City of Woodstock

# Accessibility Plan

**for the**

**2026 Municipal and School Board Elections**

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## Background

The Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of municipal elections in the City of Woodstock ("City"). In accordance with the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* as amended; the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*; and the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Clerk must have regard for the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities and shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The plan must be made available to the public prior to voting day. Within 90 days after voting day, the Clerk must publish a report about the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affected electors and candidates with disabilities. The development of this Accessibility Plan for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections is consistent with the framework provided in the City's Accessibility Policy A001 (Appendix A), as amended. A consultation with the Woodstock Accessibility Advisory Committee was carried out on March 11, 2026, to ensure this plan addresses the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers to accessibility during the 2026 Municipal Elections in the City.

## Value Statement

The City is committed to providing goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. In addition, the City is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services. This includes accommodating the needs of electors and candidates through procedures and processes that address accessibility for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Elections.

Unforeseen circumstances that arise during the Municipal Election will be handled in keeping with the City's Accessibility Policy and the values that it upholds.

## Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this plan is to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility in the 2026 municipal election process in the City. Objectives for equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in the municipal election process include:

- To independently cast a ballot and verify the selection, with assistance available, if desired
- To provide full and equal access to information about eligible candidates and where and when to vote
- To participate fully in the municipal election as an elector, candidate, election officer, or registered third-party advertiser
- To ensure awareness of accessibility measures available via channels such as election communications, the City's website, digital and print media

The scope of this plan applies to facilities used during the 2026 Municipal Election, election officials, candidates, and election services. This plan outlines legislative requirements, voting methods, and standards relating to information, communication, and customer service. It also includes the provision of an accessible, secure, and user-friendly online voting system that accommodates voters of all abilities through adherence to accessibility best practices and compatibility with assistive technologies. The City will, in accordance with legislation and its policies and in consultation with the Woodstock Accessibility Advisory Committee, strive to conduct a barrier-free election by identifying and removing barriers across all voting methods, including online voting.

## Legislation

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (MEA) states the following:

***12 (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."*

***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.*

***(7)*** *On voting day, a voting place shall be provided on the premises of the following:*

***2.*** *An institution in which, on September 1, 20 or more beds are occupied by persons who are disabled, chronically ill or infirm.*

***3.*** *A retirement home in which, on September 1, 50 or more beds are occupied. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s. 45 (7); 2016, c. 15, s. 34 (2, 3).*

***(8)*** *The deputy returning officer for a voting place described in subsection (7) may attend on an elector who is a resident of the institution or retirement home, to allow him or her to vote.*

***(9)*** *To allow an elector with a disability to vote, a deputy returning officer shall attend on the elector anywhere within the area designated as the voting place. 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (3).*

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) defines disability as:

***2 (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)*** *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.*

Under the AODA, *O.Reg 191/11: INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS* (IASR) defines a service animal as:

***80.45 (4)*** *For the purposes of this Part, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,*

***a)*** *the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or*

***b)*** *the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:*

***i.*** *A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.*

***ii.*** *A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.*

***iii.*** *A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.*

***iv.*** *A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.*

***v.*** *A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.*

***vi.*** *A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.*

***vii.*** *A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.*

***viii.*** *A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.*

***ix.*** *A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.*

***80.47 (1)*** *This section applies if goods, services or facilities are provided to members of the public or other third parties at premises owned or operated by the provider and if the public or third parties have access to the premises. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.*

***(2)*** *If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.*

***(4)*** *If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the provider shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises. O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16.*

## Voting Methods

In accordance with Section 42 of the MEA, Woodstock City Council passed By-law 9729-25, on February 2, 2025, authorizing the use of alternative voting methods and voting counting equipment for the 2026 City's Municipal and School Board Elections. The approved voting methods include traditional in-person voting and online voting.

### In-Person Voting

In-person voting will be offered throughout the advanced voting period and will remain the sole voting method available on Voting Day. Eligible electors may cast a traditional paper ballot that will be processed using a tabulator. Election Officials will be present at each voting location to support voters, including assisting individuals with disabilities. An accessible voting terminal with assistive devices will be located at Goff Hall during the Advanced Voting Period and on Voting Day.

| Voting | Dates & Times |
|---|---|
| Advanced Voting Period | • October 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 2026<br>• 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. |
| Voting Day | • October 26, 2026<br>• 10:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. |

### Online Voting:

Online voting will be available starting October 10, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. until October 25, 2026, at 8:00 p.m., which is the day before Voting Day. Online voting provides the accessibility and convenience to vote from anywhere at any time during the timeframe indicated above on an internet connected smart device such as a cell phone, tablet, or computer. Online voting is intended to eliminate barriers to voting and to support the use of assistive devices, such as screen readers, to be used in casting a ballot privately and independently.

## Polling locations

The City is committed to taking measures to identify and remove accessibility barriers that may exist through the election period and at polling locations. An accessibility review was conducted at each in-person voting location using a Voting Location Accessibility Checklist (Appendix B) based on input from the Woodstock Accessibility Advisory Committee (WAAC) and best practices from other municipalities.

