



Elections  
Ontario

# 2016 Status Update to Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

# Table of Contents

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan .....	1
Message from CEO.....	5
Overview .....	6
Background and Legislation .....	6
Commitment to the Plan .....	6
Update on 2016 Accessibility Initiatives.....	7
General Requirements .....	8
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.....	8
Deliverable .....	8
Status Update - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP).....	8
Accessibility Policies.....	10
Deliverable .....	10
Status Update - Accessibility Policies .....	10
Staff Training .....	10
Deliverable .....	10
Status Update - Staff Training.....	11
Accessible Procurement .....	11
Deliverable .....	11
Status Update - Accessible Procurement.....	11
Customer Service Standard .....	12
Assistive Devices.....	12
Deliverable .....	12
Status Update - Assistive Devices .....	12
Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Support Persons .....	12
Deliverable .....	13
Status Update - Guide Dogs and Service Animals.....	13
Deliverable .....	13
Status Update - Support Persons.....	13
Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions .....	14
Deliverable .....	14
Status Update - Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions.....	14
Information and Communications Standard .....	15
Accessible Feedback Process.....	15

Deliverable .....	15
Status Update - Accessible Feedback Process .....	15
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports .....	16
Deliverable .....	16
Status Update - Accessible Formats and Communication Supports.....	16
Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information .....	17
Deliverable .....	17
Status Update - Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information .....	17
Accessible Websites and Web Content .....	18
Deliverable .....	18
Status Update - Accessible Website and Web Content .....	18
Employment Standard.....	20
Recruitment, Assessment and Selection .....	20
Deliverable .....	20
Status Update - Recruitment, Assessment and Selection.....	20
Documented Individual Accommodation Plan .....	21
Deliverable .....	21
Status Update - Individual Accommodation Plan .....	21
Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees .....	22
Deliverable .....	22
Status Update - Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees .....	23
Workplace Emergency Response Information.....	23
Deliverable .....	23
Status Update - Workplace Emergency Response Information .....	23
Return to Work Process.....	24
Deliverable .....	24
Status Update - Return to Work Process .....	24
Performance Management .....	24
Deliverable .....	24
Status Update - Performance Management.....	24
Career Development and Advancement.....	25
Deliverable .....	25
Status Update - Career Development and Advancement .....	25
Redeployment .....	25

Deliverable .....	25
Status Update - Redeployment .....	25
Design of Public Spaces Standard .....	27
Accessible Public Spaces .....	27
Deliverable .....	27
Status Update - Accessible Public Spaces .....	27
Other Accessibility Initiatives .....	28
Accessible Voting By-Elections .....	28
Online Registration Tool .....	29
Election Management System .....	29
Final Remarks .....	30

# 2016 Status Update to Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

## Message from CEO

---

Over the past five years we have shown our commitment to accessibility by meeting the accessibility requirements within specified timelines according to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and its standards: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, and Public Spaces.

This 2016 Status Report update will be the final report for the 2012-2016 Multi-Year Plan. Our team is proud to have completed all of the deliverables that Elections Ontario proposed in the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and those that were mandated in accordance with *the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

In 2016, part of our planning for the year included the development a new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2017 to 2021. In order for the plan to be reflective of the needs of people with disabilities, an outreach strategy to community agencies was completed. Multiple community consultations were held and valuable input was received from agencies, including Accessibility Experts Ltd., Alliance for Blind Canadians, Alzheimer Society, Arthritis Society, Bob Rumball Centre for the Deaf, Canadian Hearing Society, CNIB, Community Living, Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy, Parkinson Canada, and Spinal Cord Injury Ontario. Their input, along with internal stakeholders, has had a positive impact on the way we identify, prevent and remove barriers as outlined in the five-year plan. I would like to personally thank them for their engagement and the insight that they provided in developing a new five-year accessibility plan.

We also successfully implemented a technology-enabled staffing pilot project for both the Whitby-Oshawa and Scarborough-Rouge River by-election. We went from a paper-based poll process to an automated-ready process through the integration of technology.

We are proud of our accomplishments over the past five years and, specifically, for the 2016 year that we are reporting on. Elections Ontario is committed to ensuring that we prevent and remove barriers in all areas of our day to day operations and especially during elections. The new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for 2017 to 2021 will serve as a roadmap to accessible voting in Ontario and ensure implementation and compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Greg Essensa  
Chief Electoral Officer

## Overview

---

Elections Ontario is committed to the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA). In 2011 Elections Ontario created a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the years 2011 to 2016. This is Elections Ontario's final report on the five-year plan and the 2016 Status Update.

