



2018 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan

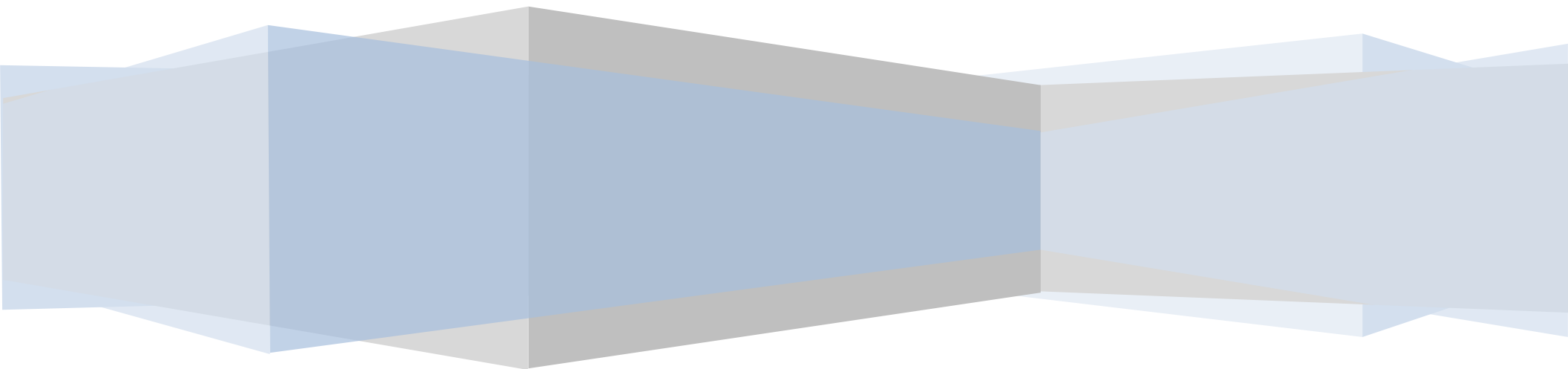


Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
1.1 Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended - Legislative Requirements.....	1
1.2 City Clerk’s Customer Service Policy.....	3
1.3 Definition of Disability	3
2. Feedback	6
5. Assistance to Candidates	9
6. Voting Places	11
7. Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities	14
8. Accessibility Training for Election Officials.....	18
9. Post-election Report.....	20

1. Introduction

The Election's Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the City's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that electoral services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience.

The City Clerk's Office will continue to learn, develop and adjust our approaches in order to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The review of accessibility issues and initiatives and addressing barrier prevention or removal is an ongoing practice. This plan will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

1.1 Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended - Legislative Requirements

The City Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing policies and procedures to ensure that all electors have the opportunity to fully participate in the 2018 City of Toronto election.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended states the following:

- 12.1 (1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.
- 12 (2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.
- 12 (3) Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.
- 41 (3) The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).
- 45 (2) In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

1.2 City Clerk's Customer Service Policy

The City Clerk's Office is committed to making our services accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. We comply with the customer service standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

In fulfilling our mission, the City Clerk's Office will at all times provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We give people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services in the same place, and in a similar way as others. The full customer service policy is attached as Appendix A.

1.3 Definition of Disability

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 defines "disability" as follows:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination,

blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Disabilities can take many forms, both visible and invisible. The following criteria were considered in the development of this Plan:

- Policies and procedures must be consistent with the principles of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 and must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities,
- Access to electoral services must be integrated and equitable,

- Initiatives should address and accommodate a wide range of abilities, and
- The City Clerk's Office AODA-compliant customer service policy for providing services to people with disabilities must be followed throughout the election process. This policy can be found at:
http://www.toronto.ca/city_clerk/disabilities.htm.

2. Feedback

The City Clerk welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the City can improve the delivery of an accessible Election. This Plan is a living document and will continue to undergo changes. Please provide us with your feedback so we know how to best provide an accessible election. Feedback on this Plan can be submitted through the following channels:

Email: AccessibleElections@toronto.ca

Phone: 416-338-1111 (press 6)

Fax: 416-395-1300

TTY: 416-338-0889

By Mail: City of Toronto
City Clerk's Office
Elections & Registry Services
89 Northline Road
Toronto, ON M4B 3G1

If you require this information in a different format, please let us know.