**Advance Voting**

The advance voting period will be conducted online and in person as follows:

| Polling Location & Method | Dates & Accessibility Considerations |
|---|---|
| Online Voting<br>Internet connection | • October 10 – 25, 2026<br>• 24/7 voting |
| In-person Voting<br>Goff Hall<br>Reeves Community Complex<br>381 Finkle Street | • October 10 and 13-15, 2026<br>• Accessible voting terminal with audio-tactile keypad with Braille legends, two-position rocker switch, and sip-and puff device<br>• Election Officials available to assist<br>• On transit route |

**Voting Day**

Voting day is Monday October 26, 2026, from 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. will be held in person only at the following locations. Eligible electors may vote at any voting location on Voting Day, allowing for the convenience to vote anywhere. To identify, remove, and prevent any barriers to accessibility, all Election Official will be trained to provide accessible customer service and each voting location will have supplies such as a magnifying sheet for people with visual impairments and scratch pads for people with hearing impairments.

| Polling Location | Accessibility Considerations |
|---|---|
| Goff Hall, Reeves Community Complex<br>381 Finkle Street | • Accessible voting terminal with audio-tactile keypad with Braille legends, two-position rocker switch, and sip-and puff device<br>• Election Officials available to assist<br>• Specialized transit route stop at front entrance of the Complex |

| Polling Location | Accessibility Considerations |
| --- | --- |
| Oxford Auditorium<br>875 Nellis Street | • Election Officials available to assist |
| Unifor Hall<br>126 Beale Street | • Election Officials available to assist |
| Cowan Park Sportsplex<br>895 Ridgewood Drive | • Election Officials available to assist<br>• On transit route |
| École Secondaire Catholique Notre-Dame<br>(Notre Dame High School)<br>700 Bristol Street | • Election Officials available to assist<br>• On transit route |
| **Roving Polling locations:**<br>• Chartwell Oxford Gardens Retirement<br>• Woodingford Lodge<br>• Woodstock Hospital<br>• Caressant Care Woodstock<br>• Cedarview Gracious Retirement Living<br>• Park Place Retirement Residence | • Election Officials available to assist<br>• Vote in an accessible space without leaving the institution |

## Information and Communication Standards

The IASR establishes accessibility standards for information and communications Part IV.2 that include:

### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Election information will be available in accessible and alternative formats upon request through a range of channels and in diverse formats, including:

- Information available in large print (upon request) and on the City's website in a format that can be downloaded.
- Material in plain/clear language for electors, service providers, and others who help with a person with a disability.
- Notices will be posted on the City's website.
- People with disabilities may be able to receive information and copies of election documents in a format that accommodates their disability. The format will be agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk. Notice of this provision is located on the Election page on the City's website.
- The Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections (Appendix C) will be provided to candidates. Election Officials will ensure candidates with disabilities can access services consistent with the requirements of the *Act* and the *AODA* Standards.
- Candidates or registered third parties who have a disability and incur election expenses that are directly related to their disability and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are considered as an expense not subject to their spending limit.

### Emergency Procedure

Election Officials will be aware of the emergency evacuation procedure and plans at each voting place. This includes being trained on how to assist people with disabilities in the event of an emergency.

## Customer Service Standards

The IASR also establishes accessibility standards for customer service that include allowing people with disabilities to use their own assistive devices, service animals, and support persons, providing notification when services are disrupted, interacting appropriately with people with disabilities, and establishing a feedback process, among other standards.

### Assistive Devices

An accessible voting terminal will be at the Goff Hall voting location at 381 Finkle Street, to assist eligible electors who require assistance or an alternate means of casting a ballot. The accessible voting terminal will have assistive input devices including audio-tactile keypad with Braille legends, two-position rocker switch, and sip-and puff device. All polling locations will be equipped with magnifiers for people with low vision, and pads of paper and pens for people with impaired hearing

Online voting provides an opportunity for electors to cast their ballot using a smart device such as a cell phone, tablet, or computer. The platform interface is designed to support screen readers, high-contrast display modes, scalable fonts, and complete keyboard-only navigation. The system supports compatibility with switch control devices, adaptive keyboards, and speech-to-text software. The system uses Accessible Rich Internet Applications to ensure that assistive technologies can effectively interpret and navigate the interface. The online voting option is available at any time between October 10 at 10:00 a.m. to October 25 at 8:00 p.m.

### Service Animals

People with disabilities may be accompanied by a service animal within the voting place. If the animal is not readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, the person shall provide supportive documentation from a regulated health professional so that he or she may be accompanied by the animal in the voting place.

### Support Persons

A person with a disability may be accompanied by a support person who may cast the ballot or assist in any other way as directed by the person with the disability. There are no prescribed oaths to be taken by support persons. In addition, the Returning Officer or designated Election Official can assist in the voting process, to which the extent of the assistance will be determined between the voter and the Returning Officer or designated Election Official.

An eligible elector with a disability who requests support at a polling location will be assisted by an Election Official. All Election Officials shall take an oath of secrecy, stating their commitment to confidentiality. An Election Official shall, in conjunction with the eligible voter with a disability, determine the extent to which the voter needs assistance and the best way to provide such assistance. This may include marking the ballot as directed by the person with the disability. Where a voting location is at an institution or retirement home, the Election Official can attend a living area or bedside to assist the voter to cast a ballot.

**Notice of Temporary Service Disruption**

If there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services, notice will be given by posting the information in a visible place on the premises (on doors, at service counters, on bulletin boards, etc.), on the City's website, and by such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances. The notice of service disruption must include the following information:

- Description of the service disruption
- Reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration of the disruption
- Alternate routes, facilities and services, if any, that are available

Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing information or services to people with disabilities.

**Training for Election Officials**

Election Officials will be trained in accordance with requirements under the Human Rights Code, AODA, and the City's Accessibility Policy A001 as it pertains to people with disabilities. All staff carrying out election duties will be trained to recognize and ensure that people with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their needs. Training will be provided as soon as practicable after duties are assigned and will include:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- How to use voting equipment or devices to deliver election services.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing election information or services.
- Any updates to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- The Woodstock Accessibility Advisory Committee will be consulted to provide first-hand experience interacting with people with disabilities.

**Feedback Process**

Feedback, comments, and suggestions regarding the accessibility of elections is encouraged and invited. This information can be submitted on the City's website, by email, phone, mail, in person as listed below:

| Method | Contact |
|---|---|
| Website | https://www.cityofwoodstock.ca/en/city-governance/accessibility.aspx |
| Email | accessibility@cityofwoodstock.ca |
| Phone | 519-539-1291<br>519-539-7268 (TTY) |
| Mail or<br>In Person | City of Woodstock<br>P.O. Box 1539<br>500 Dundas Street<br>Woodstock, ON  N4S 0A7 |

The feedback process provides an opportunity for the City to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility. Corrective measures can then be taken to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery, and offer alternative methods of providing election services.