### Background and Legislation

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) has established accessibility standards and requirements for Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and the Design of Public Spaces. The four applicable standards which Elections Ontario has to implement under the AODA are explained and listed below:

- **Customer Service Standard** – provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities so that they can access the same goods and services as everyone else
- **Information and Communications Standard** – create, provide and receive information in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities
- **Employment Standard** – employers provide for accessibility to employees across all stages of the employment life cycle
- **Public Spaces Standard** – public spaces are designed to make it easier for everyone (people with disabilities, seniors and families) to use public spaces. Public spaces includes recreational trails, beach access routes, outdoor public use eating areas, outdoor play spaces, exterior paths of travel, accessible parking and service related elements. This standard also includes the maintenance of public spaces.

Under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, Elections Ontario has ongoing obligations to accommodate people with disabilities to the point of undue hardship. We incorporate the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), but also recognize that additional accommodation measures that go beyond the AODA may be required in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

### Commitment to the Plan

Elections Ontario is committed to preventing and removing barriers to accessibility. Our goal is to ensure accessibility is considered in all areas as is evidenced by the many initiatives we have successfully implemented throughout 2016. We continue to update policies, practices and procedures, provide staff training and ensure that staff follows specific guidelines across all departments so that we remain committed to incorporating accessibility into all areas of service provided to the public.

## Update on 2016 Accessibility Initiatives

Elections Ontario continues to undertake and complete initiatives in our ongoing strategy to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. For each of the initiatives we show the deliverable followed by a status update:

- **Deliverable:** what we are legislated to do under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) for each of the standards, and what we have committed to do as per our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- **Status Update:** what we have accomplished for the year 2016

## General Requirements

---

There are a number of general requirements that must be implemented in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. They include:

- Multi-Year Accessibility Plan;
- Accessibility Policies;
- Staff Training; and
- Accessible Procurement.

### Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

A multi-year accessibility plan outlines an organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the AODA. The "deliverable" and "status update" for the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan are provided below:

#### Deliverable

Establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers in consultation with persons with disabilities. The plan must be reviewed on a yearly basis and updates provided on the progress.

#### Status Update - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)

Below are the updates on the status of our previous 2012-2016 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) and the creation of our new 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP.)

#### 2012-2016 MYAP

Elections Ontario continues to meet the deliverables outlined in the 2012 to 2016 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, which outlines a phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and addresses the current and future requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA.)

Elections Ontario reports annually on the progress and implementation of the plan by preparing the "Annual Status Update for the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan" report. This information is posted on our website and is provided in accessible formats upon request.

We are finishing the work from our five-year plan for 2012 to 2016 and reporting on our fifth and final year of this report. We can proudly say that we have accomplished and met all deliverables outlined in our five-year plan.

On December 15, 2016, we filed our compliance report with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario and successfully completed all legislated requirements. We also provided a copy of our new 2017-2021 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

## **2017-2021 MYAP**

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*(AODA) requires organizations to create a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) every five years. The plan outlines a strategy for how Elections Ontario will prevent and remove barriers as we serve people with disabilities and how we will meet all legislative requirements as per the AODA.

In November 2016, we consulted with 15 individuals from community organizations representing people with disabilities to assist us in creating the new five year accessibility plan:

- Yin Brown, Alliance for Blind Canadians
- Kat Clarke, CNIB
- Yannick Constant, Arthritis Society
- Cindy DeGraaff, Ontario Federation for Cerebral Palsy
- Katie Doran, Alzheimer Society
- Jason Ducharme, MNP
- Edie Forsyth, Accessibility Experts Ltd.
- Signy Franklin, MNP
- Gordon Kyle, Community Living
- Gary Malkowski, Canadian Hearing Society
- Justin Manuel, Parkinson Canada
- Richard McCallum, Spinal Cord Injury Ontario
- Christine Nelson, Bob Rumball Centre for Deaf
- Ray Smith, CNIB
- Yvonne Spicer, Community Living

The community consultation began with an overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and the legislated requirements applicable to Elections Ontario and for the private and non-profit organizations at the table. We then worked through each deliverable and received valuable suggestions and ideas that we know will have a positive impact on the way we identify, prevent and remove barriers.

Internally, senior staff at Elections Ontario reviewed the legislated requirements applicable to their department and outlined their affected deliverables and commitment to the plan. With the information we gathered from our own staff and the community agencies, Elections Ontario's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2017-2021 was created. It was sent for review and comments and then the final version was approved and distributed. An accessible version was posted on Elections Ontario's website. We are already beginning to implement the deliverables identified in our new five-year plan.

An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the plan will be completed on a yearly basis. The status report will be posted on Elections Ontario's website and be available in an accessible format.

