

Overcoming Barriers to Civic Participation For the Deaf & Hard of Hearing

Twenty-eight million Americans with severe hearing loss do not have full access to information about political candidates and election issues.

Public Media Innovation Grantee:

WXXI Public Broadcasting, Inc.
Rochester, New York

Project Hypothesis:

Deaf and hard of hearing people will be better able to participate in the democratic process if new technologies and media distribution platforms are applied, adapted, and promoted for this purpose.

Project Description:

First, WXXI and its project partners are launching an accessible Web site to adapt our regular elections content and allow Americans who are deaf or hard of hearing an opportunity to speak out about political or news Web sites that represent the best, or the worst, in accessibility. This site includes the Civic Sense Blog, with deaf & hard of hearing bloggers.

<http://wxxi.org/citizen/pmi/index.html>

Second, WXXI and its project partners are planning an accessible, televised political forum. We'll show the candidates how to relate to an audience that is deaf and hard of hearing, and we'll adapt our television production techniques to make sure the forum is accessible to television viewers who are deaf and hard of hearing.

When we conclude our experiment at the end of the year, WXXI will deliver a report about what we've learned to the Corporation for Public Broadcasters. This report will be shared with public broadcasters around the nation so they can incorporate our best practices into their civic engagement efforts.

Project Partners:

National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology

Rochester Hearing & Speech Center, Rochester, NY

Center for Disability Rights, Rochester NY

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