## Additional Information

The City's website is updated to reflect current information about the municipal election at Woodstock.ca/election.

Please note that the Clerk, at any time, has the right to amend this plan to facilitate the vote, enable count and tabulation of the votes, and ensure security of the vote. The Clerk's ruling on any interpretation of this document is final.

### Post-Election Report

In accordance with the MEA, within 90 days after the election, the Clerk will prepare a report about the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affected electors and candidates with disabilities and post it publicly on the City's website.

## Appendix A: City of Woodstock Accessibility Policy A001

# The City of Woodstock
# Policy Manual

| | |
|---|---|
| **Subject:** | **Accessibility** |
| **Policy Number:** | **A001** |
| **Revision:** | **04** |
| **Approved by Council:** | **February 9, 2009** |
| **Amended:** | **August 11, 2016** |

## Policy Statement

The City of Woodstock is committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of City services, programs, goods and facilities in a manner that respects their dignity and that is equitable in relation to the broader public. This commitment extends to residents, visitors and employees with visible or non-visible disabilities.

## Purpose

This policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other City of Woodstock policies, standards, procedures, By-laws and guidelines to comply with the standards developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11. (AODA).

## Application

This Policy applies to all City employees, volunteers and to any individual or organization that provides goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, in accordance with the legislation.

The City's Transit Services Division is committed to meeting the spirit and intent of AODA.

The Woodstock Public Library reports to a separate board and as such follows their own respective policy.

## Principles

City services, programs, policies, goods and facilities are to be available to people with disabilities in a manner that:

- Is free from discrimination;
- Reflects the principles of dignity and independence;
- Seeks to provide integrated services;

- Provides an opportunity equitable to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services; and
- Takes into consideration a person's disability while respecting the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

## Responsibilities

The Clerk's Department is responsible for reviewing this Policy annually and recommending amendments to ensure on-going compliance with regulated accessibility standards and legislated obligations. The City Clerk or designate shall provide advice and direction on the implementation of this Policy. Supervisors and managers shall ensure that they and their staff are familiar with and comply with this Policy.

**Accessibility Office (Clerk's Department) is responsible for:**

- Collecting information about requests and feedback from departments;
- Monitoring compliance with this procedure on an annual basis; and
- Providing a summary of the requests and feedback to the Accessibility Advisory Committee at their regular meetings.

**Directors are responsible for:**

- Creating and maintaining service free from discrimination toward persons with disabilities;
- Budgeting for the costs associated with accessible formats and communication supports of materials originating from their departments; and
- Monitoring situations where requests for accessible formats and communication supports have not been provided and determine ways to make the information more convertible in the future.

**Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:**

- Creating and maintaining service free from discrimination toward persons with disabilities;
- Ensuring employees are aware of this procedure and are logging requests and feedback that are received by their departments with the Clerk's Department;
- Tracking costs associated with requests;
- Ensuring employees are providing residents with the requested accessible format and communication support;
- Ensuring that staff provide residents with an explanation as to why information or communications are unconvertible; and
- Overseeing the provision of a summary of the unconvertible information or communication support to the resident.

## Monitoring/Contraventions

Failure to comply with the AODA regulations can result in administrative penalties. Supervisors and managers shall monitor current practices to ensure compliance.

Failure to comply with this Policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

## Policy Requirements

## General Standards

The City of Woodstock is a large designated public sector organization under AODA and is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

## Accessibility Advisory Committee

The City of Woodstock has established an advisory committee with a majority of individuals whom are persons with disabilities. The committee shall advise Council about the requirements and implementation of AODA accessibility standards, preparation of accessibility reports, including access for persons with disabilities to a building or premises, and other matters for which Council may seek advice.

## Establishment of Accessibility Plans and Policies

The City shall produce a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The plan will be posted on the City's website and shall be made available in an accessible format and with communication supports, upon request. Progress on the plan will be provided to Council annually in the City of Woodstock's Status Report. The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once every five (5) years.

The City of Woodstock maintains policies governing how the City shall meet its requirements under AODA, and the City will provide policies in an accessible format, upon request.

## Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Except as otherwise provided by AODA, the City of Woodstock shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs, and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons, in accordance with the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedures (see Schedule B).

This does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information or communications and information that the City does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. If it is determined that information or communications are unconvertible, the department shall provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

(a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible;

(b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

## Procurement of Goods, Services, Facilities and Kiosks

When procuring goods, services, self-service kiosks or facilities, the City shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features, unless it is not feasible (practicable). If not practicable, the City shall provide an explanation, upon request (reference By-law 8040-04).

## Feedback

Feedback on how services were delivered to people with disabilities shall be invited, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback shall be collected by phone at 519-539-1291, TTY (Teletypewriter) at 519-539-7268, by e-mail to accessibility@cityofwoodstock.ca and in person at any of the City's service locations.

The City of Woodstock shall ensure that the feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports, on request. Feedback given to any city service locations, person or department shall be forwarded to the City Clerk's Department who shall investigate the feedback with the appropriate Department Head and ensure that the person who provided the feedback receives a response within seven days. If deemed appropriate by the city clerk or his or her designate, the feedback will be considered by the Woodstock Accessibility Advisory Committee.

## Documentation

Documentation that describes this Policy and each of its requirements shall be maintained on the City's website www.cityofwoodstock.ca and provided to individuals, upon request, in the appropriate format or communication support.

# Customer Service Standards

### Statement of Principle

The City of Woodstock is committed to meeting the Customer Service Standards set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards .

# Administration

### Policies, Practices and Procedures

The City of Woodstock provides goods or services to members of the public, including those with disabilities. The City shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the same principles used to govern the City of Woodstock's overarching accessibility policy.

### Use of Service Animals and Assistive Devices

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the City shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and allowed to

keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the City shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods or services.

This applies in equal measure to assistive devices. Customers with disabilities shall be permitted to enter the premises with their mobility aids.

**Use of Support Persons**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the City shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the City shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

The City may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if, after consulting with the person with a disability and considering the available evidence, the City determines that,

a) a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disabililty or the health or safety of others on the premises; and
b) there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and the health or safety of others on the premises.

In such a situation the City of Woodstock will waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability, into facilities where admission is charged.

**Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a City of Woodstock goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the City and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the City shall give notice of the disruption to the public.

Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice shall be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the City of goods or services, by posting it on the City's website or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

# Information and Communication Support Standards

## Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, City employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. Guidelines for communicating with people who have various types of disabilities are provided in the City of Woodstock Orientation training of which copies are available upon request.

## Terminology

When referring to people with disabilities, City employees, volunteers and third party contractors shall use terminology that adheres to guidelines provided in the City of Woodstock's Accessibility Training for Customer Service.

## Accessible Websites and Web Content

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by the City of Woodstock or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product shall conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards effective January 1st 2013.

## Emergency Procedures, Plans and Information

The City shall provide all existing public emergency procedures, plans and public safety information, upon request in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports in a timely manner.

# Employment Standards

## Recruitment

The City of Woodstock shall post information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. Job applicants who are individually selected for an interview and/or testing shall be notified that accommodations for material to be used in the process are available, upon request. The City shall consult with any applicant who requests an accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability. Successful applicants shall be notified about the City's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment.

## Employee Supports

The City will inform employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. The City will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. The City will also provide updated information to all employees whenever there is a change to existing policies

on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports are available for employees, upon request. The City shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:

a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

The City will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

## Workplace Emergency Response Information

If an employee's disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary, and the City is aware of the need for accommodation, this information shall be provided to employees. In addition, this information shall be provided, with the employee's consent, to the person designated to provide assistance. The information shall undergo review when the employee moves to a different location, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the City reviews its general emergency response plan.

## Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

A written process for the development and maintenance of documented individual accommodation plans shall be developed for employees with disabilities, if requested. These plans shall include information regarding accessible formats and communications supports. If requested, the plans shall include individualized workplace emergency response information.

## Return to Work Process

The City shall have in place a documented return to work process for employees returning due to disability and requiring disability-related accommodations. This return to work process will outline the steps that the City may take to facilitate the return to work.

## Performance Management and Career Development and Redeployment

The City shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing career development, performance management and when considering redeployment.

All of the aforementioned employee standards shall be in place by no later than January 1st 2014.

# Transportation Standards

## Taxicabs

Owners and operators of taxicabs licensed by the City of Woodstock are prohibited from charging additional fares or fees to persons with disabilities than for persons without disabilities and for the storage of mobility aids or mobility assistive devices. The City requires that taxicabs licensed by the City make available vehicle registration and identification information in an accessible format.

## Training

All City employees, volunteers and third parties developing policies, practices, or procedures, or providing goods and services on the City's behalf shall be required to undergo training on the requirements of AODA accessibility standards and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities. The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of the employee, volunteer or third party. Training shall take place as soon as is practicable and upon completion, the City shall keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which accessibility training took place.

The customer service section of the training shall include a review of the requirements of the Regulation and instruction about the following matters:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
3. How to use equipment or devices available on the City's premises or otherwise provided by the City that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the City's goods or services.
5. The training must be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.
6. Training must also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

# Schedule A

## Definitions

**Accessible Formats** - may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Communications** - means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

**Communication Supports** - may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

**Conversion ready** - an electronic or digital format that facilities conversion into an accessible format.

**Disability** – is defined, per Section 2 of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 and the Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19, 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."

**Electronic Text** – presentation of information in order to enable various computer programs to convert the information into a "readable" format. All illustrations or graphical information is explained fully in text.

**Information** - includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning. The information and communications standards do not apply to the following:

1. Products and product labels.
2. Unconvertible information or communications.
3. Information that the City does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

**Kiosk** − an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

**Service Animals** – are defined, , per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards, as follows:

an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

a. if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
b. if the person provides a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person** – is defined, perthe Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards , as follows:
"a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities."

**Unconvertible** - information or communications are unconvertible if it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communications or the technology to convert the information or communications is not readily available.

# Schedule B
# Accessible Formats and Communication Supports procedures

## Application

This procedure applies to City employees, volunteers and other persons or organizations that provide goods, services or facilities to the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Regulation developed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, S.O.2005, c.11. and in support of the City of Woodstock Accessibility Policy.

The procedures apply to all materials and communications produced by the City of Woodstock for release to the public whether produced in house or on behalf of the City (i.e. consultant reports). It does not apply to unconvertible information and information that the City does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Each publication should be produced in such a way as to reduce or eliminate barriers in the original document. Adaptation to another format can be accommodated easily and quickly when accessibility is considered during the development.

**Procedure Description**
**Notification**
The City will advise the public of the availability of accessible formats and communications supports by means of the following:

- A link on all City websites to the Accessible Formats and Communication Supports request form;
- Signage at every public service counter advising of the availability of Accessible formats and Communication Supports, if requested;
- Or by such other method as is deemed reasonable by the city clerk or his or her designate in the circumstances.

**Processing Requests**
Requests for an accessible format or communication support can be received by staff in person, by phone/TTY or by electronic formats such as emails or service requests. Upon receipt of a request, staff will complete the Online Request Form which is forwarded to the Clerk's Department for record keeping purposes. The request is to be responded to by the appropriate operational staff. A direct link to this form is provided on the accessibility page of cityofwoodstock.ca.

