



2010 Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan

VOTE
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toronto.ca/elections

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	2
1.3 Definition of Disability.....	2
2. Feedback	3
3. Consultations.....	4
4. Communications and Information	5
5. Assistance to Candidates	8
6. Voting Places	9
7. Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities	12
8. Accessibility Training for Election Officials.....	16
9. Post-election Report	17

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 2010 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.
- 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).
- 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

Initiative	Actions	Status
<p>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.</p>	<p>Present the election accessibility initiatives to the City’s Disabilities Issues Committee.</p> <p>Initiatives presented to the Committee at its meeting on Monday, June 7, 2010.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
	<p>Enlist the help of various disability groups and individuals to disseminate election information and raise awareness about the City’s accessibility initiatives to its members.</p> <p>Partner with disability groups to channel election information through their networks and communities using newsletters, links to the City’s web site, etc.</p> <p>Attend meetings, events and fairs to demonstrate the accessible voting technology.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
	<p>Conduct a post-election survey to evaluate the success of the various initiatives.</p>	<p>Planned</p>

4. Communications and Information

Initiative	Actions	Status
<p>Provide an informative and accessible election web site.</p> <p>www.toronto.ca/elections</p>	<p>Provide election information in clear, simple language.</p> <p>Election information will be posted on the City's web site and will be continuously updated to reflect the most recent developments and information.</p>	Ongoing
	<p>Ensure election web pages are W3C Consortium WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant.</p> <p>Election web pages are now between Level AA and AAA compliant, with many of the AAA level checkpoints satisfied.</p>	Complete
	<p>Provide BrowseAloud tool on election web pages. This free software reads web pages out loud and assists individuals who have difficulty reading on-line, including people with limited vision, low literacy, English as a second language, or learning disabilities, such as dyslexia.</p> <p>BrowseAloud icon has been posted on each of the election web pages. Clicking on the icon provides information about the software as well as downloading instructions.</p>	Complete

Initiative	Actions	Status
	<p>Establish a dedicated Accessibility section on the elections web page that provides information on the initiatives being undertaken by the City Clerk's Office - http://www.toronto.ca/elections/accessibility/index.htm</p> <p>Pages will be updated regularly and will include the 2010 Election Accessibility Plan and Post-election Report.</p>	Ongoing
	<p>The City's "Where Do I Vote" application will be enhanced to provide accessibility information about voting places including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • location of accessible entrance • availability of push button or election staff at doors • comments on locations that will have ramps on election day. 	In progress
Provide election information in alternative formats.	<p>Make election information available through multiple channels:</p> <p>Web site: www.toronto.ca/elections Twitter: @TorontoVotes Facebook: TorontoVotes Phone: 3-1-1 (interpreter services available in 180 languages) 416-338-1111 TTY: 416-338-0889 Fax: 416-395-1300</p> <p>General Email: elections@toronto.ca Accessibility Email: AccessibleElections@toronto.ca</p>	Complete

Initiative	Actions	Status
	<p>Produce a "How to Vote" booklet in English and 22 additional languages. The booklet will be posted on the City's web site.</p> <p>It will also be available at all voting places in both print format and Braille.</p>	In progress
	<p>Produce a "How to Vote" video which will be posted on the City's web site.</p> <p>The video will provide voters with an overview of the voting process.</p>	Complete
	<p>Produce an election information tabloid which outlines key election information such as voter qualifications, identification requirements, voting dates, accommodations and special services for electors with disabilities.</p> <p>The tabloid will be available in English and 22 additional languages as well as Braille upon request.</p> <p>The English tabloid will be mailed to each household in the city and all language versions will be posted on the City's web site.</p>	In progress

Campaign expenses incurred during election.	The Municipal Elections Act, 1996 provides that expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.	Complete
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6. Voting Places

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

Initiative	Actions	Status
	<p>Conduct an additional accessibility check in September.</p> <p>Election staff will visit all of their assigned voting places and confirm whether there have been any changes to the accessibility of the location since the last inspection.</p>	Planned
	<p>Election Day Inspections - Election staff will be instructed to verify the accessibility of the voting place.</p>	Planned
<p>Ensure all voting place access routes and entrances are clearly identified.</p>	<p>Ensure there are designated or reserved parking for persons with disabilities at each location. Parking spaces to be clearly marked with accessibility symbol or sign.</p>	Planned
	<p>Provide appropriate signage at voting places.</p> <p>Prominent signage will ensure electors with accessibility needs are directed to the accessible voting entrance. Where possible the accessible entrance will be the same as the main entrance.</p> <p>Election staff will have an additional supply of signs to ensure access route and doors are clearly identified.</p>	Planned

Initiative	Actions	Status
<p>Ensure all voting place owners and managers are aware of accessibility requirements.</p>	<p>Notify all facility owners and managers of proposed voting places of the new accessibility requirements in order to prevent last minute changes to voting rooms.</p> <p>Letters will remind owners and managers that rooms have been inspected for accessibility and that there cannot be any last minute changes.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>
<p>Provide mechanism for feedback on the list of proposed voting places.</p>	<p>Invite disability groups and individuals with disabilities to provide feedback on the list of proposed voting places.</p> <p>Feedback will help to ensure that all voting places are accessible to electors, as required by the Municipal Elections Act, 1996.</p> <p>The list of voting places will be posted on the City's web site.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>
<p>Set up process to facilitate notification of disruptions to service or last minute changes to voting places.</p>	<p>In the event of disruptions to service or unforeseen circumstances that affect accessibility at voting places either 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 web site • on Facebook: Toronto Votes • on Twitter: @Toronto Votes • at the site of the disruption, and • where applicable, a media advisory will be issued. 	<p>Complete</p>

