

Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting

September 5, 2018

6:30-8:00 pm

Rockville Memorial Library

Notes

Attendees

Richard Bell-Irving, Debbie Brown, Jane Carona, Steven Frank, Francie Gilman, Villy Iranpur, Barbara King, Elizabeth Lang, Jill Lewis, Monica Martinez, Dennis Pillsbury, Marcie Povitsky, Betty Thompson

Introductions

Committee members introduced themselves and reported on recent and upcoming activities. Debbie Brown reported that the National Federation of the Blind will sponsor a “Hands-on Non-Visual Technology” seminar from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the Praisner Library on September 29th. The seminar focus will be the use of basic devices and programs for low vision/blind individuals and will include a free lunch. Francie Gilman and Dennis Pillsbury discussed attending a regional ADA conference for agency representatives who advocate for individuals with disabilities. Francie also is working on a Wiki for Nancy Greene’s office. Nancy is the former ADA Title II Compliance Manager for the county Department of General Services. Dennis said that on September 18th the Baltimore Orioles will wear jerseys with their names in Braille to celebrate the 40th year of the National Federation of the Blind being located in Baltimore.

Library Update

Elizabeth Lang reported that the AAC will be listed on the library web page. The web page will include a description of the committee’s mission, work, and membership. The web entry still needs to be finalized.

The new home book delivery service, Books at Home, is in a pilot stage with all branches currently assisting customers. A survey sent to the 26 customers indicates

that the service has improved their quality of life. However, staff feedback shows that staff would like more training and that there are difficulties with the post office book delivery. Elizabeth is writing a decision memo requesting that the service become a permanent one. The goal is to grow the program until it serves 500 customers, and she hopes to be able to let us know soon that Books at Home has become permanent. At that point Elizabeth may ask the AAC members for assistance with marketing Books at Home. The targeted Books at Home customers are individuals unable to come to a library who have submitted an application based on the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped application (only shorter). The application can be completed and submitted by phone or mail. Most of the applications come through the librarians who talk to family members. After being accepted into the program, the customers are assigned to a library with customers spread out among the branch libraries. Most of the customers are older individuals who do not use eBooks and may not have computers. Committee members congratulated Elizabeth on the success of the important new program.

ADA work has been completed at the Praisner, Damascus, and Potomac branches. The work includes improvements such as slope correction, sidewalk repair, and the correct placement and number of disability parking spaces. Long Branch Library will have corrective work done during the upcoming refresh project. Betty Thompson reported that the accessibility work completed at White Oak Library is very good, and Debbie said the signage is now correct. Elizabeth will discuss with her supervisor the handling of future signage problems. The ADA requires Braille signage, and Dennis requested that individuals let him know if they find incorrect signage. AAC members were asked to advertise to their organizations to report signage problems.

The next branch libraries to be refreshed are Praisner and Long Branch. The AAC has visited all branches due for refresh except Germantown Library, and Elizabeth will look into setting up an accessibility tour of this branch which will include a meeting with Susan Cohen, Head of Adult Services and Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, Project Coordinator, Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library (MDDCDL).

Staff Training

Elizabeth will conduct a staff training pilot project focused on customers with autism using a modified version of Monica Martinez's tip sheet. This project will be presented to staff in two libraries frequented by customers with autism. Elizabeth is investigating the best way to train library staff since there are a large number of employees (about 400) and is considering asking staff members to watch a video followed by a quiz. Elizabeth would like to receive feedback from the AAC on what committee members hope to see in the training and how the tip sheets created by committee members can be used in training.

MCPL Staff Development Coordinator Kate Tavakolian joined the meeting to discuss her work on staff training for service to customers with disabilities. Kate explained that she developed a form and would like AAC members to fill in the form so that she has a blueprint for a training module that builds on AAC members' experience and knowledge. The form includes a title, learning objectives, learning activities, and resources. The learning objectives are quantifiable and show what the staff members should be able to do after they have completed the training. The learning objective is what you want the person being trained to know. Learning activities are such activities as case studies which describe situations where customer service was unsuccessful. A learning activity also can be a discussion of an actual library experience or a potential disappointing experience. Resources can be a list of links or the resources listed in the tip sheets.

Before the next meeting, AAC members are asked to (1) from a tip sheet you have created or which describes the disability you represent, come up with at least two learning objectives and (2) from your experience or the experience of members of your organization come up with learning activities (scenarios which can be case studies or actual experiences). The scenarios should be very specific so that Kate has a problem situation that can be used in training. Scenarios and case studies should reflect what you think is one of the most important situations you want MCPL to address. Your case studies/scenarios should not only describe a situation but also describe a solution.

The blueprint exercise should lead to good training discussion topics and insure that Kate and Elizabeth know the topics that are important to AAC members.

Committee members discussed the various ways to categorize training modules, for example by kind of disability (auditory, visual), visible and nonvisible disabilities, explicit vs. unclear disabilities. Also under discussion were the various means of conducting training sessions. Training sessions can vary. Some can have a pre-assignment followed by face to face training spread over time. Other training sessions can follow the model Elizabeth is exploring of having a quiz follow a video.

Kate regards training as a long-term project and does not feel that immediate success will occur since the best way to retain the kind of information she is presenting is through practice. The eventual goal is a reduction in complaints.

Richard said that his organization works with invisible disabilities and asked if the customer training takes invisible disabilities into consideration. Kate said yes. She wants staff to be aware that what the customer does not say is important. Francie asked if the scenario/case study could be a video. Yes. Steven stressed the importance of terminology in the resource section of the form.

Next Meeting

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

Recommendations/Action Items

- Once the Books at Home program is a permanent one, the AAC members will market it to their organizations.
- Dennis requested that individuals let him know if they find incorrect signage at any of the branch libraries and to let their organizations' members know to report signage problems.
- Elizabeth will look into setting up an accessibility tour of the Germantown Library that will include a meeting with Susan Cohen, Head of Adult Services and Services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Community, Project Coordinator, Maryland Deaf Culture Digital Library.
- AAC members will provide feedback to Elizabeth on what committee members hope to see in staff training and how the tip sheets created by committee members can be used in training.

- AAC members will help create staff training blueprints for different disabilities by listing learning objectives, scenarios/case studies, and resources. These can be based on the tip sheets or on actual library experiences. The resources can be taken from the tip sheets.
- The learning objectives, activities, and resources should be sent to Jill before Thanksgiving. Jill will compile the information and send it to Elizabeth to share with Kate and Angelisa.