All City staff shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

**Timeframe**
The timeframe for the conversion process of a document into an accessible format, or the provision of a communication support, can vary depending on the media chosen, the size,

complexity, quality of source documents, and the number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

If the document being requested is the subject of a public consultation or has a set timeframe for public comment, the timeframe for document conversion and distribution must be taken into consideration.

**Cost of Conversion**
When a member of the public requests a City document in an accessible format or information with a communication support, the department of origin is responsible for the cost of conversion, materials and distribution of information. If the materials are directly related to the work of an Advisory Committee, costs will be the responsibility of City Clerks.

Once the appropriate format or support is determined with the requestor, staff shall provide or arrange for the provision of the accessible formats and/or communication support for persons with disabilities.

If a staff member determines that information is unconvertible, they shall, in consultation with their manager, provide the person requesting the information or communication with:

a. a written explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and,
b. a summary of the unconvertible information or communication.

The Accessibility Office is available for consultation to help determine if information can be converted.

**Common accessible formats**
Some of the most common accessible formats are (but not limited to):

- HTML or electronic text version on line that meet the WCAG 2.0 level A or AA;
- Text saved as a Word document;
- Large Text;
- Plain language versions; and
- Braille.

Common communication supports are (but not limited to):

- Screen Reader software (eg: BrouseAloud on Woodstock website);
- Verbal explanation of a written document;
- Video Captioning, transcripts;
- Alternative and augmentative communication supports such as an FM loop system or Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART); and
- Sign language interpretation.

## Enquiries

For further information regarding this procedure, contact:
City Clerk's Department
accessibility@cityofwoodstock.ca

| Revision Date | Rev # | Particulars |
|---|---|---|
| February 19, 2009 | 00 | Issue Date |
| July 12, 2012 | 01 | |
| April 14, 2013 | 02 | Council approved GA022 – A001 |
| September 14, 2013 | 03 | Combine A001 & A005 |
| August 11, 2016 | 04 | Legislative Updates |

## Appendix B – Voting Location Accessibility Checklist

# Voting Location Accessibility Inspection Checklist

**Voting Location:** _____ **Completed by:** _____ **Date:** _____

| Signage | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Is there an exterior sign identifying the name and address of the facility? | | | | |
| Is the sign clearly visible at the front of the building to indicate the location of an accessible entrance? | | | | |
| Are the characters on a contrasting background? | | | | |
| Are text characters raised (sized between 1.5 cm and 5 cm high)? | | | | |
| Is the sign mounted on the wall on the latch side of the door? | | | | |
| Is there an alternate system to communicate information on the signs for people with visual impairments? | | | | |

| Parking | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| For parking lots with 1-25 spaces, is there at least one accessible parking space? | | | | |
| For parking lots with 26-50 spaces, are there at least 2 accessible spaces? | | | | |
| For parking lots with over 500 spaces, are there at least 11 accessible spaces, plus 2 additional spaces for every 100 spaces over 500? | | | | |
| Are the accessible parking spaces located as close as possible to a barrier-free entrance to a building? | | | | |
| Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked with the International Symbol of Accessibility? | | | | |
| Is there adequate lighting in the parking area? | | | | |
| Are the accessible parking spaces at least 2.4 m wide, with an adjacent access aisle of at least 1.5 m? | | | | |
| Is the parking space level? | | | | |
| Is there a curb ramp from the parking lot onto the sidewalk? | | | | |

# Voting Location Accessibility Inspection Checklist

| Exterior Access | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Are the drop-off / loading zones appropriate for voter drop-off and para-transit? | | | | |
| Is there a bus shelter or stop nearby? | | | | |
| Can you see the accessible entrance from the parking area? | | | | |
| If not, is the accessible route clearly marked with directional signs? | | | | |
| Is the building name and route signage displayed in large and high-contrast lettering? | | | | |
| Is there adequate lighting leading to the entrance? | | | | |
| Is the route to the building entrance stable, firm and slip-resistant and is it a reasonable distance for people with disabilities? | | | | |
| Is the route at least 92 cm wide? | | | | |
| Are curb cuts provided along the accessible route and free of barriers (such as parking spots, garbage cans, etc.)? | | | | |
| If the entrance has stairs, do they have tactile warning strips? | | | | |
| Is there a level route from outside the exterior door to the interior of the building? | | | | |
| If not, is there a ramp or lift to accommodate the change in elevation? | | | | |
| What is the % of the slope of the ramp? (8.33% or lower is good, 10% or 11% is too steep - use a “smart tool”) | | | | |
| Is the threshold at the entrance less than 13 mm? | | | | |
| Is there a power-assist door at the entrance? | | | | |
| If there is no power-assist, can the door be propped open? | | | | |

# Voting Location Accessibility Inspection Checklist

| Exterior Access | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can doors be opened without too much force (2.25 kg maximum for interior doors)? | | | | |
| Are door handles 1.2 m high or less, and operable with a closed fist? | | | | |
| On the pull side of doors, next to the handle, is there at least 0.5 m of clear wall space so that a person using a wheelchair or crutches can get near to open the door? | | | | |
| Are the operable parts of the door hardware no less than 0.86 m and no greater than 1.2 m above the floor or ground surface? | | | | |
| If the main entrance is not accessible, is there an alternative accessible entrance? | | | | |
| Can the alternative accessible entrance be used independently and during the same hours as the main entrance? | | | | |
| If an exterior door to a vestibule is automatic, is the interior door equipped with an automatic door opener as well? | | | | |
| Is the distance between the main entrance and vestibule doors at least 1.2 m plus the width of the doors when swinging into the space? | | | | |
| If provided at the building entrance, are carpets or mats no greater than 13 mm thick? | | | | |
| Are edges of carpets or mats securely attached to minimize tripping hazards? | | | | |