## Accessibility Policies

Accessibility policies outline how an organization will meet their obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) as it refers to the Customer Service Standard and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. The “deliverable” and “status update” are provided below:

### Deliverable

Every organization shall develop, implement and maintain policies governing how the organization achieves accessibility through meeting its requirements under the accessibility standards. The policy includes a statement of commitment to meet the needs of persons with disabilities, is publicly available and is provided in accessible formats upon request. The policies must be consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

### Status Update - Accessibility Policies

Elections Ontario maintains policies governing how we meet the requirements under the AODA. The Customer Service Policy and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy shows our organizational commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities. We ensure that we follow the four core principles of accessibility, so that goods and services are provided in a manner that:

- Respects the dignity of persons with disabilities;
- Respects the independence of persons with disabilities;
- Is integrated for persons with disabilities unless an alternate measure is necessary; and
- Is equal to that given to others to obtain use and benefit from the goods and services provided.

All staff follow the accessibility policies. The policies serve as rules and principles that guide staff when making decisions related to accessibility for their particular departmental work. Elections Ontario ensures that the policies are publically available and provided in accessible formats upon request.

## Staff Training

All organizations are required to provide Accessible Customer Service Training, as well as training on *the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it relates to people with disabilities. The “deliverable” and “status update” for staff training are provided below:

### Deliverable

Training must be provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards and on the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities to all employees, volunteers and others who provide goods or services on behalf of the organization.

Staff shall be trained as soon as practicable. Records will be maintained of the training provided, including dates and the number of individuals trained. Should there be any changes to the policy, staff shall be trained on the policy changes.

### **Status Update - Staff Training**

All Elections Ontario employees full time, part time and volunteers that are providing goods and services on Election Ontario's behalf are trained on the Accessible Customer Service Standard. We use the videos funded by the government (AccessForward) which cover the standards as it pertains to people with disabilities. Training takes place as soon as practicable after individuals are hired and records are maintained and kept with the dates and the number of individuals trained.

### **Accessible Procurement**

In order for goods and services to be more accessible to people with disabilities, it is important that organizations incorporate accessibility into their procurement process. The "deliverable" and "status update" for accessible procurement process are provided below:

#### **Deliverable**

Accessibility criteria and features shall be incorporated when procuring or acquiring goods, services, facilities and self-service kiosks except where not practicable to do so. If not practicable to do so, an explanation will be provided upon request.

#### **Status Update - Accessible Procurement**

Elections Ontario has created a Procurement Policy for Goods and Services and developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) process. When Elections Ontario procures or acquires goods, services, facilities and self-service kiosks it follows the Request for Proposal (RFP) process. In the RFP, there is a particular section asking proponents to "describe any accessibility features and options available for their goods or services as Elections Ontario is committed to breaking down barriers that prevent or limit persons with disabilities from participating in a variety of activities in Ontario." It also requires that a document describing the proponents Customer Service training policy, including a summary of the training contents and details of training dates and attendees, be submitted to Elections Ontario.

If the procurement of goods and services has specific accessibility elements that we are asking for, the accessibility component becomes part of the scoring criteria for evaluation of the submission.

## Customer Service Standard

---

The Customer Service Standard applies to all organizations, both public and private, that provide goods or services either directly to the public or to other organizations in Ontario (third parties) and that have one or more employees in Ontario.

Policies, practices and procedures must be in place and staff training provided which we spoke to earlier on in the document under “General Requirements.” They should take into consideration the following requirements as per the Customer Service Standard:

- Assistive Devices;
- Service Animals and Support Persons; and
- Notice of Service Disruption.

### **Assistive Devices**

People with disabilities may need to use their own assistive devices in order to access an organization’s goods and services. The “deliverable” and “status update” for assistive devices are provided below:

#### **Deliverable**

Develop a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access an organization’s goods and services and any other measures offered.

#### **Status Update - Assistive Devices**

Elections Ontario has a Customer Service Policy with a section on assistive devices which states that “customers with disabilities may use their own assistive devices to obtain goods or services.” It also states that if Elections Ontario provides any sort of assistive device, staff should know how to operate that device if a person requires assistance.

During an election period, Elections Ontario offers assistive voting equipment at particular polling stations and staff are trained on how to operate the device if a voter requires any assistance.

### **Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Support Persons**

People with disabilities may need to be accompanied by their guide dog, service animal or a support person. The “deliverable” and “status update” for guide dogs and service animals, and support persons are provided below:

#### **Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

Guide dogs and service animals assist a person with a disability in their daily lives. Whether they are providing physical or emotional support, they help the individual to access goods and services and are allowed anywhere the public is allowed. The “deliverable” and “status update” for guide dogs and service animals are provided below.

## **Deliverable**

In accordance with the Customer Service Standard, organizations must allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises you own or operate that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law.

## **Status Update - Guide Dogs and Service Animals**

Elections Ontario has specific policies and procedures stating that we allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal to obtain goods or services.

