election Assistance Commission with many relevant resources, both statewide and national.
<https://www.eac.gov/voters/resources-for-voters-with-disabilities>

• *ADA Checklist for Polling Places*

This document is an updated technical assistance publication on polling place accessibility for voters with disabilities. The publication includes information about key areas of a facility that must be accessible to voters with mobility or vision disabilities, options for low-cost temporary measures for removing barriers, and a survey to guide election officials in evaluating the accessibility of facilities used or being considered for use as polling places.
www.ada.gov/votingck.htm



VOTE SMART

JUST THE FACTS

Vote Smart's mission is to provide free, factual, unbiased information on candidates and elected officials to ALL Americans.
<https://votesmart.org>

The Voter's Self-Defense System (Partial list)

Every candidate and elected official from President to local government can be easily and instantly accessed through the Voter's Self-Defense System:



Voting Records – https://votesmart.org/bills#.WezgrBR_Jno

Vote Smart digests key legislation in Congress and all 50 states into easy-to-understand summaries, making it easy to compare what your representatives said during the campaign with how they actually voted on the record.



Biographical & Contact Information – https://votesmart.org/search#.Wezh9BR_Jno

From their previous professions, education, family life, and organizational memberships to their social media accounts and latest email addresses.



Issue Positions (Political Courage Test) – https://votesmart.org/about/political-courage-test#.WeziPhR_Jno

We test thousands of candidates for President, Congress, Governor and State Legislature with our Political Courage Test. The Test accurately measures candidates' willingness to provide voters with their positions on the issues they will most likely face if elected.



Interest Group Ratings – <https://votesmart.org/interest-groups>

See how over 400 national and 1300 state special interest groups evaluate your representatives. Despite their bias, special interest group ratings can help indicate where an incumbent has stood on a particular set of issues.



Campaign Finances – https://votesmart.org/search#.WezjRRR_Jno

How much money did your representatives raise and from whom?

<https://votesmart.org>



Security for people with disabilities since 1990

<https://commonwealthcommunitytrust.org/>

2020 Charitable Fund Award

The Application Period for the 2020 Award Cycle is Open

Note: The 2020 timeline has been adjusted given the Virginia Governor's social distancing mandate related to COVID-19. We have heard from a number of organizations who are having difficulties getting vendor quotes and/or connecting with their clients to finalize the application. Therefore, we are extending the application period until June 10, 2020. As more information becomes available, CCT will update the 2020 timeline and communicate it to our email notification list.

***For funded applications, an award check will be made payable to the vendor noted on the application. Award checks must be cashed within 90 days of issue date to prevent forfeiture.**

Who is eligible?

The recipient must live in Virginia and have a disability that meets the SSA definition of disabled. Disability for adults is defined as the inability to engage in "substantial gainful activity." There must be a physical or mental impairment that can be expected to last at least 1 year. A child must have a physical or mental condition that very seriously limits his or her activities and is expected to last at least 1 year.

The recipient must meet Federal poverty guidelines and/or receives SSI benefits. To review the HHS Poverty Guidelines, go to: <https://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty-guidelines> (Note: For a minor, eligibility would be based on the family's income.)

What types of services/equipment/medication can be funded?

The application should be for the purchase of equipment or medication or services (not paid for by Medicaid, private insurance, or another source of funds) that will increase the recipient's ability to perform activities of daily living, or to perceive, control or commu-

nicate within the environment in which he or she lives.

The maximum amount of the award per individual in 2020 is \$1,000.

Last year, the following types of requests were funded:

- Assistive Technology, including iPads
- Dental services and dentures, hearing aids and eyeglasses
- Summer camp fees, therapeutic riding and fitness center membership fees
- Equipment such as wheelchairs, van lifts, stair lifts, dehumidifiers and adaptive bicycles
- Home safety modifications such as wheelchair ramps and grab bars

Who can submit an application?

The application must be completed and verified online by a representative from a non-profit organization or public agency that serves people with disabilities. Parents or guardians may not submit an application on behalf of a potential recipient of goods or services. Any applications received from an individual or representative that does not meet these criteria will be denied. A maximum of 10 applications may be submitted from each organization or agency.

This program is not intended to pay off a recipient's debts, to fund services that are

normally provided at no cost to the recipient, or to provide a general source of income to the recipient or to the applying organization/agency.

What criteria is used to evaluate the applications?

A committee of CCT Board Members and staff will review applications based on how the request will impact the recipient's quality of life. Preference will be given to applications that:

- Effectively communicate how the request will impact the recipient's quality of life (of primary importance),
 - Demonstrate the lasting impact (versus a short-term benefit)
 - Are for a one-time expense (versus an ongoing expense), and
- Cover the entire cost of the equipment, medication, or service requested.

How can I add my email address to be notified about the 2020 CFA application?

To request to be added to the email notification list, please send an email to cfa@trustct.org. You must be a representative from a nonprofit organization or public agency that serves people with disabilities. Please include your name, the name of your nonprofit organization or government agency, your title and your email address.

Commonwealth Community Trust (CCT) is a 501(c)(3) national nonprofit organization that administers affordable and efficient pooled special needs trusts for people with disabilities.

CCT was founded in 1990 by parents who have a child with a disability along with concerned professionals. CCT is managed by a Board of Directors who serves with a caring heart and without compensation. Our volunteer Board of Directors is comprised of at least two members who are related to an individual with a disability, legal and financial professionals, and experts who work in the disabilities field.

CCT staff members are knowledgeable about rules governing trusts for clients receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Medicaid in order to preserve these benefits. See <http://commonwealthcommunitytrust.org> • 804-740-6930 • P.O. Box 29408, Richmond VA 23242-0408