Municipality of Dysart et al

2026 Municipal and School Board Election Accessibility Plan

VERSION 1

May 1, 2026

This document is available in alternate formats, upon request.

Table of Contents

Introduction **3**
Objectives **3**
Development of the Plan **4**
Staff Training **4**
Voting Methods **4**
Telephone Voting 5
Internet Voting 5
In-person Electronic Voting at Help and Revision Centre 6
Voter Help and Revision Centre 6
Voting Day Date and Voting Assistance Location 7
Voting Location(s) 7
Signage and Access to Voting Place 7
Entrance and Exit (including Fire Exits) 7
Parking Area and Lighting 7
Accessible Washrooms 7
Voting Assistance 8
Support Person/Friend of the Voter 8
Service Animals 8
Election Officials 8
Communication **8**
Election Materials 8
Alternate Formats 8
General Election Materials 9
Service Disruptions 9
Candidates **10**
Election Feedback **10**
Reporting **10**
Additional Information **10**
Appendix "A": Voting Place Audit Report **11**

Introduction

The Municipality of Dysart et al is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service for its customers and is dedicated to ensure that all voters have a clear, unrestrained opportunity to vote. The Election Accessibility Plan supports and strengthens the Municipality's commitment and efforts to respond to the needs of persons with disabilities.

The Municipal Clerk is responsible for the appropriate legislative and administrative conduct of the municipal election in the Municipality of Dysart et al.

The *Municipal Elections Act*, *(MEA),* Section 12.1 (1) places responsibility on the Clerk to have regard to the needs of the electors and candidates with disabilities. Accessible Customer Service Standards must be followed when conducting a municipal election.

Section 12.1 (2) of the MEA requires that 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.

The municipal election will be conducted in a manner that shall ensure Candidates and electors with disabilities have full and equal access to all election information and services, including the Voting Place and Revision and Help Centre. The election shall be conducted in a manner that ensures persons with disabilities are able to vote independently and privately with access to voting assistance if required.

The focus of this Plan is to ensure that electoral services are accessible to all electors and candidates to identify and eliminate barrier for persons with disabilities.

This Plan will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

Objectives

This Plan is intended to highlight measures the Municipality of Dysart et al will be implementing to ensure equal opportunity for all electors and candidates. These objectives include:

- That persons with disabilities are able to independently cast their vote and verify their selection.
- That persons with disabilities have full and equal access to all information on where and when to vote and on eligible candidates.
- That persons with disabilities can fully participate in the Municipal Election as an elector, candidate, or election official.

- That efforts are made to ensure that electors with disabilities are aware of the accessibility measures available via channels such as the newspaper, media launches, the Municipality's website and social media.
- That the Voting Place and all Help and Revisions Centre is accessible.
- This plan will be improved and updated as new opportunities are identified or become available.

Development of the Plan

This Plan is a "living document" which will be improved and updated as best practices are identified and new opportunities for improvement arise. In order to develop this Plan, several steps were taken to ensure that the statutory requirements were met and a feasible implementation plan was in place. During the development of the 2026 Municipal Election Accessibility Plan, the following steps were taken:

- Review and analysis of documents, policies and other supporting materials from Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), neighboring municipalities, and the Municipality of Dysart's eVoting supplier for the 2026 election (VOATZ).
- Review, update and establishment of staff training standards and practices directly related to the 2026 Municipal election to ensure that people with disabilities can vote in a positive customer service environment, and ensure that all Election Officials recognize that a voter's needs shall be accommodated.

Staff Training

All staff carrying out election duties will have AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) Accessible Customer Services Training and specific Election Training to comply with this Plan to recognize and ensure that persons with disabilities are served in a way that accommodates their individual needs.

Training will include:

- How to interact/communicate with persons with various types of disability;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, require the assistance of a support person or a service animal;
- How to clearly explain internet and telephone voting;
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing election information or services;
- How to provide voter assistance if requested.

Voting Methods

In 2026, the Municipality will be working with Voatz to provide eVoting services to eligible voters. This includes the convenience and independence of voting from anywhere via telephone or internet during the Voting Period from Friday, October 16, 2026 commencing at 8:30 a.m. to Monday, October 26, 2026 until 8:00 p.m.

Everyday tools such as computers, telephones and other aids can present accessible opportunities for persons with disabilities to accomplish more, while being consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

The Voatz System provides voters with the capability to vote from the comfort of their own home. Voting from home facilitates the voting process for persons with disabilities who may have mobility restrictions, visual impairment, and/or have a difficult time with transportation. Additionally, persons who have assistive devices set up in their homes can use them to assist with casting a ballot privately and independently.

By allowing persons with disabilities to vote from any location and from a selection of methods, there is a potential increase in the capability for the individual to vote without any assistance. This provides persons with disabilities the same independence and privacy in participating in the election as other voters.