If staff cannot identify whether the animal is a guide dog or service animal, they can ask the person to provide proof in the means of documentation from a doctor or a nurse.

The service animal must be under the care and control of the individual at all times. We also provide training to all head office staff, Returning Officers and polling staff on proper guide dog and service animal etiquette.

If a service animal is excluded by law, Elections Ontario will ensure that there are measures in place so that those same services that the service animal provided are being provided by an Elections Ontario staff person or some other means.

## **Support Persons**

A support person can be used by a person with a disability in order to help them with communication, mobility, personal care of medical needs or to help access goods or services. If a fee is being charged, the support person must know ahead of time so that they are prepared in advance. The “deliverable” and “status update” for support persons are provided below:

## **Deliverable**

Organizations must permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.

Where admission fees are charged, organizations must provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.

## **Status Update - Support Persons**

People with disabilities who use a support person are permitted to bring that person with them to access any goods or services that Elections Ontario provides. Admission fees are never charged for anyone nor would we charge a fee for a support person.

During an election period, a support person is permitted to assist an individual while voting and can mark a ballot providing they have taken the oath or affirmation that he or she will keep secret the name of the candidate for whom the ballot was marked.

## Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions

In order to use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, people with disabilities normally use particular facilities or services. If there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services, it is important that the individual is informed so that they can make plans accordingly. The "deliverable" and "status update" for providing notice of temporary service disruption are provided below:

### Deliverable

Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use your goods or services are temporarily disrupted. The notice must include the following three items:

- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration of the disruption; and
- Alternative facilities or services.

### Status Update - Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions

In accordance with Elections Ontario's Accessible Customer Service Policy, we continue to provide notice of service disruption to the public which includes information about what service is being disrupted, the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services. The notice is posted as soon as possible, in a visible place or on Elections Ontario's website, or any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

During the voting process at polling stations, we are legislated under the *Elections Act*, and the Customer Service Standard, to provide notice of service disruption. Notice is given in advance and remediation where possible is provided.

## Information and Communications Standard

---

People with disabilities need to access information and communications about the goods, services or facilities offered to clients or customers in an accessible manner. Under the Information and Communications Standard the following sections apply:

- Accessible feedback process;
- Accessible formats and communication supports;
- Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information; and
- Accessible websites and web content.

### Accessible Feedback Process

In order for persons with disabilities to be able to provide feedback on the services they are receiving, they must have a means to be able to do so and it must be in a manner that is accessible. The “deliverable” and “status update” to provide an accessible feedback process are provided below:

#### Deliverable

Every provider of goods and services shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services. Organizations must ensure the processes are accessible to person with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

#### Status Update - Accessible Feedback Process

Elections Ontario continues to identify barriers that exist for persons with disabilities and takes the necessary steps to address them. Through public opinion surveying and feedback provided by our stakeholders, we continue to gather information pertaining to barriers that exists for persons with disabilities.

Elections Ontario has a number of ways individuals can provide feedback:

- In writing;
- Call toll free number or by using TTY;
- By fax;
- In person;
- By completing feedback form available on each website page;
- By completing general website feedback form;
- By completing formal complaint form on the “Contact Us” page of EO’s website;
- By submitting feedback by email to [info@elections.on.ca](mailto:info@elections.on.ca); and
- Various channels throughout website.

During voting periods, feedback is received at the poll and staff immediately analyzes the options available to find a solution to remove the identified barrier. At the end of an election or by-election, a report is filed by all Returning Officers for each Electoral

District entitled “Returning Officer’s Report on Accessibility for Electors with Disabilities.” The report provides the following information:

- Accessibility training provided to staff;
- Accessible formats provided;
- Special ballot voting options offered;
- Persons with disabilities employed;
- Assistive voting technology devices used;
- Site accessibility standards followed to ensure site accessible;
- Remediation required for ramps, bevelled thresholds, mats, parking cones, signage or information assistant;
- Notice of service disruptions; and
- Other remediation provided.

The Chief Electoral Officer gathers all of the information from the Returning Officers and submits an annual status report. The report summarizes the measures and recommendations to address barriers to accessibility and other accessibility issues. It also reports on the accessible customer service feedback received on services for persons with disabilities and the resolutions provided. Feedback helps Elections Ontario to continue to remove barriers and improve accessibility.

Prior to a general election, all voting locations (more than 7,000) are listed on Elections Ontario’s website six months prior to election-day, and the public is asked for their feedback on whether the voting locations present any accessibility barriers. Remediation is provided where possible or new sites are selected to ensure accessible voting is provided.