Initiative	Actions	Status
Provide a dedicated contact centre to deal with accessibility issues, concerns or complaints.	<p>An elector with a disability who encounters an accessibility issue during the Advance Vote or on Election Day, can contact City Clerk's staff through any of these channels:</p> <p>Phone: 416-338-1111 (press 6) Email: AccessibleElections@toronto.ca Fax: 416-395-1300 TTY: 416-338-0889</p>	Planned

7. Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities

Initiative	Actions	Status
Provide accessible voting equipment at all advance voting opportunities.	<p>Touch screen terminals will be available at each of the Weekday Advance Vote Days.</p> <p>The touch screen is a paperless electronic voting terminal which features an audio ballot. The audio ballot, in combination with the Braille-embossed navigation buttons, enables partially sighted or blind individuals to vote independently and in complete privacy. It is also wheelchair accessible.</p> <p>Weekday Advance Vote Dates: October 5, 6, 7, 8, 12 & 13, 2010</p> <p>Locations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Hall, 100 Queen Street West, Main Floor Rotunda • East York Civic Centre, 850 Coxwell Avenue, Council Chamber • Etobicoke Civic Centre, 399 The West Mall. Council Chamber 	Planned

Initiative	Actions	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North York Civic Centre, 5100 Yonge Street, Lower Level, Members' Lounge • Scarborough Civic Centre, 150 Borough Drive, Committee Rm. 1 • York Civic Centre, 1500 Eglinton Avenue West, 2nd Floor, Council Chamber <p>Voter Assist Terminals will be available at each of the Weekend Advance Vote Days. 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 limited vision.</p> <p>The Voter Assist Terminal 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.</p> <p>The Voter Assist Terminals will be available during the Weekend Advance Vote Days held on:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Saturday, October 16, 2010, and Sunday, October 17, 2010.</p> <p>A Voter Assist Terminal will be available in each of the 44 weekend Advance Vote locations. A list of the 44 advance vote locations will be posted on the city's web site at www.toronto.ca/elections.</p>	Planned

Initiative	Actions	Status
<p>Provide instructions on the use of accessible voting equipment.</p>	<p>Produce videos which outline the voting process and the accessible voting technologies that will be used this election. The videos include instructions in both voice-over and open captioning formats.</p> <p>The videos have been posted on the City's web site, Facebook and YouTube.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Welcome the use of support persons and service animals in voting places.</p>	<p>Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or service animal may enter the City Clerk's Offices' premises or any voting place with his or her support person or service animal. Staff training will address support persons and service animals.</p> <p>A support person assisting an elector will be required to take an oath, stating their commitment to confidentiality and that they will mark the ballot as directed by the elector (if the elector requests this type of assistance). The elector will also be required to take an oath stating they require assistance to vote.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>Provide assistance to electors with disabilities as required.</p>	<p>An Election Official in the voting place can assist a voter in casting his/her ballot.</p> <p>The Election Official, in consultation with the person with the disability, will determine the level of assistance the elector needs and the best way in which to provide assistance, including marking the ballot as directed by the elector.</p>	<p>Planned</p>

Initiative	Actions	Status
Provide for proxy voting.	<p>In cases where an elector with a disability is unable to attend a voting place, he or she may appoint another person to act on their behalf. Proxy certificates are available by contacting the Elections Office at 416-338-1111. The proxy voter must bring the completed form as well as identification for both the elector and him/herself to any one of the City Clerk's Offices. More information about Proxy Voting is available on the city's web site at: www.toronto.ca/elections/voters/faq.</p>	Planned
Provide for curbside voting.	<p>All voting places will be accessible to all electors. However, electors with a physical disability may request that the ballot be brought out to their vehicle or to another location within the voting place.</p>	Planned
Provide voting opportunities in institutions and retirement homes.	<p>Voting locations will be established 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. <p>Voting hours will be from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and election staff will provide for bedside voting where required.</p>	Planned

Initiative	Actions	Status
Review ballot design to increase legibility.	<p>Consult with CNIB on accessibility design guidelines.</p> <p>Increase legibility of ballots through use of accessible fonts styles and sizes, appropriate case usage, and colours, where possible.</p>	In Progress
Provide supplies to assist electors with disabilities.	<p>Magnifying sheets will be available at all voting places to assist those electors with low vision</p> <p>Note pads and pens will be available at all voting places to assist communication with electors who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.</p> <p>A "How to Vote" booklet will be available at all voting places. The booklet will be available in English and 22 languages and in Braille.</p>	Complete

8. Accessibility Training for Election Officials

Initiative	Actions	Status
Ensure all election officials receive accessible customer service training.	<p>Train election staff on accessibility requirements, serving people with disabilities and on the accommodations and special services available to assist electors.</p> <p>All staff will be required to sign that they have received elections and accessibility training.</p>	In progress

<p>Develop reference materials for all election officials highlighting how to serve voters with disabilities.</p>	<p>AODA, customer service standard, and serving people with disabilities messaging will be included in all training materials, classroom training and on-line training provided to elections staff.</p> <p>Online training module will include voice-over and open captioning formats.</p>	<p>In progress</p>
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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.

It will be important to hear from people with disabilities in the preparation of the post-election report. Please contact us to provide feedback on your experiences with the election process and suggestions as to how we can improve our accessibility efforts.

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

The City Clerk's Office is the foundation of local government in Toronto.

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