# Voting Location Accessibility Inspection Checklist

| Interior Route & Spaces | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Do all routes of travel have a minimum 0.81 m width, including interior door openings? | | | | |
| Is there an accessible route of travel from the entrance to the voting area that: is free from stairs, is free from overhanging/protruding objects or other obstacles and has non-slip floor surfaces under wet and dry conditions? | | | | |
| Are all doors equipped with opening devices such as power-assist or lever handles that are operable by one hand without requiring fine finger control? | | | | |
| Do all doors have at least 0.6 m of unobstructed wall space on the latch side of the doors that PULL open? | | | | |
| Do all doors have at least 0.3 m of unobstructed wall space on the latch side of the doors that PUSH open? | | | | |
| Are floor surfaces stable, firm, and slip resistant? | | | | |
| Are tripping hazards clearly marked with a bright colour or guard? | | | | |
| Is there adequate lighting in the voting room? | | | | |
| Is there a 1.5-m circle or T-shaped space for turning a wheelchair completely? | | | | |
| Are there seats available for people to rest if needed? | | | | |
| If the queue will extend to outdoors, is there shelter available? | | | | |

# Voting Location Accessibility Inspection Checklist

| Interior Route & Spaces | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Can controls (light switches, security and intercom systems, emergency/alarm boxes, etc.) be operated with one hand and without tight grasping, pinching, or twisting of the wrist? | | | | |
| Do fire alarms include both auditory and visual components? | | | | |
| Are the fire exits marked with clear signage using large and high-contrast lettering? | | | | |
| Are exit instructions printed in large text and mounted in an accessible and easily visible location? | | | | |

# Voting Location Accessibility Inspection Checklist

| Washrooms | Yes | No | N/A | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Are washrooms a reasonable distance from the voting room? | | | | |
| Are there accessible washrooms available to the public and staff? | | | | |
| Are washroom doors equipped with an automatic or push-button opener? | | | | |
| Is there a raised symbol or raised letters on the washroom door? | | | | |
| Is there an accessible sink (knee clearance of 68 cm)? | | | | |
| Is there a grab bar beside the toilet? | | | | |
| Do all doors have at least 60 cm of unobstructed wall space on the latch side of the doors that PULL open? | | | | |
| Do all doors have at least 30 cm of unobstructed wall space on the latch side of the doors that PUSH open? | | | | |
| Is there a turning radius of at least 150 cm? | | | | |
| Is there a minimum seat height of 38 cm to 46 cm? | | | | |
| Is there at least 81 cm of clear floor space beside the toilet for a lateral transfer? | | | | |
| Is the faucet operable with closed fist or automatically controlled? | | | | |
| Can someone using a wheelchair or a scooter reach the faucets and turn the water on using one hand? | | | | |
| Are washrooms large enough to accommodate people who use scooters and power wheelchairs? | | | | |
| Are washroom accessories and dispensers within easy reach of a person using a wheelchair or scooter? | | | | |

## Appendix C – AMCTO Candidates Guide to Accessible Elections

# Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections

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This guide was developed in partnership with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

# Preamble

This guide is intended to draw your attention to the measures candidates should include: literature through print media, audio and video messages, and access to your campaign office (if you are intending to campaign from an office that is separate from your home).

Be sure that all of your campaign activities are accessible to everyone!

# Campaign Literature

## 1. Print Media

Printed campaign materials are one of the most common methods of communicating with your candidates during your campaign. Consider the following when preparing your campaign literature:

- What is the font size on your material? It should be between 12 and 18 points, except when producing brochures where space can be an issue. Having a message at bottom of brochure saying “Alternative Formats Available Upon Request” allows an individual to request it in a format that works for them.
- Use a sans serif fonts (sans means “without” and serif are the small projecting features at the end of strokes; arms and legs). The extra serifs make text difficult to read. Choose a font without serifs like Arial or Verdana.)
- Use upper and lower case, avoid italics and avoid underlining (underlining is perceived to mean a website or email link.)
- If you are using a filled box, “bold” the font.
- Use good colour contrast – black and white is easiest to see and read.
- Avoid using watermarks and text as not very readable.
- Will you have separate large print copies available?
- Do you have magnifying sheets available to help a person with low vision to read your materials? Could the material be offered in an alternate format, if requested?

- Can you have key pieces of your literature in alternative formats (e.g. Braille, large print, e-text versions)?

- All printed material should have a statement “alternative formats available upon request.”

- Ensure that your print materials provide details on whether your campaign office (if you have a campaign office) is accessible.

- If sending printed material electronically, ensure that it has been designed to be accessible. If for instance you have created a document in word, then you would need to use headings and styles to enable an assistive device to read the material easily. Pictures and links need to be tagged appropriately so that the images are picked up and described.

- Consider accessibility provisions for your website. Do you have scalable print? Is the font size large enough? Is there sufficient contrast between the colour of the background and any text? Has alternative text been provided to describe any images, link and tables, used on your website?

- If you elect to provide a TTY number in your campaign office/home, be sure to include TTY number in all advertising and promotional materials.

- Consider the services offered through VoicePrint, a division of The National Broadcast Reading Service, which broadcasts readings of full-text articles from more than 600 Canadian newspapers and magazines. They also provide advertising opportunities through a fee-for-service program.

## 2. Audio/Video Media

Radio and Video campaign messages also often form part of a candidate’s campaign portfolio. Consider the following when preparing your campaign literature:

- Recorded messages provide consistent information and access for individuals after-hours.

- Will you offer these messages in alternative formats? Advertise that these formats are available and how they can be accessed.

- You may wish to consider providing subtitles for video communications.

- Consider captioning for live video presentation of electoral debates.

## 3. One-on-One Communication

Will you consider offering Sign Language Interpreting?