## **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

In order for people with disabilities to access sources of information and communications, it is important to ensure that they are created and available in accessible formats. The “deliverable” and “status update” to provide accessible formats and communication supports are provided below:

### **Deliverable**

Organizations must create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. They must also notify the public that accessible formats and communication supports are available upon request.

### **Status Update - Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Elections Ontario continues to ensure that staff are able to provide accessible formats and communication supports to the public when requested. Accessible formats and communication supports are provided by Elections Ontario upon request, in a timely manner and at a cost no more than the regular cost to the general public.

When an individual requests an accessible format or communication support, Elections Ontario consults with the person to determine their accessibility needs and the suitability

of information being provided. If it is not feasible to convert the information or communications that is being requested, then an explanation is provided as to why it cannot be converted along with summary of the content.

On our website, under Reports and Publications, we have a statement “We can provide reports in accessible formats upon request.” The documents themselves are created to be accessible, but should someone wish to have it in another alternative format, we work with an individual to see if we can provide it in a manner that works for them.

When creating documents that are being posted to our website, we ensure that the document has been created to be accessible and that they pass the built-in accessibility checkers in Word (for Word documents) and Adobe (if being converted to a PDF).

## **Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information**

A person with a disability may want to know and understand an organization’s emergency procedures, plans or public safety information prior to attending or arriving at a particular location. It would be important for people with disabilities to have that information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports. The “deliverable” and “status update” to provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and the action taken by Elections Ontario are provided below:

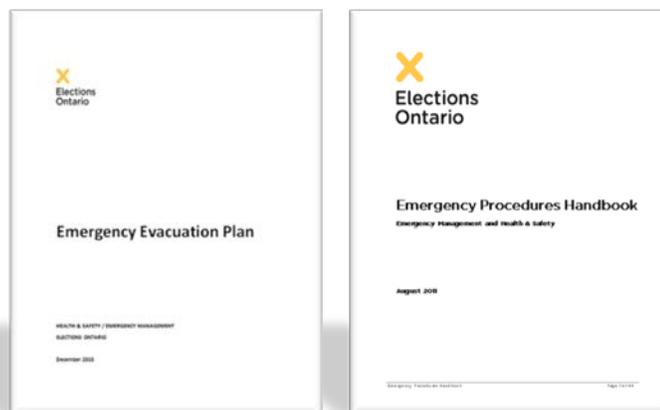
### **Deliverable**

If an organization prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, it must be available in accessible formats or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, and upon request.

### **Status Update - Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information**

Elections Ontario has a number of emergency safety procedures and plans including:

- Emergency Evacuation Plan;
- Emergency Procedures Handbook;
- Emergency Management Policy; and
- Continuity of Operations Plan.



These documents have been created as internal processes for staff and are not made available to the public. Should a visitor or the public visit our head office facilities and request emergency safety information, we would provide relevant information in a format that would work for the individual. Similar processes are created during an election for field operations, returning offices and voting locations.

## Accessible Websites and Web Content

Websites are often an easy and convenient way for persons with disabilities to access a company's goods or services without having to physically go to an office. Individuals can use their own assistive software and devices to manoeuvre through a website provided it has been designed to be accessible. When a website is properly designed, in a logical and understandable order, it helps everyone, not just people with disabilities. The "deliverable" and "status update" to provide accessible websites and web content and the action taken by Elections Ontario are provided below:

### Deliverable

Legislative Assembly organizations must ensure that their internet and intranet conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA as set out as per the following schedule.

By January 1, 2012, **new internet** and **new intranet websites**, and **web content** on those sites must conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live) and 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

By January 1, 2016, **all internet websites** and **web content** on those sites must conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live) and 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

By January 1, 2020, **all intranet websites** must conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live) and 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded).

### Status Update - Accessible Website and Web Content

We continue to work on improving the accessibility of our website. Regular checks are performed to ensure compliance to WCAG, 2.0, Level AA. We follow the four guiding principles of WCAG to ensure the website continues to have the elements referred to as **POUR**:

1. **P**erceivable: can perceive website (can input information into brain and process it);
2. **O**perable: can operate without a mouse (keyboard only);
3. **U**nderstandable: language and functionality are understandable (same look and feel throughout); and
4. **R**obust: works with other interfaces and browsers (screen readers and assistive devices as well as web browsers like Chrome, Internet Explorer, Firefox and Safari).

We are also determining how to ensure all documents on the website are accessible including reports, brochures and other information created as Word documents, PDFs and any other formats. Any newly created document will also have to be accessible.

## Employment Standard

---

The Employment Standard requires employers to provide for accessibility across all stages of the employment life cycle for employees with disabilities. By proactively removing barriers, employers can help to create workplaces that are accessible and that allow employees to reach their full potential. The Employment Standard applies to paid employees and covers the following seven areas:

- Recruitment, assessment and selection;
- Accessible formats and communication supports for employees;
- Workplace emergency response information;
- Documented individual accommodation plans;
- Return to work process;
- Performance management; and
- Career development, advancement and redeployment.

### Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

Notification must be provided that accommodations are available upon request during all three stages of employment including recruitment, assessment and selection. The “deliverable” and “status update” for recruitment, assessment and selection are provided below:

#### Deliverable

Every employer shall notify its internal and external job applicants that accommodations will be provided upon request to support employee’s participation in all aspects of the recruitment and assessment process.

New and existing employees are informed of the organization’s policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. Once a person is hired and/or a current employee discloses that they require accommodations, an Individual Accommodation Plan process begins.

Employers shall provide updated information to its 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 a disability.

#### Status Update - Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

Elections Ontario continues to follow its Accessible Employment Standard procedures and processes. Newly selected individuals and existing employees are informed of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. The policies promote Elections Ontario’s commitment to support and accommodate our employees throughout the lifecycle of their employment.

All Elections Ontario job postings include the following statement: “We are an equal opportunity employer. If you require a disability related accommodation to participate in

the recruitment process, please contact us. We will accommodate your needs under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.”

Accommodations are also provided during the assessment process if needed. Once an individual is selected, should they wish to disclose that they have a disability and require accommodations, the Individual Accommodation Plan process is followed.

## **Documented Individual Accommodation Plan**

Employers will develop a written individual accommodation plan for employees with disabilities so that employers will have a clear and consistent approach for accommodating people with disabilities. Below are the “deliverable” and “status update” for the Individual Accommodation Plan process:

### **Deliverable**

Employers shall develop and have in place a written process for the development of a documented individual accommodation plan (IAP) for employees with disabilities. The process for the development of an IAP shall include the following 12 elements:

- An employee requesting accommodations participates in development of the IAP;
- Assessment on an individual basis;
- Identification of accommodations to be provided;
- Timelines for the provision of accommodations;
- Request for an evaluation by outside medical or other expert, at organizations’ expense, to assist with determining accommodation and how to achieve accommodation;
- Employee may request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where represented, or otherwise a representative from the workplace where employee is not represented by a bargaining agent;
- Steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee’s personal information;
- Frequency with which the IAP will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done;
- If denied, the reasons for denial are to be provided to the employee;
- A format that takes into account the employee’s disability needs;
- If requested, any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports provided; and
- Identification of any other accommodation that is to be provided.

### **Status Update - Individual Accommodation Plan**

Elections Ontario remains committed to ensuring that people with disabilities can be accommodated on the job and throughout the employment cycle. If an employee discloses that they have a disability or an employer recognizes the need for accommodations, the Employment Accommodation Procedures are followed and implemented by Human Resources. An Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP) is completed with participation from both the employee and a HR staff person. Human Resources completes an Individual Accommodation Response Plan to finalize the appropriate accommodation required for the individual and then, if approved,

accommodations are provided. The support and accommodations are provided throughout the life-cycle of their employment.

All information gathered is held in confidence and becomes part of the formal process to document the accommodation needs of employees with disabilities.

Accessible Employment Standards Procedures

Appendix B: Individual Accommodation Plan continued

DOCUMENT 2:  
INDIVIDUAL ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION FORM  
FOR EMPLOYEES WITH DISABILITIES

To be completed by employee

The purpose of this form is to assist us in managing your accommodation needs, including any return to work needs. Your input will help us to provide you with an accommodation plan suited to your needs. The information collected is confidential and will only be shared with your consent. You **do not** have to provide details of your disability, only the type of accommodation and/or support you may need.

Please complete this form and return to your Human Resources Officer.

**Employee Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Division \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Please detail the type of accommodation you are requesting: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Expected duration of accommodation: \_\_\_\_\_

What essential job functions are limited for the duration of your accommodation? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The IAP is reviewed to ensure adjustments, if any, to the plans are made as changes occur such as:

- Employee changes his or her job;
- Need for accommodations change; and/or
- Elections Ontario’s policies and practices change.

Should the accommodation be denied, the reasons for denial are provided to the employee. Steps are taken to protect the privacy of the employee’s personal information. The Individual Accommodation Plan is reviewed and updated regularly and follow-up provided to ensure accommodation needs are continually being met.

## Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

In order for people with disabilities to perform their jobs effectively they must be provided with the accessible formats and communication supports they require. The “deliverable” and “status update” for providing accessible formats and communication supports to employees are provided below:

### Deliverable

Consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is needed in order to perform the employee’s job and information that is generally available to employees in the

workplace. The employer shall consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

### **Status Update - Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees**

Elections Ontario continues to provide accessible formats and/or communication supports and arranges for the provision of information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job which is generally available to employees in the workplace.

