

IOWA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROPOSED POLICY FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The Iowa General Assembly and its agencies have analyzed their services to the general public in conjunction with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and will provide the following:

Printed Materials

Each of the agencies of the Iowa General Assembly will assign an individual staff member within the agency, upon request, to read printed materials aloud. (A list of printed materials of the Iowa General Assembly is attached.)

Upon request, printed materials of the General Assembly will be provided as soon as reasonably possible in one or more of the following formats:

Audio cassette tape

Large Print

Computer disk in either ASCII or Word Perfect format for conversion to synthetic speech

Braille, prepared by the Department for the Blind

Interpreting Services

The General Assembly will execute an agreement with the Deaf Services Commission of Iowa of the Department of Human Rights for provision of interpreter services either by the Deaf Services Commission or an interpreter in private practice. The services will be paid for by the General Assembly. Upon request given 48 hours in advance, the General Assembly will provide an interpreter for any session of either house of the General Assembly, any standing or interim committee meeting, and meetings with individual legislators at the State Capitol. It is understood that although meetings, floor debate, and activities may be scheduled for a specific day and time by either house of the General Assembly, those dates and times may be altered by that house without advance notice. To the extent possible, requests for interpreting services will be provided under the revised time schedule.

Assistive Listening Systems

The General Assembly will purchase and install assistive listening devices for the Senate and House chambers and one gallery in each chamber will be equipped to receive the signal. A portable system will be purchased that can be used in committee rooms. The General Assembly will purchase receivers that may be used for both the fixed and the portable systems. The receivers will be in the custody of the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House during the legislative session and the Legislative Information Office during the interim. Individuals wishing to use a receiver must leave a driver's license or credit card with the custodian of the receiver. The driver's license or credit card will be returned upon return of the receiver.

Telephone Access

A tele-typewriter for the deaf (TTY) is available through the Secretary of the Senate and the Chief Clerk of the House offices. Staff members from these 2 offices will be available to assist any individual desiring to use the device. The telephone numbers of telephones that have access to the device will be publicized. A TTY is also available in the Office of Citizens' Aide/Ombudsman.

Physical Access

The Senate and House lobbies are open to the public and accessible to and functional for persons with physical disabilities and are equipped with speakers which carry the debates. If public meetings are held in either chamber, a chairlift is available in each lobby that accesses the upper lobby areas in each house and these areas are accessible to the respective chambers. Upon request, the rules of the Senate or the House of Representatives may be waived, by the respective house, to allow access to the floor of the Senate or House of Representatives chamber during debate of interest to persons with physical disabilities if those persons are unable to access the galleries and they are not registered lobbyists.

Senate Committee Room 116 and House Committee Rooms 118 and 19 are accessible to and functional for persons with physical disabilities. Upon request, and to the extent possible, a meeting not scheduled for one of these committee rooms will be moved to a committee room that is accessible. Legislative agencies are also able to use meeting rooms of other government agencies that are accessible if they are not otherwise in use. Members of the public who have physical disabilities may convey requests for accessible meeting rooms to the Secretary of the Senate, the Chief Clerk of the House, and to the Legislative Information Office.

Procedure for Complaints

A person with a disability whose request for assistance within the General Assembly has not been fulfilled to the person's satisfaction may file a complaint of discrimination with the Iowa Legislative Information Office, on a form provided by the Legislative Information Office, within 24 hours of the time of the alleged discrimination. The Legislative Information Office shall transmit the complaint form to the General Assembly Staff Committee. The Staff Committee consists of the Secretary of the Senate, the Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives, the Director of the Legislative Service Bureau, and the Director of the Legislative Fiscal Bureau. If the complaint of discrimination involves either the Computer Support Bureau or the Office of Citizens' Aide/Ombudsman, the General Assembly Staff Committee shall also consist of the Director of the Computer Support Bureau or the Citizens' Aide/Ombudsman, as applicable. The General Assembly Staff Committee shall consider the complaint as soon as practicably possible.

ADA

EXPENSES RELATING TO IMPLEMENTATION OF A PROPOSED POLICY FOR ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Braille

The Department for the Blind will convert computer disks of written materials in ASCII or WordPerfect format into Braille at a cost of \$.30 per page with one written page generally transcribing into 3 or 4 Braille pages. The Department for the Blind routinely transcribes into Braille and distributes any legislation that would be of interest to blind persons.

Assistive Listening Devices

In order for persons with hearing impairments to be able to listen to debates of the Senate and House of Representatives, and discussion at legislative committee meetings, and to participate in legislative conversations, it is necessary that the General Assembly purchase an assistive listening device system. This system would include equipment and installation of assistive listening devices in each chamber and in one gallery of each chamber. In addition, the system would include portable devices to be used in committee rooms and for other meetings in the State Capitol. Receivers would also need to be purchased that could be used by persons with hearing impairments to access the assistive listening device system.

Staff of the Iowa General Assembly is meeting with several vendors to determine the cost of installation of an assistive listening device system.

Interpreting Services

If the General Assembly completes an agreement with the Deaf Services Commission of Iowa for provision of interpreting services, interpreters would be provided by the Deaf Services Commission of Iowa or by a private interpreter (if a Deaf Services Commission interpreter is not available). The cost of a Deaf Services Commission of Iowa interpreter is \$15 per hour and the cost of a private interpreter ranges from \$15 to \$35 per hour.

Accessibility of the Public

The Life Safety and Interior Restoration Task Force, established by the Department of General Services to study fire and life safety, accessibility, and historical preservation issues relating to the State Capitol, noted that persons with physical disabilities do not have access to the public galleries of the Senate and the House of Representatives because the access level of the galleries is 8 inches above the corridor level. While the Senate and House of Representatives may suspend their rules to allow persons with physical disabilities to have

access to the floor during debate, access on the floor is not the access that members of the public have. Removing the top level of the gallery seating areas on the rotunda side of the Senate and House galleries would make the entrance to those gallery seating areas level with the third floor and would make possible access to those galleries for persons with physical disabilities. The Department of General Services has estimated that providing improved access to the galleries would cost approximately \$61,000.

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