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SECRETARY OF STATE

STATE OF LOUISIANA  
SECRETARY OF STATE

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**To: All Parish Governing Authorities and Parish Financial Officers**

**Re: Grant Funding for Polling Place Accessibility**

**Date: February 14, 2011**

In 2004, the Louisiana Department of State began receiving annual federal allocations of funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Administration for Children and Families) for election improvements for individuals with a full range of disabilities. We refer to this grant as LEAD. In our annual grant application request, the Department has been requesting federal funds to assist in parish governing authorities in making polling places 100% accessible and ADA compliant.

Beginning in 2008, the Department notified parish governing authorities that federal funds were available to help parishes in need of temporary or permanent solutions to make polling places in their parish accessible. Currently, only 25 parishes have sought federal assistance from our Department. In addition, we have three parishes who have submitted formal requests for advance approval and have yet to expend the funds placed aside for their parish.

Currently, federal funds are still available for parishes in need of temporary or permanent solutions to their accessibility issue. One of the requirements to receive funding is that the parish governing authority must make the polling place accessible, pay for the solution(s), and prepare a Parish Grant Application Form (see enclosure) requesting reimbursement. The Department would in return reimburse the parish pending approval of the grant. In addition, all requests for reimbursement that are estimated to exceed \$5,000 for any polling place must receive advance approval from the Department of State prior to incurring expense(s).

The purpose of this letter is to set forth the requirements that must be met by each parish seeking LEAD grant funds to address polling place accessibility. These funds will be distributed to parishes based on date grant application is received and availability of funds. The guidelines and stipulations for a grant application are set forth below and must be followed for receipt of funds. All funding and expenditures will be subject to state and federal audits.

**The funds are to be used to:**

- (1) Make publicly owned buildings/property used as polling places accessible to individuals with the full range of disabilities (e.g., impairments involving visual, mobility, dexterity, or elderly) by establishing permanent or temporary election day improvements to parking, paths of travel, door hardware, entrances, exits, and voting areas through the use of various accessibility tools; or
- (2) Make privately owned buildings/property used as polling places accessible to individuals with the full range of disabilities (e.g., impairments involving visual, mobility, dexterity, or elderly) by establishing only temporary election day improvements to parking, paths of travel, door hardware, entrances, exits, and voting areas through the use of various accessibility tools.

**Guidelines:**

1. Accessibility survey forms provided by the Department of State must be completed by the parish governing authority for each polling place in the parish and filed with the Department of State. If you have already submitted survey forms to the Department for all of your current polling places, you will only have to complete a survey form for any new polling place.
2. In order to receive federal funds, a "Parish Grant Application Form" (see enclosure) must be completed by the parish governing authority listing the following:
  - a. . In the top right hand corner, mark whether or not this application is an estimate or a request for reimbursement.
  - b. Complete the top of the form making sure that there is a contact name, number, and email address; and
  - c. Under the Polling Place Accessibility Improvements section, complete the following for each polling place:
    - (1) Name and address of polling place;
    - (2) Indicate if the polling place is a public or private building;
    - (3) List proposed improvement and quantity and showing whether the improvement is a permanent or temporary solution; and
    - (4) Show the cost.
3. This form must be dated and signed by both the Parish Financial Officer and the President of the Parish Council/Jury.

4. All proposed permanent or temporary improvements must meet ADA standards.
5. The use of funds must be the most economical way to make the polling place accessible. If the cost is excessive, the parish may want to consider relocating the polling place.
6. The request for funds for permanent or temporary improvements must serve all of the disabled population for whom the accessibility is needed.
7. Funds CANNOT be used for anything other than accessibility of polling places.
8. All expenditures must be specific and well documented, with a copy of invoices to support all expenditures attached to the Parish Grant Application Form.
9. Under no circumstances are these federal funds to be used for any purchases other than for those supported by invoices and attached to the Parish Grant Application Form.
10. Any procurement over \$5,000 must be approved by the Department of State in advance prior to incurring any expenses.
11. All procurements must be made in accordance with parish purchasing procedures and guidelines.

Temporary polling place accessibility solutions include the use of portable equipment, such as temporary ramps, signs, and cones. Enclosed is a listing of accessibility solutions for different improvements at polling places. Any product for temporary improvements, once acquired, would be retained by the parish governing authority as their property and would be placed at the polling place for use at each election at the expense of the parish governing authority.

Please mail the original Parish Grant Application Form and all accompanying documents, invoices or receipts to :

Carol H. Guidry  
Director of HAVA  
Department of State  
P. O. Box 94125  
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-9125

For express delivery, send to: 8585 Archives Ave., Baton Rouge, LA 70809.


If you need assistance or have a question concerning any expense, please call Carol Guidry (225) 922-0900. It is better to have the expense approved in advance than to have the expense denied.

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All Parish Governing Authorities and Parish Financial Officers  
February 7, 2011

Thank you for your continued work on ensuring the accessibility of all polling places in your parish.

