



ASSISTING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

(Time varies)

OBJECTIVE

Students develop and carry out plans to assist individuals with disabilities in registering to vote and voting.

MATERIALS

Internet access; a local phone book

GET READY

- ✓ Make arrangements to have a speaker come to the class who works with people with disabilities in the community.
- ✓ If possible, ask the speaker to invite a person with a disability to come to the class with him/her to speak.

INSTRUCTIONS

- ✓ There are roughly 43 million Americans with disabilities. Many of these people are adults of voting age. With support from the Americans with Disabilities Act, the U.S. government has a legal responsibility to assist individuals with disabilities in living full and productive lives. Have students brainstorm the types of disabilities that could affect how one registers to vote or how one votes.
- ✓ Have students research existing services for people with disabilities in terms of registering to vote and voting.
- ✓ Have students prepare questions in advance to ask your guest speakers about issues, problems, and services for people with disabilities related to registering and voting.
- ✓ At a class session after the speakers' visit, brainstorm as a class how to assist people with disabilities in registering and voting. Have students, either individually or in small groups, develop a plan to assist people with a specific disability in registering and voting in a local election.

- ✓ Have students collaborate with the voter registration office, local agencies that serve people with disabilities, or the local elections commission to increase the numbers of people with disabilities who are registered and who vote. Students could volunteer their time and/or make suggestions to the elections commission.
- ✓ Where appropriate, individual students who are completing the service activity can then be paired with a person with a disability to help them register and/or vote in a local election. If individuals with disabilities require transportation to the polls, it may be possible to use school buses with special accommodations for this purpose.
- ✓ After the election, have students who engaged in the direct service with people with disabilities talk about their experiences in class.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ★ *What accommodations are available at your local voter registration office and local polls?*
- ★ *Could some types of disabilities deter an individual from registering or voting at all?*
- ★ *Why is it important for people with disabilities to be able to register and vote?*
- ★ *Did you make a difference with your assistance?*