



For Immediate Release – Nov. 6, 2016

## Accessibility & Services for Voters with Disabilities

For the Nov. 8, 2016 Presidential Election, the Chicago Election Board is taking new measures to ensure accessibility in the polling places, including additional training for poll workers, a comprehensive review of our buildings – in addition to continuing a successful program to designate accessible parking spots at all polling places.

“We are committed to doing everything possible to meet as many standards as possible under the new 2016 guidelines for the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA),” said Chicago Election Board Chairwoman Marisel A. Hernandez. “Longer term, we are measuring every aspect of our polling places with the goal of having 100% compliance with these guidelines in future elections.”

Hernandez noted two new measures: (1) the Board included accessibility components in training of Election Coordinators who are assigned to each precinct. The focus was on the layout of equipment to ensure all voters may cast their ballots privately and independently. (2) The Board is partnering with Equip For Equality, a disabilities advocacy organization, and hundreds of pro-bono partners, to perform surveys of ramps, sidewalks, doors and other physical aspects of each of the city’s precinct polling places.

The goal of the surveys is to identify all short-term remedies and long-term infrastructure improvements that may be needed to meet the new 2016 ADA standards.

Hernandez also expressed gratitude to Department of Streets and Sanitation Commissioner Charles L. Williams, whose agency works to mark parking spaces for the disabled in front of every polling place in Chicago. “In this massive undertaking, Streets and Sanitation marks spaces for more than 1,700 Chicago polling locations for the city’s 2,069 precincts,” Hernandez said.

The reserved parking signs will be in effect from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. for Election Day. Crews from the Department of Streets and Sanitation post the signs prior to Election Day under a program that the two agencies launched in 2004.

More information on systems and services to ensure accessible voting is available at <http://www.chicagoelections.com/en/accessibility-voters-with-disabilities.html>

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