
ADA's Impact on Three Extraordinary Individuals

As many of you know, the 20th Anniversary of the ADA's signing will be celebrated on July 26. In this issue you will get a chance to meet three extraordinary individuals whose professional lives encompass the two decades of the ADA. How did the new law affect them? How were they able to use it to affect the lives of others? What was it like back before the ADA was passed?



Jan Campbell - Advocate

*She has a degree in elementary education from Portland State University (1970) and successfully completed her student teaching. The University was proud of her. There was just one problem: the school district wouldn't hire her because her disability might "badly influence" the children. Substitute teaching at several district schools – which might have calmed down those fears – was difficult because the schools were inaccessible. Meet **Jan Campbell**, and see why Portland is lucky she didn't get that teaching job.*

Left paralyzed at the age of two by a virus that attacked her spine, Jan Campbell has used a wheelchair nearly all her life. She attended special schools or classes for children with disabilities. Her mother, a physician, offered some advice that has stayed with Campbell for her entire life and shaped how she dealt with adversity. ***"The world isn't ready for you, so we'll make you ready for the world."***

Take, for example, earning a degree in elementary education that didn't result in becoming employed. Campbell recalls that everyone just assumed she would teach 5th or 6th graders because she was a good student and effective in her student teaching practicum. For many of us, the rejection would be devastating, but Mom's advice worked once again and Campbell started job hunting.

Portland, in 1970, wasn't very accessible for someone who got around in a wheelchair. Lifts on busses? Not yet invented. Curb cuts? Come back in a decade or so. Campbell got around manually wheeling herself, using the streets when necessary and depending on friends to drive her longer distances. Many businesses were not particularly accessible, and even when they were, their bathrooms were not yet ready for someone in a wheelchair. The ADA was still twenty years in the future. Still, Portland was much more progressive than many cities.

Campbell contacted the city and found it receptive to hiring her to bring some teeth into compliance with the brand new 1973 Rehabilitation Act's section 504 that prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities. As the city's new Disability Rights Coordinator, Campbell began a 24-year-long career with the city that allowed her to become a forceful and effective advocate for citizens with disabilities.

As Campbell describes her work during that early, pre-ADA period, she emphasizes how different it was to have the law backing her up, rather than simply being an advocate. “The city was not the hard part,” she says, “because it knew it had to comply with the law.” Still, Section 504 was an anti-discrimination approach to changing society and, as the ADA’s civil rights approach would later demonstrate, not the more effective strategy.

“The tough part of my job,” Campbell explained, “was out in the community. The barriers were attitudes about disability, and those are harder to change.” For example, Oregon had progressive building codes that promoted accessibility, but builders didn’t see the need for it. “They said they didn’t have people who were asking for accessible stores and buildings, so why go the extra expense and bother?” she says.

Campbell spent a lot of time talking on the phone, and routinely found that her first face-to-face meetings elicited a surprised, “Oh, I didn’t know that YOU used a wheelchair!” She feels that walking the walk increased her credibility and made her ideas more believable. One individual who was a critic and a non-believer in the need for accessibility for years made an abrupt and dramatic change when an accident left him disabled. The need for accessibility, he found, was much clearer.

Technology made life easier. Campbell got her first motorized wheelchair in 1978, which was both good and bad. Now the strategy of asking a friend for a ride was out the door – the motorized chair was far too heavy to put in the trunk – so Campbell motored around the community. The lack of curb cuts often forced her out into the street. By now, some busses had lifts – again, both good and bad news. Those first lifts were not as safe as today’s lifts, they were slow, and the drivers were not allowed to use them in busy rush hour traffic. Bus drivers made individual decisions regarding the safety of letting a passenger in a wheelchair out using the lift, which meant they might not stop at some locations.

Not surprisingly, Campbell became a member of the Tri-Met’s Committee on Accessible Transportation and worked hard to improve the bus system’s success at serving people with disabilities. She’s proud of the improvements made by Tri-Met over the years. “I can now go so many places independently,” she says. At the same time, Campbell is well aware that public transportation in the city is much more accessible than in the suburbs and more rural areas. Recent cuts by Tri-Met reflect difficult economic times and have reduced the service on routes further out from the city.