3. Consultations

Consultations with individuals and community groups provide greater knowledge and understanding in conducting elections that are accessible to all.

Initiative	Actions
Consult with individuals and groups knowledgeable in providing services to persons with disabilities in order to gain better understanding of their needs and to obtain feedback on this Plan by:	Presenting election accessibility initiatives to the City's Disabilities Issues Committee.
	Enlisting the assistance of disability groups and individuals to disseminate election information and raise awareness about the City's accessibility initiatives to its members.
	Partnering with disability groups to channel election information through their networks and communities using newsletters, links to the City's website, etc.
	Attending meetings, events and fairs to demonstrate accessible voting technology and raise awareness of the 2018 election.
	Conducting a post-election survey to evaluate the success of the various accessibility initiatives.

4. Communications and Information

Communication and information initiatives ensure election information is accessible and available in alternative formats

Initiative	Actions
<p>Provide an informative and accessible election web site by:</p> <p>www.toronto.ca/elections</p>	Ensuring election information is available in clear, simple language.
	Continuously updating election information posted on the City's website to reflect the most recent developments and information.
	Ensuring election web pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level AA Compliant.
	Providing a free web page reader on election web pages to assist individuals who have difficulty reading online.
	Establishing and continuously updating a dedicated accessibility section on the elections web site that provides information on the initiatives undertaken by the City Clerk's Office.
	Enhancing the City's MyVote web application to provide accessibility information about voting places.

Provide election information in alternative formats and through multiple channels by:	Producing a How to Vote booklet in English and 24+ additional languages and make the booklet available at all voting places in both print format and Braille.
	Producing a How to Vote video and posting to the City's website, including ASL and captioning.
	Producing a city-wide mail-out election householder that outlines key election information.
	Providing equipment to facilitate communication for elections staff and members of the public who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

5. Assistance to Candidates

Providing candidates with information on how to make their campaigns accessible to the public and providing candidates with election information in accessible and alternative formats.

Initiative	Actions
------------	---------

<p>Provide candidates with information on how to make their campaigns more accessible.</p>	<p>Providing candidates with links to the following provincial publications from our Election website:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible Campaign Information and Communication • Accessible Constituency, Riding Association, Central Party and Campaign Offices • Accessible All-Candidates Meetings • Candidates' Guide to Accessible Elections (by AMCTO)
<p>Provide candidates with access to information in alternative formats by:</p>	<p>Ensuring the candidate's guide and/or other relevant publications are available in an accessible format.</p> <p>Making the City of Toronto voters' list available in an electronic format, free of charge, to candidates with disabilities.</p>
<p>Ensure candidate information sessions are accessible by:</p>	<p>Holding candidate information sessions in accessible locations.</p> <p>Making accommodations and special services (for example, ASL interpreters) available upon request.</p>

6. Voting Places

These initiatives cover all aspects of obtaining voting places that are accessible to all.

Initiative	Actions
Ensure all voting places are accessible to electors with disabilities by:	Creating an accessibility checklist for election staff to use when conducting site visits of each voting place ensuring each facility has: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• barrier free path of travel from the parking lot/sidewalk• barrier free parking, where parking was provided• door operators or accessible doors• adequate lighting
	Inspecting all voting places to ensure all locations are accessible: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where possible, make modifications to existing voting places to make them accessible, for example, temporary ramps• Places that cannot be made accessible will be relocated or merged with other voting places in the vicinity

	<p>Conduct an additional accessibility check in August/September to ensure there have been no changes to the locations.</p>
<p>Ensure all voting place access routes and entrances are clearly identified by:</p>	<p>Have election staff perform final accessibility checks during the advance vote and on election day to verify the accessibility of the voting place.</p>
	<p>Ensuring there is designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each voting location where parking is available.</p>
	<p>Marking parking spaces clearly with accessibility symbol or sign.</p>
	<p>Providing appropriate signage at voting places.</p>
	<p>Ensuring electors with accessibility needs are directed to the accessible voting entrance by prominent signage.</p>
	<p>Where possible the accessible entrance is the same as the main entrance.</p>

