

# Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

June 6, 2018

6:30-8:00 pm

Rockville Memorial Library

Notes

## **Attendees**

Debbie Brown, Richard Bell-Irving, Cindy Buddington, Jane Carona, Steven Frank, Rita Gale, Francie Gilman, Angelisa Hawes, Barbara King, Jill Lewis, Monica Martinez, Dennis Pillsbury, Kathleen Reedy, Betty Thompson

## **Introductions**

Committee members introduced themselves and welcomed Angelisa Hawes, the incoming Assistant Director for Facilities and ADA. The meeting was the final meeting for Rita Gale who is soon to retire from this position. Committee members presented Rita with a thank-you print/Braille card in appreciation of her work for library clients with disabilities.

## **Staff Training**

The meeting was devoted to staff training and the staff training tip sheets.

### Tip Sheets

The tip sheet discussion began with questions about the format and whether the tip sheets should be simple cheat sheets/quick reference guides or lengthy informative documents. Debbie Brown recommended that the tip sheet be intuitive and uncomplicated. Cindy Buddington suggested that the librarians decide which format suited them. Rita Gale stressed that some staff members may not have frequent contact with individuals with disabilities and quite possibly would not remember training information without continual client contact. Rita mentioned the invaluable knowledge and experience the committee members bring to creating tip sheets and asked that the tip sheets convey to the trainer and library staff what “works.” Richard Bell-Irving asked if committee members should choose the top five tips

from each organization for the tip sheets. Francie suggested eliminating print resources from tip sheets and only include online resources. Rita recommended simply adding one or two prime resources if possible.

AAC members have already created long tip sheets and decided they now will revise/edit the long tip sheets into ones that can be used as quick reference guides. The MCPL administrative staff or trainer can decide which/or both tip sheets would be most useful as training tools. The longer tip sheets possibly could be used in training sessions while the shorter ones might be used as information desk reference guides. The format for the shorter tip sheets should be uniform and include a definition/overview of the disability, essential tips, and essential resources. If possible, the tip sheet should fit on one page. The short tip sheets that AAC members will create will include tip sheets for blindness/low vision, service animals (Jane), mental illness (Amy), autism (Monica), learning disabilities (Richard), mobility impairments (Francie and Cindy), and deaf blindness (Steven). Short tip sheets should be sent to Jill by July 1 or August 1 at the latest so Jill can forward them to Elizabeth and Angelisa in enough time for them to read and give input at the September meeting.

Committee members agreed that the tip sheets should explain that clients are the best ones to explain their needs. Members also agreed that the overview should clearly describe a disability.

## Training

A second discussion focused on the best way to present the training to staff as well as how often training should be repeated. One suggestion is for an online training class with a follow-up quiz. A certain score would need to be achieved on the quiz and, when not achieved, the staff member would need to repeat the training. AAC committee members might be the ones to come up with the after-training quiz. Other suggestions include person-to-person training, a system-wide staff training meeting, and role playing. Committee members agreed on the importance of staff feeling comfortable serving clients with disabilities and that staff members have ample opportunity to ask questions about this service. Other discussion points included the difficulty staff may have serving a client with a disability if the disability is not easily recognizable. Angelisa mentioned that staff members do not al-

ways know how to address a complaint if the complaint involves a client with a disability. For example, staff may not know how to react if a child with a disability makes a loud noise or a client with mental illness is muttering. How does a staff member react not only to the client but also to other clients in the vicinity? Amy Fier discussed mental health tips and acceptable behaviors as opposed to behaviors that staff might need training to recognize or manage. Steven suggested that the staff or the trainer meet with volunteers (perhaps from the AAC) and asked who would be doing the training. This has yet to be determined.

### **MCPL report**

The County Council approved the CIP budget and proposed a change in the refresh project schedule. Two branches will be refreshed each year instead of three. FY18/19 refresh projects include Praisner and Long Branch Libraries which are in the design and construction phases. Work is still being done on the planning for the FY19/20 refresh projects. Cindy voiced a concern about elevators in branch libraries and asked that each library have two elevators in case one is not working. Committee members agreed with this recommendation with the understanding that it was not always possible to install two elevators.

### **Next Meeting**

The next AAC meeting will be on Wednesday, September 5, 6:30-8:00pm at the Rockville Memorial Library.

### **Recommendations/Action Items**

- AAC members will revise/edit long tip sheets into ones that can be used as quick reference guides.
- The MCPL administrative staff or the trainer can decide which/or both tip sheets would be most useful as training tools. The longer tip sheets possibly could be used in training sessions while the shorter ones might be used as information desk reference guides.
- If possible, the short tip sheets should include the top five essential tips from each organization.

- Eliminate print resources from the short tip sheets and only include online resources.
- Add one or two prime resources to the short tip sheets, again if possible.
- The format for the shorter tip sheets should be uniform and include a definition/overview of the disability (what the staff needs to know), essential tips, and essential resources.
- If possible, the tip sheet should fit on one page.
- Short tip sheets should be sent to Jill by July 1 or August 1 at the latest so Jill can send them to Elizabeth and Angelisa in enough time for them to read and give input at the September meeting.
- The short tip sheets that AAC members will create will include tip sheets for blindness/low vision, service animals (Jane), mental illness (Amy Fier), autism (Monica), learning disabilities (Richard), mobility impairments (Francie and Cindy), and deaf blindness (Steven).
- Both the long and short tip sheets should explain that clients are the best ones to explain their needs. The overview should clearly describe a disability.
- Training could be: an online training class with a follow-up quiz. A certain score would need to be achieved on the quiz and, when not achieved, the staff member would need to repeat the training (AAC committee members might be the ones to come up with the after-training quiz); person-to-person training; system-wide staff training meeting; role playing.
- Committee members agreed on the importance of staff feeling comfortable serving clients with disabilities and that staff members have ample opportunity to ask questions about this service.
- The staff or the trainer meet with volunteers (perhaps from the AAC).
- Each library should have two elevators in case one is not working.