Telephone Voting

Eligible voters may vote using a touch-tone telephone, using the toll-free telephone number, their date of birth, and PIN number contained in their Voter Information Letter to access an audio ballot. Communication barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. Barriers may be identified as low volume, use of language that is not clear or plain, and confusing or unorganized menu options.

The Voatz telephone voting application provides the following:

- Service on all types of touch tone phones and wireless devices;
- Clear, plain language;
- Menu options that are easy to follow, advising when to select options and provision of confirmation of the voter's selections; and
- Standard volume is used to allow for adjustment dependent of the telephone or device being utilized.

Internet Voting

Eligible voters may vote online, using a smart phone, tablet device (i.e. iOS and Android) or computer and any accompanying assistive devices or software, using their date of birth, PIN and qualifying information to access the internet address as provided in their Voter Instruction Letter.

The Voatz System is fully compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG-2 Level AA), which meet requirements of the AODA, and ensure persons with disabilities can perceive, understand, navigate and interact with the online voting

system. It is compliant with the guidelines of the World Wide Web Consortium website principles, which include organization, functionality and readability of information provided, as well as alternative ways of representing information, such as with audio.

In-person Electronic Voting at Help and Revision Centre

Individuals without means to access voting via telephone or internet, or who require assistance to vote, can attend the Voter Help and Revision Centre located at the Municipal Office at 135 Maple Avenue in Haliburton, Ontario from Friday, October 16, 2026 to Friday, October 23, 2026 during normal business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm) and on Voting Day (Monday, October 24, 2026) from 8:30 am to 8:00 pm. Individuals will be able to access a computer or iPad to cast their vote and Trained Election Officials will be onsite to provide assistance if required.

Access to the Voter Help and Revision Centre entrance and voting area shall be level and slip resistant. Any doormats or carpeting shall be level with the floor to prevent potential tripping hazards. The voting area shall be well lit and seating shall be available. Entrance corridors shall be clear of obstructions and tripping hazards and will allow sufficient space for use of a wheelchair or scooter.

An accessible voting area will be available at the voting location. These areas shall be low in height and have a wide area to allow for individuals who use a wheelchair or scooter to vote independently and secretively.

Magnifying glasses will be available to help people with low vision to read materials.

For those who are physically unable to go inside the Voter Help and Revision Centre, please bring a friend or support person to come inside the Municipal Office to request assistance on your behalf, or call in advance to make an appointment. An Election Official will meet you outside to provide assistance with your election needs including voter list corrections, the completion of election forms or the issuance, or replacement, of your Voter Information Letter. During the advance vote period (October 16th-26th), a tablet can be brought out to your vehicle from the Help and Revision Centre to allow you to cast your vote.

Voter Help and Revision Centre

Voters may attend any Voter Help and Revision Centre to make additions, deletions and corrections to the Preliminary List of Electors/Voters List during the following hours and locations:

- Municipal Administration Office, Monday to Friday during normal business hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. from September 1, 2026 to October 23, 2026**;** and
- Voting Day, Monday October 26, 2026, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Voting Day Date and Voting Assistance Location

For individuals that do not have access to a telephone or device to cast their vote electronically there will be a computer and iPads set up at the Municipal Office for use on Voting Day from 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM. Internet access will also be available at the Municipal Office.

Voting Assistance Location(s)

An accessibility assessment of the Help and Revision Centre will be conducted using a Site Audit Report, attached as Appendix “A” to this Plan. The following considerations are taken into account when determining which location(s) will be used.

Signage and Access to Voting Place

The name and/or address of the voting location shall be clearly visible. An easily navigable route will be marked for entry into the voting location and into the voting area within the location.

The voting area shall be identified with clear and understandable signage. Seating areas shall be provided throughout the voting location for individuals needing a rest.

Entrance and Exit (including Fire Exits)

The route to the entrance and fire exits of the voting location shall be unobstructed and accessible. The route shall be wide enough to allow for an individual using a wheelchair, scooter, other assistive device, or service animal to travel safely.

Doors into the voting location and voting area shall be accessible and easy to open or shall remain propped open for the duration of the voting location hours. Routine checks of entrance and exit routes will be made throughout the hours of operation.

Parking Area and Lighting

Accessible parking shall be available at Voting Place. The designated parking space(s) shall be clearly marked with the international Symbol of Accessibility and will be on firm and level ground, adequate lighting and close to the entrance of the voting location. An appointed Constable/By-law Enforcement Officer will monitor and enforce parking at voting locations throughout the day.

Accessible Washrooms

Accessible washrooms shall be available at the Voting Place on Advance Vote days and Voting Day.

Voting Assistance

Support Person/Friend of the Voter

Pursuant to the Municipality of Dysart et al Integrated Accessibility Policy, people with disabilities shall be permitted to be accompanied by a support person at the Voting Place and Help and Revision Centre.