<p>Ensure all voting place owners and managers are aware of accessibility requirements by:</p>	<p>Notifying all facility owners and managers of the proposed voting places of legislative accessibility requirements in order to prevent last minute changes to voting rooms.</p>
<p>Provide mechanism for feedback on the list of proposed voting places by:</p>	<p>Inviting disability groups and individuals with disabilities to provide feedback on the list of proposed voting places.</p>
	<p>Using the received feedback to ensure that all voting places are accessible to electors, as required by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.</p>

<p>Set up process to facilitate notification of disruptions to service or last minute changes to voting places so that:</p>	<p>In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect the accessibility of voting places during the advance vote or on election day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on the City's website • on Facebook: Toronto Votes • on Twitter: @TorontoVotes • at the site of the disruption <p>When applicable, a media advisory will be issued.</p>
<p>Provide a dedicated contact centre to deal with accessibility issues, concerns or complaints by:</p>	<p>Establishing channels so that an elector with a disability who encounters an accessibility issue can contact City Clerk's staff:</p> <p>Phone: 416-338-1111 (press 6) Email: AccessibleElections@toronto.ca Fax: 416-395-1300 TTY: 416-338-0889</p>

7. Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities

Various initiatives regarding voting places are used to achieve our goals of a barrier free election.

Initiative	Actions
<p>Provide various accessible voting equipment at all voting opportunities by:</p>	<p>Making Voter Assist Terminals (VAT) available during the advance vote and on election day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voter assist terminal is a paper ballot-marking technology that allows voters with disabilities and other special needs to mark their ballot privately and independently. With an audio function and Braille-embossed key pads, similar to the touch screen, it allows people that are blind or partially sighted to listen to their choices through headphones. This function also allows the voter to adjust the speed and volume at which the ballot is read. The zoom feature enables voters to increase the font size on the touch screen and the contrast may also be adjusted to help those with low vision. It also features a Sip and Puff tube and a Rocker Paddle that may be used by voters with limited motor function, or who are unable to use the touch screen or touch pad. The VAT is also wheelchair accessible.

	The VAT will be available during the advance vote and on election day.
Provide instructions on the use of accessible voting equipment by:	Producing videos that outline the voting process and the accessible voting technologies in use for this election. Videos include ASL and captioning. The videos have been posted on the City's web site, Facebook and YouTube.
Welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting places:	Any person with a disability accompanied by a support person or service animal may enter the City Clerk's Offices or any voting place with his or her support person or service animal.
Provide assistance to electors with disabilities as required by:	Having an election official in the voting place to assist a voter in casting his/her ballot when requested.
	Making accommodations for electors with disabilities as required.

Provide for proxy voting:	In cases where an elector is unable to attend a voting place, the elector can appoint another person to act on their behalf.
Provide for curb-side voting:	While all voting places are accessible to all electors, electors with a physical disability can request that the ballot be brought out to their vehicle or to another location within the voting place.
Provide voting opportunities in institutions and retirement homes by:	<p>Establishing voting places at the following facilities in order to allow eligible residents of the facility the opportunity to vote:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any institution in which 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirmed • a retirement home in which 50 or more beds are occupied
	Having election staff provide for bedside voting where required.
Review ballot design to increase legibility through:	<p>Consult with CNIB on accessibility design guidelines.</p> <p>Increase legibility of ballots through use of accessible font styles and sizes, appropriate case usage, and colours, where possible.</p>

Provide supplies to assist electors with disabilities	Having magnifying sheets (4x) available at all voting places to assist electors with low vision.
	Having note pads and pens available at all voting places to assist communication with electors who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.
	Having a How to Vote booklet available at all voting places in 25+ languages including English, Braille and large font.

8. Accessibility Training for Election Officials

Develop accessibility training and development of reference materials for all election staff.