Still a decade before the ADA, Campbell went back to graduate school and got a van with a lift that she could use to drive to areas not on public transportation routes. She remembers being carried up stairs into a classroom for grad students as an adult because the academic building was not yet accessible.

With the passage of the ADA in 1990, Campbell hoped that lasting change was finally in the air. “We were very excited when the ADA passed. I really thought things would improve.”

Now, twenty years later, she reflects on what she’s seen. “You can make laws, but unless you change attitudes many things don’t change. People still make cruel remarks, and we (people with disabilities) are still excluded from simple social activities.” Campbell gives the example of attending a conference and going to a conference luncheon. The chair beside her often stays empty in the packed room.

Will change happen? “It has in some ways. Physical accessibility – getting into buildings and things like curb cuts – has improved a lot in twenty years. But for those with sensory impairments, the change is less. Look at how far we have to go in achieving effective communication. And for people with non-apparent disabilities, like mental illness, there is not much support in the community,” says Campbell. “No one wants to talk about disability, and when they finally do, a lot of stuff comes out.”

Campbell now has left her work with the city after two decades, but still has a typical work day that starts at 7 am and doesn’t finish until 10 pm. She’s become very involved with mental health and with women’s issues, working part time for Aging and Disability Services on their “Help” line, teaching a class on women with disabilities who suffer depression at Oregon Health Sciences University, and volunteering at Portland State University on a project focusing on women who have been abused. Oh, and she serves on the City’s Commission on Disabilities that she used to chair as a city employee.

“I worry,” she says, “about who will take the torch when we retire.” Campbell sees the future being more challenging for advocates. “We could see the changes we were advocating for, like when a building became accessible or when the bus system installed lifts. But in the future, the changes needed will be just as important but less visible to the advocate and to others.” She hopes that a new generation of advocates will continue the fight.



Jim Hollibaugh - Cartographer

Usher's Syndrome comes in several flavors, but for Jim Hollibaugh, the loss of his hearing began early in elementary school and his vision began deteriorating in his late teens. Naturally this affected his choice of careers: Hollibaugh became a cartographer – a maker of maps. How did he do it?

A military brat, Hollibaugh grew up all over the country. Usher's Syndrome was diagnosed early but the ensuing progressive loss of his hearing and vision was so subtle, Hollibaugh never thought it would have much impact on his future. Once out of high school he tried to enlist in the military but was turned down because he wore hearing aids. The U.S. Forest Service did hire him, however, and Hollibaugh began work in Oregon with chain saws, earth coring and seismic testing equipment, and got to drive a big two-ton service truck until an ill-fated trip to his ophthalmologist for stronger glasses triggered a mandated report to the State DMV about his deteriorating vision.

Hollibaugh lost his driver's license and with it, his job. "At that moment in time," he remembers, "losing the driver's license felt like a significant part of my independence was abruptly amputated."

Now in his mid-20's, without a job, slowly losing his vision and already hard of hearing, Hollibaugh did not know what to do next. An uncle from Anchorage invited Hollibaugh to stay with him until something came up. He could get around on city buses.

In those pre-ADA days, the federal government offered "Schedule A" positions (*and it still does*) that encouraged people with disabilities to apply for jobs. Hollibaugh applied for a position with the Bureau of Land Management's Anchorage office, where he was offered the opportunity to do some hand drafting on maps. He had lost approximately 65% of his vision; it was quite a job match. Using a drafting pen with black ink and the "Leroy template" Hollibaugh added the names of geographic features and land status codes to maps depicting land ownership. Back in the 1980's, these maps were drafted by hand.

As Hollibaugh tells his story, it becomes clear that his early work involved a critical race: on one hand his vision was gradually deteriorating and the work strategies that worked today might not work tomorrow, while on the other hand the brilliant engineers that invented new assistive technology might just keep him working. He was in a race against time, hoping to stay employed.

"Over time I've lost my vision, the sense of colors, and my depth perception," says Hollibaugh. "I began to have an increasing number of zones in my field of vision in which I cannot see anything. Prior to the passage of the ADA, the effects of his disability were not limited to work. Just using the public bus with its steep entry stairway was a challenge.