Sign Language Interpreters are knowledgeable in the language and culture of both hearing impaired and hearing people. They provide communication in both sign language and a spoken language and are bound by a professional Code of Ethics.

A Sign Language Interpreter may need to be booked two to three weeks in advance. If a meeting or event is longer than two hours then two Sign Language Interpreters will be required. One person will sign for 15 to 20 minutes and then they will switch. If the information they are interpreting is difficult then they may ask for materials in advance to be better prepared.

The websites below provides a directory of interpreters, as well as tips on finding an interpreter, negotiating terms for agreements, etc. Link to the Ontario Association of Sign Language Interpreters' (OASLI) website: http://www.oasli.on.ca. As well as a link to their online directory:

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Association of Visual Language Interpreters of Canada's online directory:
(http://www.oasli.on.ca/contact/directory-of-oasli-interpreters)

At candidate meetings, you may wish to consider providing a recording secretary and have a screen available to broadcast information for the hearing impaired.

# Campaign Office

## 4. Choosing a Location

Many candidates campaign from their homes, however, if you are thinking of establishing a campaign office separate from your home, your campaign office may be your primary venue for meeting one-on-one with the electorate. You will want to be sure that the location is suitable to accept any elector who wishes to attend your office. The following is a recommended checklist to consider:

**Accessible Campaign Office Checklist**

- Is the office located on a route that is served by accessible public transportation?

- Is the name and address of the building clearly visible from the street and sidewalk?

- If needed, is there a pedestrian crosswalk close by? Crosswalks served by an audible and visual traffic-crossing signal are preferred. Where there is a change in level, for example where the sidewalk meets the street, curb cuts are necessary.

- Is accessible parking available for electors? At least one accessible parking space should be provided on the shortest, safest accessible route to the accessible building entrance.

- Is the accessible parking space clearly marked with the international symbol of accessibility?

- Is the parking space firm and level?

- Are curb cuts provided? All sidewalks should have curb cuts at locations near parking and along the route to the primary entrance.

- Is the space large enough to meet the needs of an elector who uses a van equipped with a wheelchair lift?

- Are the parking spaces and route of travel properly maintained? Snow and ice should be removed and uneven surfaces repaired as soon as possible.

- Is the route to the entrance accessible? Accessible routes should be unobstructed and have continuous, smooth, hard surfaces with no abrupt changes in level and should not require the use of stairs. Plan to have routine checks made throughout the day.

- Is the route wide enough so someone using a wheelchair, scooter, or service animal can travel safely?

- Is the campaign office easily identified by signage? Is the sign easy to read and understand?

- Is the entrance accessible? If there are steps, there needs to be a ramp so people using mobility aids or who have mobility impairments can get in. Steps, even a small single step, can make the campaign office inaccessible to many people with disabilities and seniors.

- Is the ramp well designed and safe? Does it have handrails on both sides? Does it have a suitable slope? If the ramp is temporary, is it securely attached to the steps so it cannot slip or wobble?

- Is the door hardware accessible? Are there lever or pull handles? Be sure the door hardware passes the “fist test”. This means it can be operated by a person using a closed fist.

- Is the doorway wide enough for a person using a wheelchair or scooter to pass through?

- Is the door easy to open? If the doors are heavy, awkward to open or have handles that may be out of reach, can you prop them open in a safe manner? If you do prop them open, make sure you don’t obstruct the entrance and nearby floor space.

- Is the entrance easy to see?

- Is the entrance well lit?

## 5. Inside the Office

- Is there level access from the entrance to the office area? Internal stairs are just as much of a problem as external ones. It may be necessary to install ramps.

- Are doormats level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards? If not, you may consider removing them, provided of course this does not create further hazards. Beveled edges on doormats helpful.

- Is the voting location on a ground floor unless elevator available?

- Is the flooring non-slip, even and level? Highly polished surfaces can be slippery for some users, while thick carpeting and loose rugs or mats can cause people to trip or get stuck. Glare from polished surfaces can be a problem for people with visual impairments.

- Is the office area well lit?

- Are there seats available for people to rest if needed?

- Are corridors inside the office facility spacious enough for a wheelchair or scooter to pass through comfortably? Obstructions such as stacked furniture or piles of boxes can cause problems for visually impaired people, as well as people with limited mobility.

- Is there enough space inside the office area for a wheelchair or scooter to move about easily?

## 6. Make Provisions for Service Animals

It is prohibited to deny a person access to a place or service because a guide dog accompanies them. Be sure that the facility use agreement does not prohibit service animals. Service animals must be allowed to remain with the person with a disability. Service animals are allowed to go anywhere the public is allowed.

## 7. Telephone Access

Consider providing a TTY number.

## 8. Accessible Washrooms

- Does your office have washrooms that are large enough to accommodate scooter and power wheelchair users and are equipped with at least one accessible stall? A unisex washroom is preferred.

- Are the accessible washrooms located on the same floor and in close proximity to the office?

- Do the doors to the washroom have a raised (tactile) male or female sign or Braille lettering?

- Are there L shaped grab bars or a rear bar?

- Are taps operable with a closed fist?

- Are hot water pipes under the sink recessed or covered to prevent burning one's knees if in a wheelchair?

### 9. Training

Are your staff/volunteers trained as it relates to Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation so that you are providing appropriate services for persons with disabilities?

### 10. Other

Are you providing refreshments to visitors? If so, provide bendable straws and lightweight cups and an option for sugar free beverages.

## Budgeting

Costs associated with ensuring your campaign is accessible to your electors must be reported as per the legislated requirements. Make sure you budget for possible accessibility requests like Sign Language Interpreters, Braille copies, other alternative formats and website accessibility.

### 11. Sign Language Interpreting

For sign language interpreting, the cost will be based on how long the service is needed and whether one or more interpreters will be required. Currently, the base rate for interpreting service is $110 per interpreter for up to two hours of service. After that, $55 is charged for every hour or part thereof.

