

REDWOODS COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT Americans with Disabilities Act Transition Plan

Background

Many architectural barriers limit or deny access within District facilities. This has been evident since 1990 and the passage of the ADA. As required by the ADA businesses and institutions are required to eliminate architectural barriers that limit access by persons with disabilities. The act recognizes that not all barriers in existing buildings and grounds can be removed immediately. To facilitate a timely response the act requires businesses and institutions to have a written Access Survey of their buildings and grounds and a Transition Plan that spells out the access barriers, the cost to remediate, priorities and time-lines, and the means to fund barrier removal.

To this end, the District=s Architectural Barrier Project seeks state funding for architectural barrier removal in the arena of doors, automatic door openers, stair treads, toilet room modifications, signage, alarms, and an elevator. This Plan has been in the District=s Five Year Construction Plan filed with the Chancellor=s Office since 1994. Some of the projects have been funded in part such as alarms, ramps to buildings, automatic door openers, walkway and parking resurfacing. Other identified access issues have not been funded. The District has made improvements in access without state funds as money has been available within the District=s budget. However, in the past District funds for barrier removal have been dependent upon each year=s budget cycle and competing demands for funding. The Five Year Construction Plan is a component of the Transition Plan but not a substitute for a Transition Plan.

Funding

Beginning with the 2001-2002 budget the District will set aside not less than one tenth (1/10) of one percent (1%) of the District=s General Fund each year for access barrier removal in a fund that if not spent each year will remain and grow for the eventual removal of high cost items such as an elevator for the Eureka Campus Forum/Administration building. The District should continue to seek state and/or grant funding wherever possible for barrier removal.

ADA Coordinator and Transition Plan Committee

Abe Ali, Acting Director, Human Resources is the designated ADA Coordinator for the District. The Transition Plan Committee is composed of Abe Ali; Bill Connors, EH&S Specialist; Joe Porras, Director, Maintenance & Operations; Tracey Thomas, Director, DSPS; Scott Thomason, Vice-President, Business Services; Sandy Nightingale, Del Norte Campus; Valkyrie Peters, Mendocino Coast Campus; Clyde Johnson and Kady Dunleavy, Academic Senate; and an ASCR appointee..

The Accessibility Review of the Eureka Campus was performed by the DSPS Community Advisory Committee. The Committee was chaired by Mr. Terry Farmer, Humboldt County District Attorney. The Accessibility Review of the Del Norte and Mendocino Coast Campuses was performed by Bill Connors and Tracey Thomas.

Implementation

As a matter of course, all new construction will be built in strict compliance with Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations and the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG). All remodel construction will meet the same standards as new construction Government Code ' 4456. All requests for remodeling or change of activity in all District facilities must have their plans approved for accessibility compliance by the District's ADA Coordinator or designee. Whenever remodeling of existing space occurs the full cost of ADA access and compliance will be borne by the cost center that initiates the project. The rationale for cost center funding responsibility of remodel projects will allow funds set aside for access barrier removal to be used exclusively for barrier removal. Remodeling projects should never create additional access problems.

Consideration should be given to modifying our current Work Request Form. The form should include a check-off box for ADA compliance. This would ensure that all remodel projects or changes in space utilization meet ADA requirements. A similar requirement on Purchase Order Requisitions for computer purchases and classroom furniture would ensure ADA compliance.

Barriers identified in the Transition Plan will be prioritized as to importance in providing access and by available funding. The responsibility for priority setting is the responsibility of the ADA Coordinator and the Transition Plan Committee.

Computer and Technology Access

Access to computers and technology by students with disabilities consists of two issues: one, wheelchair access which is a size and space issue; and two, the computer's configuration in terms of memory, monitor size, and adaptive software for disabilities other than wheelchair limitations. The District has expressed its desire to achieve Universal Access to computers throughout the District. If Universal Access means every computer and all other forms of technology are available to all students whatever their disability the cost implications will be very high. So high, in terms of both space and dollars, that it will mean fewer computer stations for all students, both disabled and non-disabled students.

Another way to think about universal access is universal design. According to the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University, a Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialized design. The intent of universal design is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by as many people as possible at little or no extra cost. Universal design benefits people of all ages and abilities. Universal design has been adopted by the California Division of the State Architect as the proper approach to the full inclusion of all people in state controlled building.

In order for the District to achieve universal access/design all computer and technology purchases for labs or use by students will exceed minimum standards of Title 24, ADAAG, and the District's standard for software and other features for use by all students. Computer

purchases for labs or use by students must have approval prior to purchase by the District=s DSPS Coordinator and ADA Coordinator, or designees.

Purchase and upgrades of District site licenses for assistive software needs to be built into the District=s purchasing process. Networkable software includes JAWS screenreader and ZoomText screen magnifier. At the present time the District has a site license for 20 users each. As computer labs grow in number and size the site license must increase. Dragon Speech Recognition software is not networkable at this time, but may become so in the future. Kurzweil 1000 scan/read program for the blind (\$1,000.00) and Kurzweil 3000 scan/read program for the learning disabled (\$2,000.00) are not networkable. Possible funding sources are the cost center, a percentage of the technology budget, TTIP funds, and/or other appropriate funding sources.

Summary of Major Barrier Issues

District wide three access issues predominate: door locksets, signage, and handrails. Most door locksets are of the knob type. ADAAG standard 4.13.9 requires hardware that does not require tight grasping, tight pinching, or twisting of the wrist to operate. The District should remedy this problem by purchasing and installing clamping accessory levers to all classrooms, labs, practice rooms, and other areas of public occupancy as a priority. Faculty offices and non-public work areas may follow. As locksets are changed out they should be replaced by lever handle locksets.

Building signage is required by ADAAG 4.1.2 (7) for designation of all permanent rooms and spaces, signs providing direction to, or information about functional spaces. Other than recent new construction signage is nonexistent and/or noncompliant. Signage should be an immediate District priority.

Almost all handrails in the District do not meet current standards, particularly on the Eureka Campus. Efforts should include upgrading handrails to current standards.

Following is a summary of access problems found in the District. Access problems are identified by location, program, or activity. Each identified problem will have a description of the problem, method of removal of the barrier, applicable ADAAG standard, type of action to be taken, projected estimated cost of the action, projected date to initiate action, and the person responsible for overseeing the action.

The summary of access problems identifies problem areas throughout the District. This summary is in constant flux as problem areas are corrected and new problem areas are identified. The summary can be viewed in the Human Resources Office.