The 1980's brought great advances in the application of software to map-making, and the engineers inventing it who had been trying to speed up production were also creating an assistive technology for

Hollibaugh. A newly devised German machine allows Hollibaugh to take the information he has to ink onto maps, and instead type it into the machine, give it some coordinates, and voila, it prints directly on the map. And he begins to work with databases to draw plot lines.

“Without the ADA, I’d be living on Social Security,” says Hollibaugh.

When the ADA was passed in 1990, Hollibaugh was 33 years old and working hard on creating township maps of Alaska’s vast landscape. As a federal employee, Title I didn’t directly apply to him but the other aspects of the Act that required accessibility would eventually have a direct effect on his life.

Hollibaugh tried taking some college classes. He’d talk to the professors before the semester started, explaining his difficulties with vision and hearing. “Then they would make an announcement on the first day of class asking for a student volunteer who would be willing to put a sheet of carbon paper under their notepaper to make a copy for me. I was very embarrassed to be pointed out to the other students. Worse yet, I sensed some resentment from some students as if I was being allowed to cruise through the class...” He didn’t continue.

Social life and dating in Alaska had been particularly hard for Hollibaugh. During the 1980s and 90s, Anchorage seemed to be an odd place for a person with both hearing and vision problems. He tried dating with his hair covering his ears but as soon as his dates noticed he wore over-the-ear hearing aids, they quickly lost interest in him.

By the mid-90s, the BLM in Alaska started using an engineering software known as AutoCAD. Even though the early version of AutoCAD was notoriously slow, Hollibaugh marveled at its capabilities to draw maps on a computer monitor. His favorite feature of AutoCAD was its accessibility configuration to allow vision-impaired users to change background colors. Instead of having to work with a standard white background that was like an indecipherable snowfield displayed on a computer monitor, Hollibaugh was able to reverse the color settings so that white lines and text displayed upon a black background. Once again technology preserved his ability to work.

His fear of a race against time slowly diminished. Hand drafting become obsolete with the new technology of computer-assisted drafting software and computers. With the addition of accessibility components built in with the computers and software, Hollibaugh began to feel confident that computers could serve as his “eyes” for his work in making maps.

Still hoping to have a social life, Hollibaugh turned to the pen pal scene, which clearly leveled the playing field for him. He eventually got to know a woman in the Philippines and with the availability of fax technology, they began faxing each other regularly. When email technology emerged, they emailed each other regularly. In 1997, Hollibaugh went to the Philippines and proposed to his pen pal. In 1998, she obtained a fiancée visa, flew to Alaska, and they got married a week after she arrived in Anchorage.

“Fax machines and the Internet.” Hollibaugh says, “Are wonderful tools to use, when communicating long distance.” This month, they bought their first home and once again, accessibility played a big role in Hollibaugh’s three-month purchasing ordeal – the realtor, mortgage company, and other folks

provided him with documents in PDF format so that he could read all the legal paperwork on his home computer.

By 2000, BLM in Alaska was utilizing various databases to store all kinds of geographical and land status information. Hollibaugh learned how to collect bits and pieces of information from the various databases and merge them together to create map products in AutoCAD (the software had vastly increased in speed and capabilities by then). With the increased ease of computer and software accessibility applications, Hollibaugh became fascinated with the ability to retrieve intangible information that was electronically stored in cyberspace and manipulate the data to create tangible diagrams and maps. Things were looking up.

In the last couple of years, Hollibaugh began to experiment with some online courses at American Military University that offered easy accessibility to online course materials. Hollibaugh is now enrolled in AMU and studying with e-textbooks which come with the courses. He views enlarged course material on his computer monitor and writes his own notes in MS Word. To be more specific, he actually speaks his notes with a speech software called Dragon Naturally Speaking and it writes the notes as he speaks. He also uses a scanner and another software called OpenBook, which can convert scanned text from hard copies into editable text in MS Word.

