

**NOVEMBER 3, 2015 POLL SITE SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT**

CIDNY conducted poll site surveys for the General Election on November 3, 2015. We visited 43 sites in all 5 Boroughs, finding that 88 percent of the sites surveyed had barriers. Of the sites visited one was not in operation although it was on the NYC Board of Elections list. The survey results show some of the same old problems such as: ramps that are not compliant with ADA standards, and sites where entryways are too narrow for people using wheelchairs or scooters and not enough space around the BMDs.

There were instances of inadequate interior and exterior signage where coordinators reported that they were not given enough signs. A high percentage of temporary ramps were poorly constructed and non-ADA compliant. Architectural barriers included narrow doorways, long built in ramps without adequate turning and landing space. Although lack of space to access the machines continued to create a problem there were less occurrences than in previous elections, notably this was seen at only 6 sites, where the problem could not be corrected by the Coordinator. The main reasons for this was the lack of extension cords so other equipment shared the available outlet.

**November 3, 2015 General Election**

|                                     | <b>No. of Sites with barriers</b> | <b>% barriers</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Ramps</b>                        | <b>16</b>                         | <b>41%</b>        |
| <b>Exterior Signage</b>             | <b>7</b>                          | <b>17%</b>        |
| <b>Entryways/Pathways</b>           | <b>22</b>                         | <b>52%</b>        |
| <b>Interior Signage</b>             | <b>1</b>                          | <b>2%</b>         |
| <b>Interior Access*</b>             | <b>12</b>                         | <b>29%</b>        |
|                                     |                                   |                   |
| <b>Total no. of sites surveyed</b>  | <b>43**</b>                       |                   |
| <b>No of Sites without Barriers</b> | <b>5</b>                          | <b>12.0%</b>      |

*\* Interior access barriers include insufficient space to access the BMD. At 10 of the 62 sites surveyed, the placement of the BMD did not provide enough space for wheelchair user access. However, most of the barriers were narrow doorways.*

*\*\*One site was not in operation. CIDNY surveyors were told the site could possibly have been moved to the building across from designated site but they were not allowed in to verify. This site was on the NYCBOE list.*

## RAMPS

CIDNY surveyors found that ramps were not ADA compliant at sixteen of the sites surveyed for this election. The temporary ramps were poorly constructed with missing handrails, missing caps and a steep bevel edge to enter the ramp. The built in ramps were long and some without adequate turning and landing space. Surveyors also discovered ramps with broken areas that resulted in abrupt level changes.



IS 302, Brooklyn –No side guards, presents tipping hazard for someone using a wheel chair.



PS 224 Brooklyn- Bevel at entrance of ramp is too steep and shortens the turning radius making it difficult for a wheel chair user to negotiate the turn and use the ramp.



PS 154, Manhattan (left) - Ramp at alternate entrance looks like it is improperly installed and possibly unsteady. PS 154, Manhattan (right)- Ramp at alternate entrance exits on broken pathway potentially causing a tripping hazard for someone who is blind and a difficult or impossible landing for someone using a wheel chair.



PS 47, Manhattan- The ramp had less than 5' turning space because of barrier placed at door.



WH Career Tech HS, Brooklyn – Very long ramp, no landing. The ADA requires a resting landing every 30'.



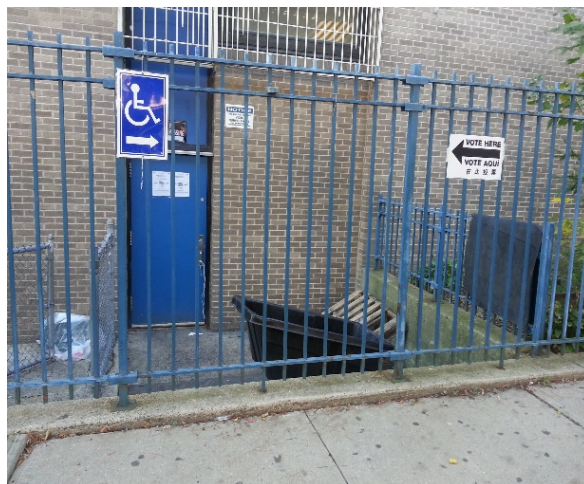
## SIGNAGE

There has been some improvement in the signs being used however, some poll sites did not have adequate signage. Inadequate exterior signage was observed at seven sites and in cases where the accessible entrance is located some distance from the main entrance there were no directional signs in between. This made it difficult to locate the accessible entrance especially when the accessible entrance is around the block. This was difficult for people with mobility issues, and particularly for those who use walkers. Signage was also confusing with directional arrows pointing in the wrong direction as well the wrong address written in.

The lack of interior signage was observed at one site, as in most cases there was direct access to the voting area.



IS 302 Brooklyn- Wrong address on sign.



IS 302 Brooklyn- Directional arrows in the wrong direction.

These signage issues could cause voters to go the wrong entrance and think that the polling site is not accessible.