# Understanding Disability: Know Your Electors' Needs And Communicate Your Solutions

## 12. Examples of Barriers to People with Disabilities:

| Barrier Type | Example |
|---|---|
| **Physical** | A doorknob that cannot be operated by an elderly person with limited upper-body mobility and strength. |
| **Architectural** | A hallway or door that is too narrow for a wheelchair or scooter. |
| **Informational** | Typefaces which are too small to be read by a person with low-vision. |
| **Communicational** | A speaker at a meeting who talks loudly when addressing a deaf participant. |
| **Attitudinal** | A campaign event that discourages persons with developmental disabilities from participating. |
| **Technological** | Information on a web site, which cannot be accessed by a person who is blind or visually impaired and who has reading software on a computer. |
| **Policy/Practice** | A practice of announcing important messages over an intercom that people with hearing impairments cannot hear clearly. |

Disabilities can take many forms and can range from temporary to permanent. Often disabilities are non-visible and no one should ever make assumptions. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time. There are physical, mental and learning disabilities, mental disorders, hearing or vision disabilities, epilepsy, drug and alcohol dependencies, environmental sensitivities, and other conditions –

## 13. Types of Disabilities

Listed below is a brief description of types of disabilities. Understanding people's needs and challenges may help you better communicate with them. Always remember if you are not sure what to do, ask the person, "May I help you?" This gives a person with disabilities an opportunity to let you know how you can assist them if they wish you too.

### Physical Disabilities:

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities, and while people who use mobility aids like wheelchairs, scooters, crutches or canes are most recognizable, it is important to consider that not all people with physical disabilities require a mobility device. People who have arthritis, heart or lung conditions or amputations may also have difficulty with stamina, moving, standing, sitting or the ability to reach or grasp. It may be difficult to identify a person with a physical disability. If you're not sure what to do, ask the person, "May I help you?" People with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.

### Vision Loss:

There are varying degrees of vision loss and a distinction between blindness and low vision. In some cases, it may be difficult to tell if a person has a vision loss. The majority of people living with a vision disability have some vision, only some are totally blind. Vision disabilities can reduce one's ability to see clearly or can affect the range of visual field. Some people can distinguish between light and dark, or between contrasting colours, or read large print, but have difficulty with small print or low-light situations. Others may have a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which impacts a person's ability to distinguish details, like recognizing faces or reading. Vision disabilities can restrict a person's ability to read print and signs, locate landmarks or see hazards. They may use a white cane or service animal to help with orientation and movement in an environment. There are specific things you can do to communicate with a voter with vision loss – for e.g. identify yourself when you approach the person and speak directly to him or her, even if he/she is accompanied by a companion.

### Deaf, Deafened or Hard of Hearing:

Hearing loss ranges from mild to profound. **Hard of hearing** people generally have a hearing loss ranging from mild to severe, although it is sometimes profound, and use their voice and residual hearing for communication. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are often used, augmented by assistive listening devices, other technology, and speech reading.

**Late deafened persons**, sometimes referred to as deafened or oral deaf, have lost all hearing at some point after learning to speak, usually as adults. Growing up either hearing or hard of hearing, late deafened people continue to use voice

to communicate and rely strongly on visual forms of communication such as speech reading, text, and occasionally sign language.

Many **Deaf** or profoundly hard of hearing people identify with the society and language of Deaf Culture and use sign language as their basis of communication.

Deaf, deafened, and hard of hearing individuals may use hearings aids, pen and paper, personal amplification devices, hearing aid dog or other assistive-listening and communication methods. Attract the person's attention before speaking. Generally, the best way is by a gentle touch on the shoulder or with a gentle wave of your hand. Look at and speak directly to the person. Address them, not the interpreter or support person.

**Deaf-Blindness:**
A person who is Deaf-Blind has some degree of both vision and hearing loss. This results in greater difficulties in accessing information and managing daily activities. Most people who are deaf-blind will be accompanied by an Intervenor, a professional who helps with communicating. An Intervenor is trained in many adaptive communication methods, depending upon the preferences of the person who is deaf-blind. The Intervenor may guide and interpret for their client. Identify yourself to the Intervenor when you approach a person who is Deaf-Blind, but then speak directly to the person as you normally would, not to the Intervenor.

**Speech Impairments:**
People with speech disabilities may have difficulty communicating. For many reasons, people may have difficulty speaking clearly – for example, as a result of a stroke or cerebral palsy – which may result in difficulties with verbal communication. Some people may use communication boards or other assistive devices to help communicate. A speech disability often has no impact on a person's ability to understand. Ask them to repeat the information if you don't understand. Ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no" if possible.

**Cognitive Disabilities:**
Cognitive disabilities may affect understanding, communication, or behavior and can be attributed to brain injuries, developmental or learning disabilities. It is not always easy to identify someone who has a cognitive disability. Some conditions, such as Down's syndrome exhibit physical characteristics, but there are others that are not apparent. People with a cognitive disability may have difficulties recognizing, understanding and remembering information. Don't assume what a person can or cannot do. And always speak directly to the person, not to their companion or support person.

**Mental Illness:**
Mental illness is a disturbance in thoughts and emotions that may decrease a person's capacity to cope with the challenges of everyday life. Mental illness can take many forms, just as physical illness does. Mental illnesses include schizophrenia, mood disorders (such as depression and bipolar disorder), anxiety disorders, personality disorders, and eating disorders. Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else. Be patient, confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with them to try to meet their needs. If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask him or her to tell you the best way to help.

During your campaign planning process, consider contacting your local organizations, such as the CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society, etc and discuss with them your campaign plans. This will assist you to better understand the needs of people in your electorate with disabilities. They are a valuable resource in providing input and feedback.