

Accessibility Info Sheet for Political Parties and Candidates

To promote accessibility in every aspect of the electoral process, Elections Canada has developed this info sheet to guide political parties and candidates in making their campaigns more accessible to Canadians of all abilities.

Why does accessibility matter?



According to Statistics Canada, nearly 6.2 million adult Canadians reported having a disability – that's close to 1 in 5 Canadians.



Voting is a right, guaranteed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Canadians with disabilities share this right equally.



Accessibility benefits everyone – using plain language, providing information in accessible formats and ensuring the physical accessibility of public meeting sites will help you reach more Canadians.

What kinds of barriers do people face?

Physical

when the features of buildings or spaces cause problems:

- stairs or high doorway thresholds
- doorknobs that are difficult to grasp; doors with no automatic openers
- parking spaces or hallways that are too narrow



Informational

when a person cannot easily read or understand the information:

- print that is too small to read or not clear
- websites that are not compatible with screen magnification or screen reader technology
- information that is too complex and not in plain language



Attitudinal

between people, when communicating, such as:

- thinking that people with disabilities are inferior and always need assistance
- assuming that a person with a disability is automatically unable to do a job or make decisions for themselves, including voting
- thinking that people with a similar disability have the same needs
- not recognizing that people with invisible disabilities might still face barriers



What can parties and candidates do to make their campaigns more accessible?

Making your campaign accessible means removing barriers to the electoral process. When these barriers are removed, Canadians can participate in the electoral process regardless of their abilities. With appropriate planning, you can make your information and events accessible to more Canadians at low or no additional cost. Also, certain expenses to accommodate persons with disabilities are eligible for reimbursement under the *Canada Elections Act*.

Plan accessible events and meetings

Know your participants to plan effectively and economically

Invite participants early, and ask them to identify their specific accommodation needs when they register.

Select an accessible facility located near public transit

Visit the site to see if the meeting space and the facility in general are accessible (automatic doors, obstacle-free pathways and doorways, elevators, tactile signage such as braille, accessible restrooms near the meeting area, close to bus routes, parking, etc.).

Designate volunteers to assist participants at the meeting

Train your staff and volunteers in accessibility standards. Ask–Listen–Do is an effective way of providing accessibility support. Ask the person if they need accommodation or assistance; Listen carefully to the person’s request; Do as required and follow up on their request.

Provide accessible services and information

Hand out information in accessible formats or electronically ahead of time, have sign language interpreters, use open or real-time captioning, etc.

Make your presentations accessible

Use microphones, a projection screen (presentation or captioning), amplification system, etc. Speak at a moderate pace, pause before new ideas to see if the message is understood and clarify as needed. When showing an image or graphic, describe it.

Get advice from experts who know about the available resources that suit your audience’s needs

National organizations representing disability groups can help you locate service organizations in your area (e.g. CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society). Engage people with disabilities in this process when possible. Party members with disabilities may be able to help.

Find resources on accessible events and meetings

- [Guide to Planning Inclusive Meetings: canada.ca](http://canada.ca)
- [Barrier-Free Design Standard and Accessible Design for the Built Environment: tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca](http://tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca)
- [Accessibility training modules – AccessForward: accessforward.ca](http://accessforward.ca)
- [Microsoft video – Inclusive Presentation Skills](#)
- [Elections Canada’s Accessibility Policy and Service Offering for People with Disabilities: elections.ca](http://elections.ca)

Provide accessible information

- Have accessible formats available** to make the information readable regardless of one's ability to see.
E.g.: large font size (between 12–18 pts), braille, audio files, electronic text.

- Use clear design and layout**
E.g.: left alignment, sans serif fonts, high contrast colours in font and background, avoid all caps, pictures relevant to the text.

- Use various communication channels** to complement verbal communications.
E.g.: sign language interpretation, open or real-time captioning, descriptive videos, amplification system for assistive listening device, etc.

- Use plain language** so that information is easy to read and understand.
E.g.: short words and sentences, one idea per sentence, avoid jargon or acronyms. Start with general information before getting into details.

- Make sure your website meets accessible standards**
E.g.: screen reader and screen magnifier compatible, including assistive devices technologies, easy-to-find contact section, clear and simple layout, etc.

- Be accessible on social media**
E.g.: alternative text for images, captions or script for videos, links to additional information or resources.

Find resources on accessible information

- [CNIB Clear Print Guides](http://cnib.ca): cnib.ca
- [Queen's University – Alternate formats](http://queensu.ca): queensu.ca
- [Canadian Hearing Society – Accessibility Services](http://chs.ca): chs.ca
- [Translation Bureau – Plain language guidelines](http://btb.termiumplus.gc.ca): btb.termiumplus.gc.ca
- [Canadian Association of the Deaf – List of other organizations \(local, provincial, national and international\)](http://cad.ca): cad.ca
- [Clear Language and Design – Tips & Tools on Reading Level](http://clad.tccltd.org): clad.tccltd.org
- [American Printing House for the Blind – Guidelines for Print Document Design](http://aph.org): aph.org
- [Microsoft Office – Videos on Accessible Content](http://support.office.com): support.office.com
- [World Wide Web Consortium's \(W3C\) Accessibility Standards](http://w3.org): w3.org
 - [The must-have WCAG 2.0 checklist](http://learn.essentialaccessibility.com): learn.essentialaccessibility.com

Social Media Accessibility Features:

- I. [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)
 - II. [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com)
 - III. [Twitter](https://www.twitter.com)
 - IV. [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com)
 - V. [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com)
- [Accessibility of Communications – Additional Resources](http://otc-cta.gc.ca): otc-cta.gc.ca