



The Corporation of the
Town of Arnprior

**2018 Municipal Election
Accessibility Plan**

Introduction

The Clerk is responsible for the proper legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal and school board elections in the Town of Arnprior. In accordance with the Municipal Elections Act, The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, the Clerk is authorized to establish procedures and provide appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to participate fully in the municipal election.

The Election Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the Town of Arnprior's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities. The focus of this Plan is to ensure that election services are accessible to all electors and candidates, to identify and eliminate barriers for persons with disabilities and to create a positive voting experience.

The Clerk's Office continues to learn, develop and adjust our approaches to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The review of accessibility issues and initiatives and addressing barriers is an ongoing practice. This plan will be updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

Municipal Elections Act, 1996, as amended – Legislative Requirements

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

12.1(1) A clerk who is responsible for conducting an election shall have regard to the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities.

12.1(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. 2016, c. 15, s. 11.

12.1(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. 2016, c. 15 S. 11.

45(2) In establishing locations of voting places, the Clerk shall ensure that each voting place is accessible to electors with disabilities.

Definition of a Disability

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 in 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
- (d) 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 can take many forms, both visible and invisible.

Customer Service Policy

The Clerk's Department is committed to making our services accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. We comply with customer service and information communications standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

The Clerks Department will, at all times, provide its services in a way that respects the independence of people with disabilities and gives people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services in the same place, and in a similar manner as others

Communications and Information

The following initiatives and actions will be carried out for the Election as it relates to communication and information:

- Provide and informative and accessible election website at:
<https://arnprior.ca/town/arnpriorvotes>
- Election information shall always be provided in an accessible font and format; alternate formats may be available at the request of any individual (citizen, candidate, elections staff etc.)
- Requests for additional equipment for elections staff and members of the public who have a special need will be addressed as soon as reasonably possible, after the request is made.
- The Voter's List shall be available in both electronic and paper formats upon the Candidates request
- Candidate Information Session provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the EVoting Service Provider will be held at an accessible location; further accommodations will be provided upon request.
- Establish a process for notification of disruptions to service. Notices of service disruptions shall be posted on the Town's website, Social Media Accounts (twitter, Facebook and Arnprior App) as well as at the site of the disruption.

Voter Help Centre

The following initiatives and actions will be carried out for the 2018 Election, as it relates to the Voter Help Centre:

- Ensure the voter help centre is accessible to electors with disabilities by conducting a walk through ahead of the election, ensuring the voter help centre has:
 - Barrier free path of travel from parking lot/sidewalk
 - Barrier free parking
 - Door operators or accessible doors
 - Adequate lighting
 - Accessible Washrooms
- Election staff will perform final accessibility checks between October 12th and October 22nd to verify the accessibility of the voter help centre.

Service Animals

Individuals accompanied by a service animal are permitted at the Voter Help Centre.

Support Person

Electors with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person within the voter help centre. In addition, an Election Official at the voter help centre can assist the voter if required.

Overview of the Election Process

Election officials who are responsible for conducting an election must have regard for the needs of electors and candidates with disabilities. Municipal and school board elections must provide the public with equal access and equal opportunity in casting a ballot. By offering electronic voting, election officials are providing accessibility to persons with disabilities in the community.

The Town of Arnprior 2018 Municipal and School Board Elections is utilizing the alternative method of electronic voting. The provider for evoting services is Intelivote Systems Inc, who provided an integrated electronic service for both Internet and Telephone users.

Using the Intelivote system, persons with disabilities are given the ability to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons who have mobility restrictions and/or have a difficult time with transportation due to physical disabilities, whereas these barriers would otherwise be difficult or cumbersome in traditional elections that provide a single method of paper ballot voting.

Remote voting from any location and from more than one eVoting channel (telephone or internet) benefits persons with disabilities in a multitude of ways. It gives persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in an election as other voters; where they could vote without any assistance.

If assistance is required, eligible electors can attend the Voter Help Centre where election staff was able to assist in the voting process.

Electronic voting also accommodates the senior population in our community. Election staff will travel to the Grove Nursing Home, the Arnprior Villa, and Island View Suites, Baskin Drive Seniors as well as other apartment buildings where seniors are known to reside, to assist in the voting process in order to maintain the high participation rates found in the 65 years+ age range. Election staff will arrange to have Voter Instruction Letters belonging to electors residing in the Grove Nursing Home, the Arnprior Villa, and Island View Suites to be mailed directly to the election officials for handling. When election staff visits the facility with a kiosk wireless Internet-enabled tablet, seniors will be able to use the tablet to cast their ballot or they can choose to use the telephone to complete their voting.

Internet Voting

The Intelivote system was created ensuring it met the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) requirements guaranteeing that persons with disabilities and people with changing abilities due to aging can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web. Web Accessibility encompasses all disabilities that affect access to the Web to allow individuals to more actively participate in society – including the ability to vote independently in elections. The standards set in the WAI respect visual, auditory, physical, speech, cognitive, and neurological disabilities, with the goal of providing equal access and equal opportunity. Web Accessibility also addresses ‘temporary disabilities’ that people may experience due to an illness or health circumstance.

Intelivote has taken measures and has been proactive in accommodating persons with disabilities facilitating their comfort with the availability of eVoting services.

Intelivote’s online solution is compliant with the guidelines as listed by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) technologies website principles which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information (audio). Additionally, the Intelivote system has full compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

In performing regular internal auditing against WCAG-2 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) Intelivote ensures the application is addressing the needs of disabled participants at all times. The Voter Module is coded with XHTML transitional document type and conforms to all W3C web standards. The Module also supports and is compatible with other accessible technologies such as screen reader software.

Telephone Voting:

Communication barriers can make it difficult for persons with disabilities to receive or convey information. Telephone barriers may come in the form of low volume, the use of language that is not clear or plain, and confusing or unorganized menus and menu options.

Intelivote's telephone voting service included the following:

- The telephone eVoting service is offered on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices including cell phones and smartphones.
- Clear natural language will be used.
- Menu options are clear and easy to follow, advising when to select options and providing confirmations of selections made.
- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustments dependent on the telephone or device.
- Users will be given a generous amount of time to complete ballot activity and prompts were repeated when no action is detected.

Persons who suffer from a vision loss or vision disability including total blindness and legal blindness have the ability to use the telephone eVoting service to cast a ballot in an election. Telephone voting has allowed many individuals the opportunity to cast a ballot remotely with little to no assistance required. The application is also capable of integrating with TTY (Teletypewriter) service for users who are deaf, deafened, hard of hearing, or who are deaf blind and do not have access to a computer.

Feedback

The Clerk's Department welcomes feedback to identify areas where changes need to be considered and ways in which the Town can improve the delivery of an accessible election. This plan will continue to undergo changes as we progress.

Please provide feedback and how best we can provide an accessible election to:

Maureen Spratt, Clerk
Town of Arnprior
105 Elgin Street West,
Arnprior, ON K7S 0A8
Tel. 613-623-4231 ext. 1817
mspratt@arnprior.ca

Kaila Zamojski, Deputy Clerk
Town of Arnprior
105 Elgin Street West
Arnprior, ON K7S 0A8
tel. 613-623-4231 ext. 1818
kzamojski@arnprior.ca