

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

# 2018 MUNICIPAL ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN



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This plan was prepared by the Corporate Services Department.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request. Contact the Regional Clerk’s Office at ext. 71320 or [regional.clerk@york.ca](mailto:regional.clerk@york.ca).

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## Introduction

York Region is committed to creating programs, services and facilities that people of all abilities can access. The 2018 Municipal Election is no exception. This Accessibility Plan outlines how the Region will remove barriers and improve accessibility for persons with disabilities during the election.

Accessibility not only helps people with disabilities, it benefits everyone. Creating welcoming and inclusive communities where every person who lives, works or visits can participate fully makes good sense for all of us.

## Definitions

**Accessibility:** The degree of ease that goods, services and facilities can be used by a person with a disability.

**Disability:** Both the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act, 2005* define disability as:

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

## Legislative Requirements

Section 12.1 of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* 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.

**(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.

**(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.

## Accessible Customer Service

York Region 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*.

York Region will at all times provide 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 Region's Accessibility Policy confirms corporate responsibilities for providing accessible customer service and is attached as Appendix A.

Our "How may I *best* help you?" approach demonstrates our commitment to enhancing the way we serve customers and meeting the individual needs of our clients. Exceptional customer experience is the result of a customer-focused attitude, willingness and commitment on the part of everyone.

All members of our organization complete training on accessible customer service. The Region also developed Accessible Customer Service Guidelines for employees that offer tips, processes and templates to best serve our customers with disabilities.

### STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

York Region is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner. We will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person's dignity and independence.

*York Region Accessibility Policy, 2017*

## Information and Communications

York Region will ensure that information is accessible, and that alternate formats and communication supports will be provided upon request and in accordance with the Region's Accessibility Policy.

The public-facing counter at York Region's Administrative Centre is equipped with signage to inform electors and candidates of the availability of documents in accessible formats and communication supports.

York Region is committed to website accessibility and will ensure that the Elections page on the Region's website at [york.ca/elections](http://york.ca/elections) conforms to AODA standards for web content so that information relating to the municipal elections can be easily accessed by electors and candidates.

## Employment and Training

York Region is committed to creating an accessible work environment across all stages of the lifecycle of employment including recruitment and training. Accessible recruiting practices for Regional employees include completing two training modules about Ontario's accessibility law and Human Rights Code.

For voting locations, York Region will rely on each local area municipality to ensure that their recruiting and training practices for election officials are compliant with the AODA and the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Each local municipal Clerk is required to prepare an Election Accessibility Plan which should include accessibility for voters as well as candidates.

Each local municipality in York Region provides accessibility training to members of Regional Council once their new Councils have been formed.

## Accessible Facilities

York Region is committed to removing barriers and to ensuring that all Regional facilities are accessible. We comply with the accessibility standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA"), which includes accessibility requirements for the design of public spaces such as accessible parking, service counters and waiting areas.

Service counters have been designed to accommodate mobility aids and meet AODA specifications for easy access by electors and candidates. Parking spaces comply with AODA requirements, including provisions for the number and types of accessible parking spaces as well as signage. Building entrances are accessible to candidates with disabilities and appropriate signage is provided so that information is clear and visible.

## Voting Locations and Procedures

York Region will be relying on each of the nine local municipalities for the selection of voting locations and procedures, and for ensuring these are accessible for persons with disabilities. The Region will also be relying on each local municipality to ensure that their election ballot is accessible for persons with disabilities. These issues should be addressed in each of the local municipal Election Accessibility Plans.

## Further Actions

Further actions that will be taken to remove barriers that may affect electors and candidates with disabilities are to:

- Meet with York Region's Accessibility Advisory Committee and consider the Committee's feedback
- Ensure the Regional Clerk's Office is accessible
- Ensure candidate information sessions at York Region facilities are accessible
- Ensure all information provided to candidates and electors is available in an accessible format

## Post-Election Report

As required under section 12.1 (2) of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*, the Regional Clerk's Office shall submit a report to Regional Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. This report will be presented within 90 days after voting day and will be available to the public.

## Plan Development and Review

The Regional Municipality of York 2018 Municipal Elections Plan was developed by the Regional Clerk's Office in consultation with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and York Region's Accessibility Unit, Community and Health Services Department.

This Plan is consistent with the principles of the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

## Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the manner that services are provided to persons with disabilities during the election process. Feedback on this Plan can be submitted to the Regional Clerk's Office through the following channels:

**Email:** [regional.clerk@york.ca](mailto:regional.clerk@york.ca)

**Phone:** 1-877-464-9675 Ext. 71303

**TTY:** 1-866-512-6228

**Mail:** 17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 8H7

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