A designated support person and/or friend of the voter will be administered an oath of secrecy/confidentiality by an Election Official prior to providing any such assistance.

Service Animals

Pursuant to the Municipality of Dysart et al Integrated Accessibility Policy, individuals requiring service animals are permitted to be accompanied by a service animal at the Voting Place and Help and Revision Centre.

Election Officials

At the Voting Place, upon request, Election Officials are available to assist any voter who requires assistance in casting their online ballot. All individuals working in the capacity of an Election Official are formally appointed as such and administered an oath of secrecy prior to voting day.

Communication

The 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Accessibility Plan will be posted on the Municipality's website at https://www.dysartetal.ca/election. The Plan and election information will be made available upon request to electors and candidates with disabilities in alternative formats as agreed upon between the requester and the Clerk.

Information regarding accessibility for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election shall be included on the Municipality's website, in general election advertising and as well as in the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election Nomination Package.

Election Materials

The Municipality is required, as per the Accessible Customer Service Standard, to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Alternate Formats

Alternate formats are other ways of publishing information besides regular print. Some of these formats can be used by everyone while others are designed to address the specific needs of a user.

The Clerk and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information recognizing that the preparation of an alternate format may result in time delays in providing the requested information.

In the event the information is not generated by the Municipality of Dysart et al or is supplied by a third party, the Municipality will make every effort to obtain the information from the third party in an alternate format.

General Election Materials

Large Print
Printed material generated by the Clerk will be provided in Arial font, minimum 12-point, and can be made available in a font (print) size that is 16 to 20 points or larger.

Website
Information generated by the Municipality on the website in relation to the election can be adjusted within the browser's functionality to aid the user in reading the information. Any promotional and educational videos created for the 2026 Municipal and School Board Election shall incorporate audio and captioning.

Service Disruptions

From time to time and/or for unforeseen circumstances beyond the Municipality's control, temporary service disruptions may be experienced.

Pursuant to the Notice of Temporary Service Disruptions section of the Municipality's Integrated Accessibility Policy, in the event of a planned temporary service disruption, a notice of disruption will be provided and shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice of planned, temporary service disruptions will be posted in a conspicuous place at the physical location of the service disruption, on the Municipality of Dysart et al website at https://www.dysartetal.ca, may be provided to the local radio stations in the form of a public service announcement and/or may be printed in the local news media when feasible.

In the event of unplanned service disruption that affect the accessibility of Voter Help and Revision Centre during the voting period or on Voting Day, notices of disruption will be posted in real time on the Municipality's website, social media accounts and, if possible, be provided to the local radio stations in the form of a public service announcement.

Every effort shall be made to provide alternative methods of providing the information or service to persons with disabilities.

Candidates

Candidates must also have regard to the needs of electors with disabilities. Campaign offices, election materials and canvassing should all be reviewed to ensure that they are fully accessible.

Election Feedback

As outlined in the Municipality of Dysart et al Integrated Accessibility Policy, should a member of the public wish to provide feedback regarding Election accessibility they can do so by contacting the Elections Coordinator by the following methods:

- In person to Amanda Duncombe-Lee, Elections Coordinator/Returning Officer, or designate; or
- By telephone: (705) 457-1740 extension 631; or
- By Fax: (705) 457-1964; or
- By mail at 135 Maple Avenue, P.O. Box 389, Haliburton, ON, K0M 1S0; or
- By email: aduncombe-lee@dysartetal.ca

Reporting

In accordance with section 12.1(3) of the *Municipal Elections Act*, 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.

Additional Information

Further information relating to the election can be found on the Municipality's website at https://www.dysartetal.ca/election.

The Clerk's Department Staff are available throughout the Election to assist with any issues that may arise with respect to providing a barrier-free election.

Appendix “A”: Voting Place Audit Report

Section 1: Facility Information

Facility name:

Facility address:

Date of audit:

Section 2: Facility Exterior

Parking lot details:

Parking lot surface materials:

Number of parking lot spaces:

Total number of accessible parking spaces:

External lighting:

Section 3: Accessibility Checklist

(Indicate yes or no answer to each question providing any additional comments as required)

Is the name of the facility clearly visible at all entry points?

Are there accessible pathways leading to all entrances of the facility?

Are the entrance(s) to the facility free of potential barriers? (Such as garbage cans, signs etc.)

Are the routes to the facility entrance(s) clear, continuous with a smooth hard surface?

Are the routes wide enough for individuals using a wheelchair, walker, scooter, or service animal to travel safely?

Are the accessible parking spaces clearly marked with signage displaying the international symbol of accessibility?

Are there ramps to access the building?

Is there enough space to accommodate an individual who uses a vehicle with a wheelchair lift?

Is there an automatic door opener at every entrance to the facility?

Are the automatic doors in good working order?

Are the doorways wide enough for an individual in a wheelchair or scooter to pass through? (Minimum is 36 inches)

Are there accessible public washrooms?