## ENTRYWAYS AND PATHWAYS

Most of the barriers encountered during this survey were with the entryways and pathways, and the width of the entry doors not meeting the required ADA standards which is 32 inches. Our surveys show entrances ranging from 27 inches to 31 inches. At one site the ADA coordinator had to help people to squeeze through the door. There were obstacles blocking doorways that prevented ease of access. There were doors that were heavy and difficult to open with no door monitors to assist. Also there were a few sites where the doorway lip at the entrance ranged from one inch to two inches high and a few were badly beveled. These are tripping hazards and may make it difficult and dangerous for those using wheel chairs because their chairs can get stuck or tip trying to negotiate that abrupt change in height. Also pathways leading to the sites were cracked and uneven with no detectable warning, so that those who are blind may trip or fall if they are not aware of the barriers.



PS 53, Bronx - Door way is 27" wide. Too narrow for wheel chair users.



PS 224, Brooklyn- Lip at doorway is more than 1" high, presenting a tripping hazard and can be difficult for someone using a wheel chair to negotiate.



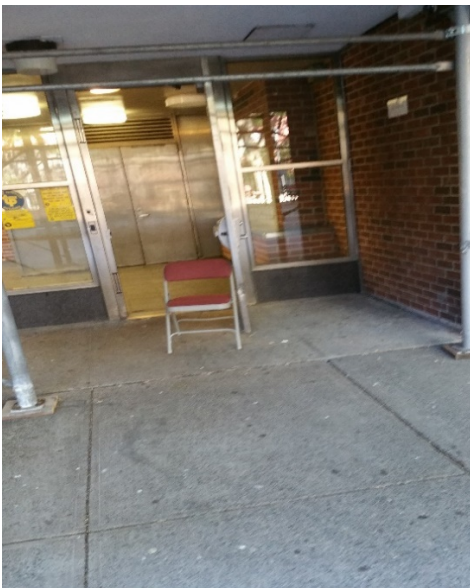
PS 57, Manhattan – Narrow doorway into voting area main entrance preventing its use by someone using a wheel chair or walker.



Bayard Rustin HS, Manhattan –

Lip at entrance is too high and does not meet ADA standards.

This is a tripping hazard and can also be impossible for someone using a wheel chair to negotiate.



Max Meltzer Community Center, Manhattan-

Chair used to keep door open blocking entryway, preventing its use by someone using a wheel chair or walker.

## BMDS

We found that significantly more of the Ballot Marking Devices (BMD) were working well than in previous elections. Out of the 42 sites surveyed, only one site had a non-working BMD. However, access to the BMDs remains an issue. There was insufficient space to access the machines at six of the sites visited. The major problem was a lack of extension cords so that most of the equipment was plugged in one power station, making the cord length smaller. There was also a sign on a free standing poll meant to draw attention to the BMD, but whose placement became a barrier to access at times. In other cases, where there was insufficient space for wheel chair users to access the machines; poll workers corrected the space issues and tried to ensure there was adequate space on one side to access the machine according to instructions in the Poll Worker Manual.



East New York High School, Brooklyn -Hoops obstructing BMD.



PS 53 Bronx - No clearance at BMD.

Both of these barriers could prevent a voter in a wheel chair from using the machine because there is not enough space for them to enter the area in front of the machine and vote. Most wheel chairs require at least a 32" width to enter a space and a 5x5 foot radius to turn in a space.



Riverton Apartment, Manhattan- BMD placed close to the refrigerator. A wheel chair user would not be able to get to the machine.

**CIDNY Poll Site Survey Summary from 2003-2015**

Results of the November 4, 2014 CIDNY surveys mirror results of surveys done since 2003. The November 2015 surveys show that 88 percent still exhibit barriers that render New York City polling sites non-ADA compliant and inaccessible to NYC voters with disabilities.

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| November 2015  | 43* Sites Visited, 37 sites or 88% with Barriers    |
| November 2014  | 62 Sites Visited, 43 Sites or 69% with Barriers     |
| September 2014 | 46 Sites Visited, 33 Sites or 72% with Barriers     |
| November 2013  | 80 Sites Visited, 27 Sites or 66.6% with Barriers   |
| November 2012  | 132 Sites Visited, 108 Sites or 81.8% with Barriers |
| September 2012 | 43 Sites Visited, 37 Sites or 86% with Barriers     |
| November 2011  | 55 Sites Visited, 46 Sites or 84% with Barriers     |
| November 2010  | 53 Sites Visited, 40 Sites or 75% with Barriers     |
| September 2010 | 53 Sites Visited, 42 Sites or 80% with Barriers     |
| November 2009  | 51 Sites Visited, 43 Sites or 84% with Barriers     |
| November 2008  | 65 Sites Visited, 54 Sites or 83% with Barriers     |
| September 2008 | 24 Sites Visited, 21 Sites or 87% with Barriers     |
| November 2007  | 50 Sites Visited, 42 Sites or 84% with Barriers     |
| November 2006  | 15 Sites Visited, 15 Sites or 100% with Barriers    |
| November 2005  | 77 Sites Visited, 57 Sites or 74% with Barriers     |
| November 2004  | 85 Sites Visited, 52 Sites or 61% with Barriers     |
| September 2004 | 35 Sites Visited, 15 Sites or 43% with Barriers     |
| March 2004     | 44 Sites Visited, 30 Sites or 68% with Barriers     |
| November 2003  | 31 Sites Visited, 14 Sites or 42% with Barriers     |

\*One site was not in operation.

**Since 2003, CIDNY has surveyed 1044 polling sites; with an average of 75.2% with barriers.**