



Town of Minto
Municipal Election
Accessibility Plan
2026

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1. Introduction

The 2026 Election Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the Town of Minto's commitment to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

The purpose of this Plan is to ensure that electoral services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and remove barriers, and to enable a positive and independent voting experience.

For the 2026 election, the Town of Minto is using a Vote by Mail system. This method increases accessibility, allowing electors to vote independently from the comfort of their home, reducing mobility, transportation, and scheduling barriers.

The Clerks' Department will continue to improve election services by identifying barriers and making changes to better support electors with disabilities. Barrier identification, review, and removal is an ongoing practice. This Plan will be refined as new opportunities for improvement arise.

1.1 Municipal Elections Act, 1996 – Legislative Requirements

The Clerk is responsible for conducting municipal elections and establishing procedures that ensure all electors have the opportunity to participate fully in the 2026 election.

In accordance with Section 12 of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996, the Clerk may establish procedures, provide assistance, and approve alternative methods to address individual accessibility needs where required.

The Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended, includes the following:

- 12(1) The clerk shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.
- 12(2) The clerk shall prepare a plan regarding the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers affecting electors and candidates with disabilities and shall make the plan public before Voting Day.
- 12(3) Within 90 days after Voting Day, the Clerk shall prepare a public report on the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers.
- 41(3) The clerk shall modify ballots as necessary to allow electors with visual impairments to vote independently.
- 45(2) If voting places are established, they must be accessible to electors with disabilities.

1.2 Town of Minto Customer Service Policy

The Town of Minto is committed to providing accessible services to all residents, consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005. This Plan also reflects relevant requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11), including accessible information and communications and training requirements.

All municipal services—including election services—must respect dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

1.3 Definition of Disability

The definition of “disability” in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 includes:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 defines “disability” as follows:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,*
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,*
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,*
- (d) a mental disorder, or*
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.*

Disabilities may be visible or invisible. In developing this Plan, the Town considered:

- (a) Upholding the principles of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996
- (b) Ensuring integrated and equitable access to electoral services
- (c) Accommodating a wide range of abilities
- (d) Ensuring compliance with the Town's Customer Service Policy

2. Feedback

The Town of Minto welcomes feedback on how to improve accessibility during the 2026 municipal election. This Plan is a living document and will evolve based on public input.

Feedback can be submitted:

Email: quinn@town.minto.on.ca

Phone: 519-338-2511 ext. 246

Fax: 519-338-2005

Mail: Town of Minto

Attn: Quinn Gorecki

5941 Highway 89

Harriston, ON N0G 1Z0

Alternate formats are available upon request. Feedback may be provided with the help of a support person or by an alternate method upon request.

Personal information collected through accessibility feedback will be used only to improve election accessibility and will be handled in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

3. Communications and Information

Ensuring that election information is accessible and available in various formats is essential for supporting an inclusive Vote by Mail process.

Initiatives & Actions

(1) Accessible 2026 Election Webpage

- a. Provide information in clear, simple language.
- b. Update content continuously as new information becomes available.
- c. Include detailed Vote by Mail instructions and accessibility resources.
- d. Meet or exceed WCAG 2.1 Level AA accessibility standards where practicable.

(2) Election Information in Multiple Formats

- a. Produce a *How to Vote by Mail* booklet (print & online).
- b. Provide a *How to Complete Your Vote by Mail Kit* instructional video.
- c. Issue a town-wide mail-out outlining key election and accessibility information.

4. Assistance to Candidates

Accommodations may include, but are not limited to, accessible meeting spaces, assistive listening devices, interpretation services, or alternate formats, depending on individual needs.

(1) Provide Accessibility Resources

- a. Supply links to provincial publications such as:
 - i. *Accessible Campaign Information and Communication*
 - ii. *Accessible All-Candidates Meetings*

(2) Provide Accessible Formats

- a. Make candidate guides available in accessible formats.
- b. Provide the voters' list electronically at no cost.