As Hollibaugh describes his life in the last ten years, it is clear that he has been thinking about and following disability issues. He talks about Alaska's discrepancy in access to technology between Anchorage and the remote villages. He regularly attends training on the ADA, EEO training on disability in the workplace, and participates in advocacy groups, especially the self-advocacy chapter of People First and an advocacy group hosted by Access Alaska. He has a passion for gathering information about disability issues, analyzing it, and creating reports. "I'm not so vocal," Hollibaugh says, "I like to work behind the scenes to make things happen."

He is appreciative of the opportunities created by the ADA. "Without the ADA," Hollibaugh says, "Life would be dramatically different for me. I would not be where I am today, supporting myself and trying to make a difference in society. I would most likely be living on Social Security Disability Income, living single, and unable to interact with society." In the early years, Hollibaugh never thought his progressive loss of hearing and vision would have an impact on his future. It did. Fortunately, his life coincided with the passage of the ADA and its beneficial ramifications for people with disabilities.



Karen Braitmayer - Architect

For Karen Braitmayer, architect, the ADA has made it possible for people to expect their world to be accessible. She's not complacent about that concept, and her work has been instrumental in building local, state, and national understanding of design issues. But her influence doesn't stop there.

Named in 2004 by the American Institute of Architects to the prestigious College of Fellows for her work on accessibility, Braitmayer owns Studio Pacifica, a small Seattle-based firm that offers design and consulting services. She has been involved with numerous advisory committees and helped shape policy. To understand how one individual could possibly have such a broad impact, it helps to look at her background.

Born with the genetic disorder osteogenesis imperfecta, Braitmayer has used a wheelchair all her life. Growing up in the pre-ADA 1970's and driving herself to the store, she had to find two parking spots side-by-side to have room to get out with her chair. She tells the story of being accepted at two universities, one an Ivy League school and the other Rice University. Visiting both campuses, Braitmayer found that the Ivy League school was proud and excited that students with mobility impairments could get into one dorm, while virtually all the dorms at Rice University were accessible.

"I wrote a letter to the Ivy League school declining their acceptance offer," she says, "and said that they needed to improve."

But Braitmayer didn't gravitate to architecture until after she had graduated with a degree in the liberal arts, and her father urged her to consider other fields. Accepted in the Master of Architecture program at the University of Houston, Braitmayer found her studies to be a great match for her interests, and met her future business partner, George Hollowell. When she graduated, she worked in Houston for several years for an architectural firm doing design, then moved on to Seattle in 1987 and continued to work on retail projects.

Braitmayer was often asked for advice by her colleagues on accessible design issues, but it wasn't until a couple of years after the passage of the ADA that she and George Hollowell left their jobs and founded Studio Pacifica. About the same time she also met her husband, David Erskine. At Studio Pacifica they worked on the design of recording studios, as well as residential and commercial projects. The business had not yet focused on accessible design.

Concurrently she met Barbara Allen of Washington's Easter Seal Society and one of the authors of "Accessibility Design for All," a publication that graphically translated code requirements into the visual language of architects. Given her lifelong history of dealing with accessibility, her architectural credentials, and Barbara's encouragement, Braitmayer found a role for herself as someone who could advocate effectively for good design, codes that made buildings accessible, and be a credible voice for accessible design within her field of architecture.

She became a governor's appointed member of the Washington State Building Code Council, working to research and draft rules and regulations that would eventually become part of the state Code. When the building codes incorporated accessible features, everyone benefited. Washington State led the nation in accessibility design legislation, and it was the first state to have its regulations certified by the Department of Justice as "equivalent to the requirements of the ADA". Living in Washington State was very different than other parts of America.

"People don't realize how accessible Washington is," Braitmayer says. "It's startling – we have a much higher level of compliance than do other communities. When I visit other parts of the county, I can't assume the restaurant will be wheelchair accessible. Here, I don't call to ask."

"Not all architects are on board with understanding accessibility codes. The profession supports civil rights, but has a difficult time with the language of the ADA," she says. She thinks the expected adoption by the Department of Justice this summer of the most recent ADA Accessibility Standards (the 2004 ADAAG) should help. Before being ratified by the DOJ, the Standards may represent good practice but they are not legally binding. The ADAAG language is closer to Model code standards. Braitmayer says, "When that happens, maybe Washington will not be changed so much, but nationally we will see more accessibility, more continuity." Architects who work with national companies with facilities across the country will benefit from the consistency between Model codes and Federal law.

