

Township of Coleman



**2018 Municipal Election
Accessibility Plan**

Introduction

This plan will address the specific accessibility requirements in relation to the 2018 Municipal Election in the Township of Coleman.

In an effort to ensure that the 2018 Municipal Election is consistent with core principals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, this planning documents was developed in advance of the election in order to identify measures to be taken and reported following the election.

Legal Requirements and Authority

The following excerpts from the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, S.O. 1996, SCHED 32, define the requirements for conducting an election with regard for persons with disabilities:

Number and location of voting places

The Clerk shall establish the number and location of voting places for an election as he or she considers most convenient for the electors. 1996, c. 32, Sched., s.45 (1)

Accessibility

In establishing the locations of voting places, the clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities. 2009, c.33, SCHED.21, s.8 (23).

Plan re: barriers

The Clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan available to the public before voting day in a regular election. 2016, c. 15, s.11.

Report

Within 90 days after voting day in a regular election, the clerk shall prepare a report about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the report available to the public. 2016, c.15, s. 11.

Variations for electors with visual impairments

The clerk shall make such changes to some or all of the ballots as he or she considers necessary or desirable to allow electors with visual impairments to vote without the assistance referred to in paragraph 4 of subsection 52 (1). 1996, c. 32, Sched., s.41 (3); 2001, c. 32, s. 30 (1).

Objectives

This plan is intended to highlight measures that the Township of Coleman will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That all voting locations are accessible;
- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection;
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates;
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate or election official;
- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures via channels such as the Township's website and municipal communications, such as office signage.

Development of the Plan

This Plan is an active document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise.

Voting Location

For the purpose of this plan, the Voting Location includes the exterior parking, walkways and property associated with The Corporation of the Township of Coleman's Complex located at 937907 Marsh Bay Road, Coleman Township. This will be the only Voting Location for the Township of Coleman Municipal Elections.

In order to ensure that this Voting Location is accessible to electors with disabilities, a Voting Location Checklist will be completed prior to Election Day.

Parking

Accessible parking will be available at the Municipal Office to accommodate those electors with disabilities. Routine checks will be made to ensure all entrances remain barrier free through the course of the day.

Entrance/Exit to the Voting Place

The entrance to the voting location at the Municipal Complex is equipped with an accessible ramp. The main door to the facility has an automatic door opening device and is wide enough to accommodate a wheelchair or other mobility devices. Routine checks of the entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the day.

Interior Voting Area

Access to the interior voting area will be level and easily traversed. Any doormats or carpeting will be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. All voting areas are to be well lit and seating will be made available.

Support Persons

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voting area or staff can assist the voter in casting their vote. Voting area staff shall, in conjunction with the person with the disability, determine the extent to which they need assistance and the best way to provide assistance. The Election Official shall require the voter making the request to take an Oral Oath to vote with assistance. In lieu of the

Election Official providing assistance, the voter may request that a Friend accompany and assist them. Any Friend assisting shall be required to take the Oral Oath of Friend of Elector to assist and/or vote as directed by the voter.

Assistive Personal Equipment

Electors with disabilities may use assistive personal devices including wheelchairs, walkers, white canes, walking canes, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

Service Animals

An animal is a Service Animal if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, for example, a guide dog wearing a harness. Service Animals will be permitted in voting places.

Candidates and scrutineers are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the voting place.

Vision Loss

Each voting booth will be equipped with magnifying sheets to assist an individual with low vision.

Hearing Impaired, Deafness and Hearing Loss

Each voting place will be equipped with a note pad and pen to communicate with the hearing impaired if required.

Proxy Voting

An elector with a disability that is homebound or otherwise unable to go to the voting location may appoint another person to act as a voting proxy to cast a ballot on his or her behalf. The appointment must be made on the prescribed form available at the Municipal Office's front desk or online at <http://www.forms.ssb.gov.on.ca/mbs/ssb/forms/ssbforms.nsf/QuickResults?Openform&ENV=WWE&MIN=&BRN=&PRG=&TIT=Proxy&NO=&SRT=T&NEW=&STR=1&MAX=10>. The person being appointed as a proxy will be required to take a statutory declaration before a Commissioner of Oath. The Clerk can administer the oath at the municipal office which is located at 937907 Marsh Bay Road, Coleman Township. Contact the municipal office to ensure the Clerk is available, and an appointment is recommended. Once completed, the voting proxy may be exercised at the advance poll or on voting day. On voting day, the proxy must be exercised at the voting location on behalf of the person who is unable to attend.

Campaign Expenses

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability that are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate, are excluded from the permitted spending limit for the candidate.

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability or a registered third party who is an individual with a disability, are directly related to the disability, and would not have been incurred but for the election to which the expenses relate.

Voting Methods

Traditional Ballot: The Township of Coleman uses traditional ballots which consists of the certified Candidates names for an office (Mayor or Councillor) being listed on a paper ballot, and the voter has the right to mark the names of the individuals he/she would like to have represent the community for the next four year term of council.

Communications

The Township is committed to making the information contained in this document available to the public and intends to do so by the following methods:

1. On the Township of Coleman's Website
2. A hard copy available at the Municipal Office
3. By verbal communications regarding certain aspects of this documents and questions which may arise from it.

Provision of Election Information

Election information will be provided to electors and candidates with disabilities in an alternative format, agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Township's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced. In the event of a temporary accessible service disruption, Election Officials will commit to making reasonable efforts to ensure that services are reinstated as quickly as possible and that alternative services are provided where feasible.

In these instances of service disruptions, the Township will provide reasonable notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the municipal office or to the services usually used by persons with disabilities. Accessible Services in relation to this plan include the voting place (937907 Marsh Bay Road, Coleman Township), election materials and/or voting provisions for electors with disabilities at the voting place.

The Clerk shall provide a public notice on the municipal website and at the Municipal Complex if there is a temporary disruption in the delivery of election information or services. The Notice shall include the reason for the disruption, the expected duration and an explanation of alternative methods of delivering the information or service. Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities. Where applicable, a media advisory will be issued.

Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will complete Accessible Customer Services Training and specific Election Training to comply with the Township's Accessibility Policy Plan and to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Feedback

The Township welcomes feedback to help identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Township can improve the delivery of an accessible election.

Such feedback can be submitted to the municipal office in any one of the following ways:

1. E-mail: toc@ontera.net
2. Fax: 705-679-8300
3. In Person or by Mail: Township of Coleman, 937907 Marsh Bay Road, Coleman Township, Ontario, P0J 1C0
4. Telephone: 705-679-8833

The feedback process provides election staff with an opportunity to take corrective measures to prevent similar recurrences, address training needs, enhance service delivery and provide alternative methods of providing election information and services.