Initiative	Actions
Ensure all election officials receive	Holding training sessions for election staff on accessibility requirements, serving people with disabilities and on the accommodations and special services available to assist electors.

<p>accessible customer service training by:</p>	<p>Requiring all staff to sign that they received elections and accessibility training.</p>
<p>Develop reference materials for all election officials highlighting how to serve voters with disabilities by:</p>	<p>Including AODA, customer service standard, and serving people with disabilities messaging in all training materials, classroom training and web based training being provided to all elections staff.</p>
	<p>Providing every election staff member with an Accessible Customer Service Etiquette Handbook.</p>
	<p>Making individual accommodations available upon request to staff during training, for example, ASL interpretation or communication devices.</p>

9. Post-election Report

Section 12.1 (2) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 as amended states the following:

“Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall submit a report to council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities.”

The City Clerk’s post-election report will be posted on the City’s web site in a format accessible to persons with disabilities and distributed to disability groups and other stakeholders as requested.

Appendix A

City Clerk's Office Customer Service Policy Statement Providing Services to People with Disabilities

The City Clerk's Office is committed to making our services accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. We comply with the customer service standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. If you would like information about our compliance, have a comment or question, please contact us as shown below.

1. Our mission

Is to build public trust and confidence in local government.

2. Our services

We elect government, make government work, and make information accessible.

3. Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, the City Clerk's Office will at all times provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We give people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services in the same place, and in a similar way as others.

4. Providing service to people with disabilities

The City Clerk's Office is committed to excellence in service, including service to people with disabilities, and we carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

4.1 Communication

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We train our staff who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

4.2 Telephone services

We provide fully accessible telephone service to all. We offer to communicate by email or TTY or other methods if regular telephone communication is not suitable to someone's communication needs.

4.3 Assistive devices

We serve all people with disabilities, including those who use assistive devices. We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing our services.

We also ensure that staff know how to use the assistive devices at their respective work locations which are applicable to their positions.

5. Use of service animals and support persons

We welcome people with disabilities, including those who are accompanied by a service animal, on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. The only areas not open to service animals due to health and safety concerns are the operational areas of the records centre and printing services. These locations are rarely used by third parties.

We welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is allowed to enter the City Clerk's Office's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises. During an election or by-election, a support person assisting a voter will be required to take an oath, stating their commitment to confidentiality and that they will mark the ballot as directed by the voter (if the voter requests this type of assistance). The voter will also be required to take an oath stating they require assistance to vote. The City Clerk's Office does not normally charge admission to access events or programs, but if we do, we will not charge support persons.

We ensure that all staff dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by either a support person or a service animal.

6. Notice of temporary disruption

We give notice when our services are disrupted or our facilities closed in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice includes information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Depending on circumstances we post notice using such methods as signage, websites, email, and media advisories.

7. Training for staff

The City Clerk's Office provides training to employees, including those who deal with the public and all those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures. The training is in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This training is provided to all staff who deal with the public or are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures within three months of their start date.

8. Feedback process

The goal of the City Clerk's Office is to meet and surpass expectations while serving people with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the City Clerk's Office provides services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail, verbally, and in writing. All written feedback will be directed to the City Clerk:

Email: clerk@toronto.ca

Phone: 416-392-8011

Fax: 416-392-2980

Address: City Clerk

City Hall 13th floor, West Tower

100 Queen Street West

Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Once received, the feedback is redirected to the appropriate director/manager/supervisor. In person feedback should be provided directly to the applicable manager/supervisor. We will acknowledge receipt of phone and email feedback within one business day (24 hours). An acknowledgement will be sent to fax and mailed feedback within 4 business days of receipt.

9. Modifications to this or other policies

Given our commitment to respecting the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, any policy of the City Clerk's Office that does not do this will be modified or removed.

10. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to people with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of this policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by the Chair, City Clerk's Office Access, Equity and Human Rights Working Group:

Email: clerk@toronto.ca

Phone: 416-392-8011

Fax: 416-392-2980

Address: City Clerk

City Hall 13th floor, West Tower

100 Queen Street West

Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2