Braitmayer mentors college-bound high school students with disabilities as part of the University of Washington DO-IT program, and she has offered pro bono services in the design of local projects including Safeco (Mariner baseball) and Quest (Seahawk football and Sounder FC) Fields.

Looking to the future, she says, "The Model code will not be finished, but rather be an on-going process. I'm anxious to see Washington State involved. We can always do better than we've done." She would also like to see HUD adopt the 2004 ADAAG Standards to build consistency. "We need the right agencies to adopt the right language," she notes.



20th Anniversary of the ADA: Getting Ready for the Celebration!

On July 26, 1990, on the South Lawn of the White House, President George H.W. Bush signed "the world's first comprehensive declaration of equality for people with disabilities." The Americans with Disabilities Act made the United States the international leader on this civil rights issue. In this speech, Bush said that despite the Civil Rights Act of 1964, people with disabilities were still victims of segregation and discrimination. Since then, Congress has responded to the

need for further accessibility by passing laws in a range of areas including education, employment, tax policy, transportation and assistive technology. This summer we celebrate its 20th anniversary.

This year, we celebrate the start of the third decade since the signing of the ADA and renew our commitments to this landmark legislation. Across the country, new attention is being focused on the ADA.

The National ADA Symposium is spearheading the **2010 by 2010 Campaign** as a lead-up activity to the June 20-23 conference in Denver, Colorado. The National ADA Symposium invites state and local governments, schools and colleges, businesses, organizations, service providers, and advocates to join in a "Proclamation of Recommitment" to the spirit of the ADA. Visit www.2010anniversary.org.

Disability.gov is featuring **100 Days to the ADA** - a blog covering an amazing array of history, resources and disability topics. Join the countdown on www.disability.gov where you can also discuss 20th anniversary celebrations being held in your community and around the country and to let others know what the ADA has meant for you!

While we celebrate the equality that the ADA has brought to people with disabilities, we can also use the celebration as an opportunity to challenge business, government and communities to fulfill some of the unmet promises of the ADA and to initiate higher standards of access in these institutions.

In Region 10, here are some of the 20th Anniversary celebrations you can get involved with to show your support of the ADA:

IDAHO

BOISE: Join "Hands Around the Capitol" on July 26, 2010. 500 people are needed to circle the Capitol! There will be music, food, crafts and information booths. The event will take place at Capitol City Park from 11 am-6 pm. Sponsors and volunteers are needed as well as nominations for the awards ceremony.

IDAHO FALLS: On July 26th, the Mayor of Idaho Falls has planned a proclamation signing that will take place in the morning. Lunch will be catered at the accessible playground in Taughaus Park. Enjoy music and an awards ceremony.

POCATELLO: On Tuesday, July 27th, the Mayor will sign a proclamation in recognition of the ADA, followed by a celebration march starting at City Hall and ending at a community park for a barbeque. There will be music throughout the day and a Keno Award will be presented.

SPOKANE: On Monday, July 26th, at Mirabeau Park in Spokane Valley, celebrate with speakers, live music, vendors and art displays starting at 10:30 am. Lunch will be provided along with a free raffle of a mural by a local artist that will be given away at the close of the event at 1:30 pm. Prior to the celebration, a media event with Mayor Sandi Bloem at 9:15 am at City Hall is being planned in the hope of capturing the "hands around the capital" concept with local citizens. These events are being sponsored by Disability Action Center-NW, Inc. (DAC) and CORD (Coalition of Responsible Disabled).

For more information on Idaho ADA celebration events contact the ADA Task Force at 208-344-5590 or bball@adataskforce.org or contact Dana Gover at Access Concepts & Training at 208-761-3073 or gforitdhg@msn.com. You can also join the community on Facebook at **ADA Task Force 20th Anniversary Celebration Hands Around the Capitol**.

OREGON

The 20th Anniversary of the ADA will be the focus of this year's Disability Mega Conference being held June 3-5, 2010 at the Hilton Eugene and Conference Center. The Mega Conference is a 3-day, cross-disability conference uniting people with disabilities, their families, community organizations and service providers to share information and encourage a statewide dialogue on collective issues. Register at www.oregonmegaconference.org.