Yours very truly,



Tom Schedler  
Secretary of State

TS:cg

Enclosure

Cc: Merietta Norton  
Angie Rogers .  
Joanne Guidroz

# POLLING PLACE ACCESSIBILITY SOLUTIONS

**PARKING.** Where parking is available; however, there is no accessible parking sign, a permanent or temporary parking sign (van accessible parking) can be used that can be seen over the hood of a van (approximately 6 feet total including sign and post). Where parking is provided, it may be necessary to mark off an additional parking space to be used only by voters with disabilities (8 feet minimum for van accessible landing area and 5 feet minimum for car accessible landing area). Blue paint markings can be used to mark off van accessible landing area or signs which are available for purchase for this purpose, as are cones. Permanent marking changes are not necessary. Where street parking is the only choice, a space near a curb cut should be marked off by signs and cones.

**HEAVY/LOCKED DOORS.** In hot weather, propping doors open may not be an option. Moreover, schools and other facilities are increasingly unwilling to have their doors left open, and in some instances even require that they remain locked. In these instances, a temporary wireless doorbell may be used and a sign must be posted on the door instructing the voter to ring for assistance and access. These temporary wireless doorbells are inexpensive and are available for purchase at hardware stores.

**INACCESSIBLE DOOR HARDWARE.** For doors that have hardware that cannot be manipulated by a closed fist, the doorbell system referred to above may be used. Alternatively, there are hardware retrofit kits that are available for purchase that may render the door accessible.

**GRAVEL AND OTHER ROUGH SURFACES.** Accessible polling places can only be reached by traveling over gravel and other surfaces that are inhospitable to wheelchairs, walkers, and cane users. Marine plywood or matting, which smoothes out the surface to make it accessible, is available for purchase at hardware stores. The plywood or matting must be made available from the 8 ft. van accessible landing area through to a concrete surface or to the front door. It is recommended that matting have beveled edges.

**STEPS.** Steps higher than *"/i>4* inch are not accessible to wheelchair users. In addition, attention must be given to the angle of the slope. Permanent ramps may be built or portable, temporary ramps may be constructed or purchased for sidewalks, entrances, and interior spaces where only a few steps are involved or where the angle of the slope is too steep. If there is a vertical drop off, the ramp must have an edge protector. In addition, if the ramp has a rise of 6 inches or greater, it must have a handrail. There are also temporary door threshold ramps that can be purchased at hardware stores.

**DOOR WIDTH.** The width of a doorway is affected by its hinges. Door widening hinges can be used to widen a door up to 2 inches. To be accessible, the width of a door should be 32 inches at a minimum.

ESTIMATE: \_\_\_\_\_

REIMBURSEMENT: \_\_\_\_\_



## PARISH GRANT APPLICATION FORM Funding For Accessible Polling Places

PARISH NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL NO. POLLING PLACES: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PERSON COMPLETING APPLICATION & TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

### POLLING PLACE ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Name & Address of Polling Place	Indicate if Public or Private Building	Proposed Improvement & Quantity (Indicate if permanent or temporary)	Cost

(Continue on additional pages if needed)

Name & Address of Polling Place	Indicate if Public or Private Building	Proposed Improvement & Quantity (Indicate if permanent or temporary)	Cost

(Copy for additional pages if needed)



## PARISH GRANT APPLICATION CERTIFICATION FORM

We, the undersigned, do hereby declare and state that:

1. Federal funds allocated under the LEAD grant, as applied for herein, will be used by our parish only for permanent or temporary improvements to polling places for accessibility, as listed in this grant application.
2. Accessibility survey forms (provided by the Department of State) have been completed by our parish governing authority for each polling place and are on file with the Department of State.
3. If this is an estimate  
:
  - a. each public building/property listed herein as a polling place that is in need of improvement for accessibility on Election Day will have such work performed in a timely manner so as to provide accessibility to individuals with a full range of disabilities; and
  - b. each private building/property listed herein as a polling place that is in need of improvement for accessibility on Election Day will have temporary solutions made available in a timely manner so as to provide accessibility to individuals with a full range of disabilities.
4. If this is a request for reimbursement:
  - a. each public building/property listed herein as a polling place that was in need of improvement for accessibility on Election Day has had work performed or temporary solutions procured and will provide accessibility to individuals with a full range of disabilities; and
  - b. each private building/property listed herein as a polling place that was in need of improvement for accessibility on Election Day has had temporary solutions procured and will provide accessibility to individuals with a full range of disabilities.
5. All permanent solutions will remain in place for all elections.
6. All temporary solutions will be retained as the property of the parish governing authority and will be delivered to the polling place by the parish governing authority prior to all elections and will be removed following all elections. Such delivery will be an expense of the parish governing authority.
7. All proposed permanent or temporary improvements meet ADA standards.
8. The use of federal funds under the LEAD grant, as applied for herein, is the most economical way to make the polling place accessible.
9. The federal funds under the LEAD grant, as applied for herein, will not be used for anything other than accessibility for polling places as detailed herein.
10. All estimates are itemized for each polling place and are attached to this grant application. Under no circumstances will such funds be used for anything other than permanent or temporary improvements for polling place accessibility as detailed herein.
11. All requests for reimbursements are specific and well documented, with a listing of expenditures with a copy of invoices attached to this grant application to substantiate all expenditures. Under no circumstances will such funds be used for anything other than permanent or temporary improvements for polling place accessibility as detailed herein.

Thus done this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT, PARISH COUNCIL/POLICE JURY

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARISH FINANCIAL OFFICER