

Guidelines for Running an Accessible Campaign

Introduction

Making your campaign and office accessible will provide the opportunity for all voters to obtain information, engage in the electoral process and exercise their right to vote without experiencing barriers.

Included in this guideline are tips, ideas and resources for running an accessible campaign and to assist you in reaching an inclusive audience throughout the campaign.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are some of the different types of disabilities?

Disabilities may take on many forms and can include, but are not limited to:

- physical disabilities,
- deaf or a hearing impairment,
- deaf-blind,
- blind or have vision loss,
- Cognitive disabilities,
- Speech disabilities, and/or
- Mental illness.

2. Why do measures need to be taken to reach out to persons with disabilities?

Measures need to be taken to communicate to persons with disabilities because not everyone is able to access information that is widely used. This could mean the elector with the disability may not be able to read a newspaper article either in print or on the internet; the elector may not be able to visually see the TV ad or media advertising; the elector may not be able to hear the radio commercial; or the elector may not be able to understand the information as presented. Communicating in multiple formats and arranging for accessible alternative formats of information will help you reach an inclusive audience.

3. What are examples of the barriers that may exist for persons with disabilities and the Election?

There are many opportunities for improving the involvement of persons with disabilities and informing these individuals about candidates and election organizers. Accessibility is an ongoing consideration throughout each stage of the electoral process. Examples of barriers that may exist include:

- **Attitudinal barriers** such as stigmas and false assumptions regarding people with disabilities.
- **Information/communication barriers** such as when information is offered in a form that is not accessible to some, but not all, or the population.
- **Technology barriers** such as when technology, or the way it used, cannot be accessed by people with disabilities.

- **Physical/architectural barriers** such as obstacles that make it difficult for some to easily access a place.
- **Organizational barriers** such as policies, practices or procedures result in unequal access or being excluded.

4. What are some accessibility considerations for campaign meeting, event and office locations?

When selecting accessible campaign, event, meeting or office locations, consider the following elements to ensure all visitors can participate:

- Candidates can visit group homes, assisted-living homes, retirement homes, nursing homes and hospitals to inform the electors of their intentions while running for office.
- Look for locations with:
 - accessible parking,
 - barrier-free sidewalks and paths of travel,
 - easy access to different transportation methods,
 - meeting rooms on the same level and within a minimal distance of the main entryway,
 - door frames, hallways and corridors are wide enough so that a wheelchair can easily pass through them,
 - accessible washroom facilities,
 - elevators and ramps with handrails are available if there are different levels at the location,
 - automatic door openers,
 - a quiet meeting environment can also be helpful,
 - accessible furniture or seating areas, and
 - portable microphones where there are multiple speakers or public participation.

5. What are some ways to communicate with voters in different methods and make information accessible?

- Candidates can utilize the services of a sign language interpreter and/or a deaf-blind intervenor when appropriate.
- Written information, both on the internet and in hard copy, can be improved through the use of large print; colourful visuals; clear speech communication; and rephrasing when necessary.
- Use alternate forms of communication can be used such as braille, large print, captioning of pre-recorded or live video, electronic text, audio format, descriptive video service (DVS), and sign language video format.
- Campaign advertisements can be provided in various formats using accessible methods such as captioning for TV ads. You can also include a statement in print or radio ads that information is available in alternative accessible formats, upon request.
- Create an accessible website that is inclusively designed.
- Consider budgeting for accessibility during your financial planning so that these measures can be planned for throughout the campaign process.
- *insert link to resource for how to communicate person to person

6. Are candidates running for Ward Councillor required to ensure persons with disabilities within their ward vote?

No, it is not a requirement that candidates ensure any person, with a disability or not, within their ward vote. However, it is in the candidate's best interest to reach out to all electors and include them in the electoral process and inform them of the various assistive devices and voting methods, such as vote by email, advance voting, and proxy voting.

7. What accessibility resources are available to assist candidates in reaching out to persons with disabilities?

Candidates can utilize the following resources for assistance to reach out to those with disabilities and include them in the electoral process:

- *Spinal Cord Injury Ontario* (formerly Canadian Paraplegic Association Ontario) – London Office
111 Elias Street, Unit 3
London ON N5W 5L1
Phone: 519-433-2331
Fax: 519-433-3987
- *CNIB* – London Office
749 Baseline Road
London ON N6C 2R6
Phone: 519-685-8420
- *Canadian Hearing Society* – London Office
181 Wellington Street
London ON N6B 2K9
TTY: 1-888-697-3613
Phone: 519-667-3325
Fax: 519-667-9668
Email: info@chs.ca
- *Ontario March of Dimes* – London Office
920 Commissioners Road East
London ON N5Z 3J1
Phone: 519-642-3999
Toll-free: 1-866-496-8603
Fax: 519-642-7665
- *Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario* – London-Middlesex Branch
648 Huron Street
London ON N5Y 4J8
Phone: 519-434-9191
Fax: 519-438-1167
Email: Aleena@london.cmha.ca
- *Accessibility Directorate of Ontario*
College Park
6th Floor, Suite 601A & Suite 601B
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J4
General Inquiry: 416-849-8276
TTY: 416-326-0148
Toll Free: 866-515-2025

TTY Toll Free: 800-335-6611

Web Site: www.ontario.ca/accesson

Resource publications from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario:

- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation Quick Reference Guide to Accessible Campaign Information and Communication](#)
- [Count Us In: Removing Barriers to Political Participation Quick Reference Guide to Accessible All Candidates Meetings](#)