ALASKA

Dave Barton of Access Alaska will fill us in on Alaska's plans for celebrating the 20th anniversary in the next edition of the Northwest ADA Center's newsletter!

WASHINGTON

The Northwest ADA Center is partnering with several state organizations to launch the "I Support the 20th" campaign beginning July 26th and lasting until the end of the year. Stay tuned for more information about how to get your button to show your support and how to get involved in Seattle and other statewide events. Visit www.dbtacnorthwest.org.

Visit www.dbtacnorthwest.org/adacelebrate for updates on celebration activities across the region.



The Americans with Disabilities Act at (Almost) Twenty: Civil Rights, Inclusion - and More Work Ahead

By Cindy Brown, ADA & Accessibility Specialist

*When **Dr. Beth Omansky** was a young newly-divorced mother getting back into the workforce, she lost three jobs because of her disability. In the first job at a stadium snack bar, Omansky, who has low vision, couldn't see the menu overhead. The second job was at a discount store, where she had difficulty telling egg salad from tuna salad. When she was fired from her third job as a receptionist at an optometrist's office, they told her that it didn't look good to have her looking closely at things: it made it seem like they "couldn't make glasses."*

"There was no such thing as asking for accommodations," said Omansky, who had worked at all of those jobs before the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). After the ADA was signed into law, she landed a job at a bakery and asked for an accommodation (large print recipes). Things weren't perfect, though. Omansky was always paid less than her co-workers. She eventually went on to earn a PhD in Social Work.

Susan Anderson, who is deaf, was four years old when the ADA was passed in 1990. Her childhood memories about inclusion revolve around negotiation and discussion as to what would be reasonable and possible. When she first took swimming lessons, she had an interpreter—who stood on the side of the pool. "It was very hard to simultaneously watch the interpreter and see what the teacher was demonstrating," said Anderson. The next summer, thanks to her mother, she had an interpreter in the water next to the teacher. "This made a big difference in my ability to participate with the class during the swimming lesson," she said.

Lavaun Heaster has had a learning disability since childhood. "Since I did not know what my problem was or what resources/accommodations might help," said Heaster, "I relied on others to get me through college and graduate school." Heaster, who works for Kaiser Permanente and chairs several disability-related committees, said, "I just thought I was lazy and 'not living up to my potential.' It was after I lost my vision in 1991 that my learning disability was diagnosed and I started receiving some services for it, and that has had the biggest impact on me recognizing my unique set of needs."

It's still taking society a while to recognize the needs of people with disabilities, even with the passage of the ADA. Omansky, who now has a doctorate in Social Work with an emphasis on Disability Studies, is currently unemployed, as is every one of the participants (who are blind) in a research group she leads. She, Anderson, and Heaster all noted difficulties regarding access and equality. That said, they also see the positive changes the ADA has made: more people with disabilities out in society, more accessible buildings, and more people who understand that access and accommodations are not "special services" but a civil right.

They all said that more awareness, more understanding, and more education about the ADA are needed. And they agree that the ADA is a step in the right direction. "I am now a college graduate who has been blessed with a wealth of knowledge and experiences that equal those of my hearing peers," said Anderson. "This would not have been possible without the ADA."



Just Ask Barney: Can Cities Use Volunteers to Enforce Accessible Parking?

How many times have you observed someone parking in an accessible spot with no placard or license plate, and wished that a cop would show up? Do you ever wish you could give the guy a ticket? Should cities empower volunteers to enforce accessible parking? Is there a downside?

The problem

It is fair to say that not every car parked in an accessible space is legally entitled to be there. “The problem is particularly acute,” according to William Edwards of the Seattle Police Department, “around hospitals, clinics and schools – locations where disabled people most often need access but find all parking spots already taken by others with – or without – placards.” Washington State currently has 1.1 million active disability parking permits, while Oregon, with a requirement for medical proof each time the driver’s license is renewed, has about 175,000 active permits.

