

2026 MUNICIPAL ELECTION ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The Township of Adjala-Tosorontio (“Township”) is committed to the promotion of an accessible municipality in compliance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and meeting the accessibility needs of persons with a disability in a timely manner.

The 2026 Election Accessibility Plan (the “Plan”) supports and strengthens the Township’s commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities by ensuring that electors in the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio who have a disability are provided with the best opportunity to vote as independently as possible in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election.

The *Municipal Elections Act, 1996* (“MEA”), places responsibility on the Clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities. Legislative requirements under the *MEA* include:

- Section 12.1 (1) places responsibility on the Clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities;
- Section 12.1 (2) requires the Clerk to 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;
- Section 12.2 (3) requires that 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;
- Section 41 (3) states 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); and
- Section 45 (2) states in establishing the locations of voting places, the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

Additionally, the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio abides by the following principles when conducting the Township's Election:

- Secrecy and confidentiality of individual votes;
- Fair and non-biased;
- Accessible;
- Integrity of the process;
- Certainty of results; and
- Voters and candidates treated fairly and consistently.

The 2026 Election Accessibility Plan will be in used in conjunction with the Township's Accessibility Standards Policy, Accessible Customer Service Best Practices and Procedures, and the 2024-2028 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

2. DEFINITIONS

Assistive Device means a technical aid, communication device, or medical aid that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities.

Barrier means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, or a policy or practice.

Clerk means the individual appointed as the Clerk of the Corporation of the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio, and his/her designate.

Council means the Council for The Corporation of The Township of Adjala-Tosorontio.

Disability means (as defined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*):

- (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*.

Election means the process of a public vote to select a person(s) for municipal or school board office.

Election Official means the Clerk or other person appointed in writing by the Clerk to carry out election duties under the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Elector means a person who is entitled to be an elector at an election held in the local municipality, if on voting day they meet the qualifications outlined in the *Municipal Elections Act, 1996*.

Service Animal means:

- (a) An animal, for the purpose of this policy, is a service animal for a person with a disability;
- (b) Means it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability, or
- (c) Means the person provides identification or documentation from a recognized authority.

Support Person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

Township means The Corporation of The Township of Adjala-Tosorontio.

Voter Help Centre means a location designated by the Clerk for the purpose of assisting electors and for providing assistance and clarification on the election process including access to a telephone and internet.

Voting Day means the final day on which the vote is to be taken.

Voting Period means the period in which an elector may cast their vote, either via internet or telephone.

3. VOTING METHOD

In accordance with Section 42 of the *MEA* on June 11, 2025, the Council of the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio enacted By-law 2025-040, authorizing the use of alternative voting methods, being Internet and Telephone Voting for the 2026 Municipal Election. Alternative methods of voting allow electors the convenience and independence of voting anywhere that has a phone or internet connection from a device they would already own that meets their specific needs.

During the 2026 Municipal Election the Township will be offering three (3) methods of Voting:

- Vote by Internet
- Vote By Telephone
- Vote by In-Person Electronic Method at a Voter Help Centre

3.1. Vote by Internet

Internet Voting will be available continuously during the Voting Period and on Voting Day. Electors may vote online, using a variety of device types such as smartphones, tablets and computers.

3.2. Vote by Telephone

Telephone Voting will be available continuously during the Voting Period and on Voting Day. Electors may vote using a touch-tone telephone.

3.3. Vote by In-Person Electronic Method at a Voter Help Centre

The Township will be providing In-Person Electronic Voting for electors without means to access voting via telephone or internet, or who require the assistance of a trained Election Official at a Voter Help Centre.

4. VOTER HELP CENTER(S)

Designated Voter Help Centre(s) shall be accessible to electors with accessible parking spaces clearly marked, barrier free entrances that allow those with a mobile assistive device to enter freely, and ability to clearly navigate to the entrance point from the parking area.

In designating a Voter Help Centre the Clerk shall have regard for:

- Entrances and corridors that are wide enough and easily travelled with a wheelchair or other assistive device;
- A small seating area available for electors to rest, if needed;
- Use or availability of large print materials;
- Ensuring the Voter Help Centre is clearly marked, well-lit and visible;
- Voting booths that are low and wide enough to enable wheelchair or other assistive device access; and
- Availability of curbside voting.

4.1. ASSISTANCE TO ELECTORS

Election Officials, at the Voter Help Centre, are available upon request to assist any elector who requires assistance in casting their vote online. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed as such and are administered and oath of secrecy prior to the Voting Period.

The use of Service Animals and a Support Person will be accepted at all Voter Help Centre(s).

5. ELECTION OFFICIAL TRAINING

Election Officials participating in election duties shall be trained to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs. Election Officials will be required to complete the Township's general Accessible Customer Service Training. Training content will include:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- How to use voting equipment to deliver election services; and
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services.

Pursuant to provincial accessibility standards requirements, a record of all Election Official training shall be maintained.

6. ASSISTANCE TO CANDIDATES

All Candidates will be provided with a copy of the Candidate's Guide to Accessible Elections produced by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in partnership with the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO).

A Physical copy of the Voter's List shall be available to Candidates with disabilities, upon request.

6.1. Campaign Expenses

Expenses that are incurred by a candidate with a disability, or a registered third party who is an individual 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.

7. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY SERVICE DISRUPTION

In the event of a temporary service disruption, the Clerk shall provide public notice on the Township's website, social media and at the physical site of the disruption, if applicable. The notice shall include information on the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration and a description of the alternative methods of delivering the service, if available. Every effort will be made to ensure services are reinstated as quickly as possible.

8. REPORTING

In accordance with Section 12.2 (3) of the *MEA*, within 90 days of Voting Day, the Clerk shall prepare a report to Council about the identification, removal and prevention of barriers that affect electors and candidates with disabilities. The report will be made available to the public through publication on a Council Meeting agenda and on the Township's website.

9. REVIEW, AMENDMENTS AND FEEDBACK

The Plan is intended to support the Township, the Clerk and Election Officials in responding to the needs of persons with disabilities throughout the election and will address the specific requirements pertaining to accessibility in relation to the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election in the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio.

The Plan is a "living" document which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities arise. The Clerk, who is responsible for conducting the election, shall act on any accessible matter which may arise during the election as deemed necessary.

To assist the Township of Adjala-Tosorontio in ensuring that the delivery of goods and services to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner, individuals are invited to provide their feedback in writing, by e-mail, in person or by telephone to:

Robin Reid, Clerk
Township of Adjala-Tosorontio
7855 Sideroad 30
Alliston, Ontario L9R 1V1
Phone: 705-434-5055 Ext. 263
E-mail: clerk@adjtos.ca

10. AUTHORITY OF THE CLERK

The Clerk has the authority to amend all election plans, policies and procedures as required.