(3) Ensure Candidate Information Sessions Are Accessible

- a. Hold Candidate Information Sessions in accessible locations.
- b. Make accommodations and special services available upon request.

5. Voting Places

While the 2026 election will be conducted primarily by Vote by Mail, the Town may provide limited in-person assistance or ballot drop-off options.

Initiatives & Actions

- (1) Use an accessibility checklist to confirm:
 - a. barrier-free paths
 - b. accessible parking
 - c. accessible doors
 - d. adequate lighting
- (2) Make accessibility modifications where possible.
- (3) Conduct re-inspections before any location opens.
- (4) Perform final accessibility checks while locations are in operation.

6. Voting Provisions for Electors with Disabilities

A Vote by Mail system increases accessibility and independence. Additional supports include:

Initiatives & Actions

(1) Support Persons & Service Animals

- a. Support persons and service animals are welcome at all election-related locations.

(2) Assistance Upon Request

- a. Election staff will assist electors with completing Vote by Mail kits when requested.

Accommodations will be provided based on individual needs.

6.1 Institutional & Retirement Home Voting

Vote by Mail kits will be delivered directly to residents in:

- (1) institutions with 20+ occupied beds
- (2) retirement homes with 50+ residents

Bedside assistance will be provided where required.

6.2 Accessible Ballot Design

- (1) Use clear fonts, high contrast, and accessible layouts.

6.3 Accessibility Supplies

- (1) Magnifiers available upon request.
- (2) Notepads and pens available for communication support.
- (3) Large-font plain-language instruction materials available.

6.4 Drop Box Accessibility

Drop boxes are an important part of the 2026 Vote by Mail system, allowing electors to return their ballots securely and independently. Ensuring these drop boxes are fully accessible is essential to supporting equal participation.

Initiatives & Actions

(1) Ensure Accessible Drop Box Locations

- a. Select locations with:
 - i. barrier-free travel routes
 - ii. level, stable ground surfaces
 - iii. adequate lighting
 - iv. accessible parking
- b. Where possible, choose drop box locations with:
 - i. automatic or accessible entry
 - ii. weather-protected access

(2) Provide Multiple Accessible Drop Box Options

- a. Maintain 24/7 exterior accessible drop boxes at designated municipal sites.
- b. Provide at least one interior drop box during office hours.

(3) Ensure Accessible Drop Box Design

- a. Use drop boxes that feature:
 - i. accessible height
 - ii. wide, easy-use slots
 - iii. tactile and high-contrast labels

- iv. clear signage using plain language and symbols
- b. Keep areas around drop boxes free of snow, ice, or obstructions.

(4) Communicate Accessibility Features

- a. Publish detailed drop box accessibility information online.
- b. Include drop box information in instructional booklets and mail-outs.
- c. Provide signage noting accessibility features and assistance contacts.

Provide Additional Supports

- (1) Curbside assistance will be provided by election staff upon request and in accordance with procedures established by the Clerk.
- (2) Arrange alternative ballot return options for electors unable to access a drop box.

7. Accessibility Training for Election Officials

Initiatives & Actions

(1) Accessible Customer Service Training

- a. Train all election staff on AODA, serving persons with disabilities, and Vote by Mail assistance.
- b. Require staff to confirm completion of training.
- c. Training completion will be tracked by the Clerks' Department to ensure all election officials are prepared to provide accessible service.

(2) Provide Reference Materials

- a. Include AODA and customer service guidance in all training materials.
- b. Provide each staff member with the Town's Customer Service Policy.
- c. Provide staff accommodations during training as needed.

8. Post-Election Report

As required under Section 12.1(2) of the Municipal Elections Act, 1996:

Within 90 days after Voting Day, the Clerk will submit a public report to Council describing the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers that affected electors and candidates during the 2026 Vote by Mail election.

The report may include accessibility-related feedback received from electors, candidates, and staff, as well as recommendations for future elections.

The report will be posted on the Town's website and shared with disability groups and stakeholders upon request.