Misuse of placards is widespread. State rules that authorize the permit for multiple years and allow little or no proof to renew have done little to curb abuse. Families may use the placard when the family member is not in the car, or even after his or her death. Phony placards have been fabricated. Doctors may authorize the permit too easily. Some drivers park in the spots with no pretense of having a disability.

At the same time, whether the person parking the car actually has a disability may not be obvious to onlookers who are unaware of non-apparent disabilities. How do you know if that driver has MS or a lung disease?

Is that car parked legally? City police and traffic departments struggle to keep up with more pressing problems. Some laws require the officer to be present when the driver leaves or returns to the car. They do the best they can.

The question

At the end of our monthly regional staff meetings with our affiliates in Idaho, Alaska, and Oregon, we open the floor to their recent challenging questions. Dave Barton, from Alaska, offered this: ***“I had a question from an Alaskan community that made me wonder how other cities handle this issue. They are thinking about using volunteers to enforce their accessible parking spots, and I want to help them think through all the pros and cons. What do you know about this?”***

Our answer

Cities in at least 20 states have programs involving volunteers who help enforce accessible parking, and some now have almost two decades of experience. Their use is much more common than most people realize. The use of volunteers, however, raises several important questions.

Is it actually legal for a law enforcement agency to use volunteers in this manner? Can they issue citations?

- Oregon Revised Statute – 811.632 authorizes law enforcement agencies to appoint volunteers, who have the ability to issue citations.
- Washington RCW 46.16.381 requires volunteers to be at least 21 years old, and they can issue citations.

What type of role do the volunteers assume in helping enforce the rules?

Across the states, the role of volunteers in parking enforcement ranges from photographing cars parked illegally and submitting the photograph to the police department all the way to wearing a uniform and being able to issue warnings and citations. Our survey of Washington State communities using volunteers found all were allowed to issue citations. Many programs require volunteers to appear in court when requested. Some use the volunteers to educate the business community on signage requirements and parking laws. They may follow up with businesses that are out of compliance with a three-stage letter process. Volunteers may also cite abandoned cars.

What is their commitment? Is turnover an issue? What factors tend to discourage their continuing participation?

Many of the volunteer programs have a monthly commitment in hours (example, two 4-hour shifts) and require a one-year commitment. They go through background checks, and typically use their own cars. The cost of gas hurt a number of volunteer programs, while some volunteers are dismayed by how angry violators become when they get a ticket.

Do they receive training? What is emphasized? To what degree is safety a serious concern?

Training is critically important, and is mentioned in the legislation, and ranged from 4 to 32 hours. Beyond the nuts and bolts training to follow police procedures, volunteers are trained to deal with conflict management. Many receive training in CPR, First Aid, Safe Driving, Blood-borne Pathogens, and other safety issues. In some cities, volunteers work in pairs as a safety precaution. The use of more official cars/vans also seems to enhance safety, and some departments provide magnetic decals for participant cars.

Is there any cost/benefit data on the use of volunteers?

Two factors have greatly influenced the cost/benefit ratio. Tickets issued a few years ago were often for \$20-\$50, but now have increased to \$200-\$300 to emphasize the severity of the infraction. And the shift from paid police parking enforcement staff to volunteers has been beneficial to police departments. Money from citations supports the extra costs of the volunteers – insurance, uniforms, vehicles, and so on – and may also be used by the cities to pay for other disability access costs.

What is the downside of using volunteers to enforce parking rules? How do cities deal with these issues?

Some cities reported that a few of their older volunteers were so inflexible that they were more harmful than helpful. Legal liabilities were a serious concern for some, as was union opposition. In some police departments the officers were resistant to working with the volunteers, and poor cooperation resulted in weak volunteer effectiveness. The most commonly cited concern was the angry citizen who felt the ticket was not justified. Less commonly, some volunteers have overstepped their authority and caused problems, e.g., trying to arrest an angry citizen who confronted him.

Actual liability issues seem to be infrequent, and cities can provide volunteer insurance that covers law enforcement activities for this and other law enforcement activities. The alternative is to have the volunteers provide insurance coverage and offer proof to the department. One Police Department in Michigan provides medical insurance, worker's compensation insurance and a stipend for gasoline.

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