Minutes for the Monterey County Commission on Disabilities

SUMMARY of RETREAT
MONTEREY COUNTY COMMISSION ON DISABILITIES

February 25, 2008 - 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Laguna Seca Recreation Area
Chaparral Meeting Room
1025 Monterey-Salinas Highway 68
Salinas, CA 93901

Commissioners Present: James Bogan, Carmelita Garcia, Eric Heckman, Carolyn Hinds, George Molano, John Pinio, and Candise Pratt.

Staff Present: Associate Equal Opportunity Analyst Sonjé Dayries, Associate Equal Opportunity Analyst Bonita Monarque, Administrative Secretary Elisa Cantu, and Deputy County Counsel Ellen Jahn.

Senior Trainers Elana Schwartz and Yvonne Walker, Monterey County Training Department, facilitated the retreat. Mrs. Schwartz and Mrs. Walker celebrated the 2007 goals accomplished by the Commission on Disabilities (COD). Mrs. Schwartz and Mrs. Walker began by highlighting and celebrating the COD's accomplishments since the last retreat. Then, they asked the commissioners to identify gaps in achieving the COD's mission and identify goals for 2008 that would address the gaps.

Goals: The goals identified were:

• Recommend free video relay interpreting system and/or video relay services that can be purchased

• See about AT&T golf grant funding for County interpreter services (for hiring and training new interpreters)

• Develop mechanism for tracking in departments people with disabilities (with anonymous/confidential survey)

• Ensure that accommodations are known on job applications

• Inform the Board about number of people with disabilities hired

• Get word to people/agencies about employment opportunities in the County

• Track number of employees hired from agency
• Track number of applications given out by agencies/schools

• Invite someone from the court system to come to commission meeting; send email to Adrienne Grover

• Checklist from each department head on how they address access to public services in their departments (COD develop questions or checklist or have each department submit what they want)

• Commission asks to use other county facilities for meetings

• Send out checklist (accessibility, ADA issues, tty machines) to County departments; review written checklist then set up meeting at site to advise department (checklist can be used as an educational opportunity)

• Ensure that future buildings aren't bumpy in front

• Have "family" bathrooms

• Develop decal/reward seal that business meets ADA requirements

• Continue to highlight employers with best practices

The commissioners decided to recommend the top three goals for approval. The top three goals were:

Goal 1:

Develop an ADA checklist and include other related categories on the list for County departments to assess how they are doing with providing equal access to employment, public services and accommodations for people with disabilities.

Additionally, the checklist can be used as an educational tool for discussing ideas on how the department can improve their services related to equal access for people with disabilities.

Based on each department's response to the survey, if necessary the COD will set up follow-up meetings on-site with the department to advise on ways to improve accessibility.

Goal 2:

Include on list the various communication tools and examples of equipment such as:
• TTY machines
• Video relay interpreting system
• "Family" style bathrooms
• Ground surfaces without decorative bumps

Departments could also indicate on the checklist whether they engage in discussions with experts during the design phase of new buildings in order to provide appropriate public accommodations for people with disabilities when facilities are being built.

Again the list would serve as an educational tool to give the departments guidance on equipment and services

that are available as resources to enhance their ability to provide equal access to public services and employment.

Goal 3:

Develop a decal seal and program to reward businesses that meet ADA requirements (especially businesses located in the unincorporated areas of the County).