When an employee makes a request for an accessible format and/or communication support, which they require to perform their job, Elections Ontario consults with the individual to determine the suitability of their request, and then provides it.

### **Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Employers must be informed and aware of the needs that an employee with a disability may have during an emergency situation. This will help employees with disabilities and the employers they work for to prepare for a range of potential emergencies. The "deliverable" and the "status update" are provided below:

#### **Deliverable**

Every employer must provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have disabilities, under the following conditions:

- When the employee's disability is such that the information is necessary; and
- The employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance, with the employee's consent, the employer shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the employer to provide assistance to the employee.

Employers shall provide information required under this section as soon as practicable after the employer becomes aware of the need for accommodation.

The individualized workplace emergency response information shall be reviewed when an employee moves to a different location, their overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when an employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

### **Status Update - Workplace Emergency Response Information**

Elections Ontario continues to ensure that when an employee discloses that they require workplace accommodations during an emergency, they are provided with the necessary assistance needed. The individual is asked to complete a "Workplace Emergency Form for Employees with Disabilities." Elections Ontario then completes a "Workplace Emergency Response Plan" form and implements the process.

The Employer reviews the individualized workplace emergency response information when:

- The employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- The employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and
- The employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

This process helps Elections Ontario to assist and support employees with disabilities, and the employers that they work for, to prepare for a range of potential emergencies such as fire, power outages, severe weather, natural disasters and security incidents.

## **Return to Work Process**

The Return to Work Process ensures that employers have in place a documented process for supporting employees who return to work after being away for reasons related to their disabilities. The "deliverable" and "status update" for the return to work process are provided below:

### **Deliverable**

Develop a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability related accommodations in order to return to work. The process shall be documented, outline the steps the employer will take to facilitate the return to work, and will use the individual accommodation plan as part of the process.

### **Status Update - Return to Work Process**

Elections Ontario continues to follow their return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability. A "Return to Work Assessment" form is provided to an employee with a disability who is absent from work for two weeks or longer. Any work modification, including information about the duration of the modification is discussed with the employee's manager. An Individual Accommodation Response Plan is created and followed.

## **Performance Management**

It is important to take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when assessing performance management. The "deliverable" and "status update" for performance management are provided below:

### **Deliverable**

An employer that uses performance management for its employees shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when using its performance management process in respect of employees with disabilities.

### **Status Update - Performance Management**

Elections Ontario continues to take into account the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities when conducting performance management processes. Performance

management includes activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness with the goal of facilitating employee success. Performance reviews are conducted annually for full time staff and every 3, 6 and 12 months for probationary staff.

## **Career Development and Advancement**

When providing career development and advancement opportunities, employers are required to take into account what accommodations employees with disabilities may need to succeed elsewhere in their organization or to take on new responsibilities in their current position. Below are the “deliverable” and “status update” for career development and advancement:

### **Deliverable**

Employers that provide career development and advancement opportunities will take into account the accessibility needs of their employees as well as any individual accommodation plans, when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities. This can include:

- Providing additional responsibilities within an employee’s current position;
- The movement of an employee from one job to another that may be higher in pay;
- Provide greater responsibility or be at a higher level in an organization; and
- Any combination of them.

### **Status Update - Career Development and Advancement**

Elections Ontario continues to take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as an employee’s individual accommodation plan, when providing career development and advancement. We provide accommodations to employees with disabilities so that every employee can be successful in their career development and advancement when acquiring new positions or new responsibilities in their current position.

## **Redeployment**

By considering the accessibility needs of individuals with disabilities when redeploying employees, employers may help individuals continue to contribute effectively. The “deliverable” and “status update” for redeployment are provided below:

### **Deliverable**

Redeployment means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization. An employer that uses redeployment shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when redeploying employees with disabilities.

### **Status Update - Redeployment**

Elections Ontario considers the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when moving individuals to other positions. Information is gathered from the Individual

Accessibility Plan (IAP) and the Individual Accommodation Response Plan (IARP) so that we ensure appropriate accommodations and communication supports are still being provided at the new position.

## Design of Public Spaces Standard

---

### Accessible Public Spaces

Accessible public spaces include specific features that make it easier for everyone to use public spaces including people with disabilities, seniors and families. The requirements under the Design of Public Spaces apply to new construction and the redevelopment of elements in public spaces. The “deliverable” and “status update” to provide accessible design of public spaces are provided below:

#### Deliverable

When designing newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces, specific accessibility criteria must be incorporated for the following:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible parking;
- Obtaining services; and
- Maintenance.

There are 44 sections under the Design of Public Spaces Standard with specific measurements and requirements. Sections 80.1 to 80.44 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* are the guidelines for the Design of Public Spaces, which Elections Ontario would use if and when it creates new spaces or is undertaking a major renovation.

#### Status Update - Accessible Public Spaces

In 2016 Elections Ontario did not design any new spaces or provide major renovations to any of our existing buildings. In the future, should we design new public spaces or renovate existing public spaces, we will follow the Design of Public Spaces Standard.

We ensure that we provide accessible voting locations during an election or by-election. Elections Ontario has created its own accessibility criteria to assist Returning Officers in evaluating and selecting the approximately 7,000 voting locations required across the province. The voting location criteria that Elections Ontario has developed, in many instances, exceeds the specific measurements and requirements listed under *Ontario Building Code* (OBC) and Public Spaces Standard. Our criteria incorporates the OBC, Public Spaces Standard and the London Facility Accessibility Design Standards (FADS).

There were two by-elections in 2016: Whitby–Oshawa and Scarborough–Rouge River. For both of these by-elections all of the buildings were audited for accessibility and followed Elections Ontario’s accessibility criteria to ensure an accessible voting experience.

## Other Accessibility Initiatives

---

In addition to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), Elections Ontario also follows:

- *Elections Act*;
- *Election Finances Act*;
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Act*; and
- *Ontario's Human Rights Code*.

It is important to ensure that we follow all legislation when creating accessible voting for the 8.75 million voters in Ontario at the approximately 7,000 voting locations, which are staffed by 80,000 employees.

The following accessibility initiatives are in addition to the legislative requirements of the AODA. By-elections are called as necessary and Elections Ontario is always prepared to execute an accessible by-election when this happens. Since the by-election voting is on a smaller scale, it presents an opportunity to test new technology and develop and implement new processes.

### Accessible Voting By-Elections

For the Whitby–Oshawa and Scarborough–Rouge River by-elections, we were successful in providing an accessible voting experience and implementing a technology-enabled staffing pilot project during these elections. We went from a paper-based poll process to an automated-ready process through the integration of technology:

- Staff were able to verify voter information and/or register individuals electronically to vote which made the process much quicker for the voter.
- An electronic vote tabulator system was used, which was faster and more accurate to replace the manual counting process.
- All staff were trained on and certified to deliver services in an accessible manner.
- Assistive devices were available for electors with disabilities, either proactively or on request, including assistive devices such as magnifiers, easy grip pens and ballot templates with Braille numbering and cut outs.
- Electors were permitted to bring a friend or support person to assist with marking their ballot.
- For electors who required an ASL Interpreter to accompany them to vote, Elections Ontario covered the costs.
- Vote by mail options, vote by home or hospital visit options were also provided
- All voting locations met Election Ontario's site accessibility standards. Some alterations were required such as ramps, bevelled thresholds, mats, parking cones or signage.
- Information Assistants were employed to ensure that locations were accessible to all electors.
- A number of voters cast their ballots during home visits and special ballot officers provided them with assistance such as reading the candidates' names out loud,

assisting some in marking the ballot or providing assistive devices so the elector could more easily mark the ballot independently.

- Other accommodations were provided and available such as moving ballot box to curb, providing documents and or information in accessible formats, reading candidates name to voters and other assistive tools.

### **Online Registration Tool**

An online registration tool is being developed that will enable electors to check, validate, change or add their own information to the list of electors in advance of the election period, saving voters time at the polling station. Accessibility is being incorporated into the design so that it is WCAG, Level AA compliant. The goal is to have this ready for the 2018 General Election. Valuable testing was provided by the community agencies and individuals representing people with disabilities to ensure the on-line tools work with other assistive devices.

### **Election Management System**

A new Election Management System to more efficiently manage all aspects of election administration is currently being designed. Elections Ontario is incorporating accessibility into the design of the system.

## Final Remarks

---

Elections Ontario continues to meet their mission to uphold the integrity and accessibility of the electoral process and to manage elections in an efficient, fair and impartial manner.

We continue to grow and learn as we more fully understand the true meaning of accessibility in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. We have learned extensively from the community agencies and individuals representing people with disabilities. Their participation in the development of our new Multi-Year Accessibility Plan enlightened us as we heard first-hand about the barriers their clients and individuals with disabilities face, regardless of whether they are blind, legally blind or have low vision, deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, have physical, intellectual, mental health and other disabilities. All of the agencies and individuals consulted have offered their expertise and were willing to test our assistive voting technology and new applications, such as e-registration that we are creating.

Developing online accessible tools was initially a challenge, but we have made significant progress and used this as a foundation to design other accessible tools and platforms, which are tested by and actually work for people with disabilities. We look forward to our continued work and invaluable input from this community.

As we proudly complete the final year of this multi-year plan, we look forward to the implementation of the new 2017-2022 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.