



**Edmonton  
Elections**

# **Accessibility and Inclusion Plan**

**2025**

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## **How to contact us**

You can request a copy of Edmonton Election's 2025 Accessibility and Inclusion Plan, make an accessibility request or provide feedback on our services.

### **Request a print copy of the Accessibility Plan**

#### **Mail**

Edmonton Elections  
16304 114 Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5M 3R8

#### **Email**

[elections@edmonton.ca](mailto:elections@edmonton.ca)

#### **Phone**

780-442-VOTE (8683)

### **Accommodation requests**

Edmonton Election's Accessibility and Inclusion Plan addresses a number of barriers faced by electors. To request a specific accessibility support:

- Email: [accessibleelections@edmonton.ca](mailto:accessibleelections@edmonton.ca)
- Phone: 780-442-VOTE (8683)
- In person or by mail: 16304 114 Avenue, Edmonton, AB, T5M 3R8

Edmonton Elections will make best efforts to coordinate the service you are requesting based upon the availability of services/service providers. To help us in finding the best possible accessibility service, please submit your request at least 10 business days prior to the voting opportunity you plan to attend.

### **Provide feedback following the 2025 Edmonton Election**

Following the 2025 Edmonton Election, a post-election survey will be made available to voters and non-voters that will provide respondents with the opportunity to share their experiences. The survey will contain questions specific to accessibility experiences.

# Introduction

## Accessibility and Inclusion at Edmonton Elections

The Accessibility and Inclusion Plan outlines Edmonton Elections' approach to identifying and removing barriers to participation, so all eligible Edmontonians can participate in the 2025 Edmonton Election.

## Guiding Principles

Edmonton Elections is a nonpartisan entity responsible for administering Edmonton's municipal and school board trustee elections in accordance with provincial legislation. We adhere to the principles:

- **Accessible:** All Edmontonians are able to access the services, supports and information they need to trust and participate in civic processes
- **Inclusive:** All Edmontonians are able to participate in civic processes
- **Equitable:** Barriers to services, supports and information will be removed, enabling all Edmontonians to see themselves represented in the outcome of civic processes
- **Ethical:** Edmonton Elections will maintain the highest standard of ethics at all times, and ethics will be a primary focus for all decisions and activities
- **Safe:** All participants will be able to safely engage with civic processes

## Overview of 2025 Election

### **Input/Emerging Needs**

[\*What We Heard in 2024\*](#), builds off [\*Understanding Voter Needs \(2017\)\*](#)

The accessibility work from previous election projects and the Understanding Voter Needs (UVN) report act as our foundation and a number of key actions have been retained from 2021. To build upon this foundation, we conducted a Voter Engagement Initiative in 2024 to learn more about the barriers voters encounter and how we can consider addressing those barriers.

### *Lessons learned from 2021*

The 2021 Voter Accessibility Strategy focused on removing physical barriers to voting, supporting voters with disabilities through use of assistive technology (for example, hearing loops and elector assistance terminals) and safety. Edmonton Elections is committed to maintaining or enhancing actions from the 2021 Voter Accessibility Strategy as well as identifying new actions for 2025.

### **Legislative context**

The [\*Local Authorities Election Act\*](#) (LAEA) enables certain accessibility measures, such as the use of special ballots, blind voter templates and institutional voting. These form key components of the accessibility and inclusion plan.

### *Special ballots*

Legislative changes since the 2021 Election make it so that electors no longer need to provide a reason for requesting a special ballot package and anyone who is unable to vote during advance voting or on Election Day may apply for the special ballot package. Voting by special ballot is a great option for electors to vote in their own time and space.

Electors can apply for a special ballot online starting August 1. There are also options for electors to apply by phone, email, mail or in-person. Electors can choose to receive their special ballots package by mail or pick it up at the Edmonton Elections Office. When picking up, the elector may choose to complete their package at the Elections Office. Electors can return their package by mail (paid postage envelope is provided within Canada) or drop it off at the Elections Office.

### *Institutional Voting*

Under the LAEA, Institutional Voting can occur at Seniors Accommodation Facilities and hospitals/treatment centres. In addition, Edmonton Elections has historically provided advance voting opportunities at post-secondary institutions. In 2025, we will explore expanding voting opportunities at shelters. Correctional facilities will continue to receive information to support electors within those facilities to vote by special ballot.

### *Elector Assistance Terminals and Blind Elector Template*

Elector Assistance Terminals (EATs) will be available to electors at advance voting stations and select location(s) on Election Day, in accordance with section 84.1 of LAEA and Election Bylaw. EATs are devices designed to allow electors to vote independently using features such as a large touch screen with large font and high contrast options, large tactile buttons for navigation and audio playback of the voting instructions and ballot selections.

In addition, blind elector templates will be available at all voting stations during advance vote and on Election Day in accordance with section 78 of LAEA and Election Bylaw. A blind voter template is a tactile template that fits over a ballot, allowing the elector to feel along the template while an election worker reads the ballot aloud to the elector. This tool allows the elector to mark the ballot themselves.

### *Accepted identification and attestations*

Changes to identification requirements and vouching (section 53 of the LAEA), will impact voting processes and Edmonton Elections Institutional Voting Approach. In particular, the vouching process can only be used to verify an elector's residential address and has become more complex.

# Accessibility and Inclusion Actions

## Voter Accessibility

**Action 1:** Establish a dedicated [email address](#) for electors to request accessibility accommodations or more information. All accommodation requests will be reviewed by Edmonton Elections, who will follow up directly with the elector to develop an appropriate action.

**Action 2:** Promote special ballots to populations who may not be able to attend a voting station. An outreach strategy is developed to communicate this option, particularly to populations who identified mail-in voting as an effective mitigation action.

**Action 3:** Host institutional voting opportunities are available at selected Seniors Accommodation Facilities (SAFs), post-secondary schools, hospitals, correctional facilities and shelters.

**Action 4:** Train election workers to effectively deliver inclusive voting processes and practices, including curbside voting in certain circumstances, and use of assistive equipment such as hearing loops.

*Greeters will be trained to ask how they can assist electors entering the voting station, allowing the opportunity for the elector to indicate if any supports are needed.*

*Election workers will be trained in the following processes which are available at all voting stations:*

- *Providing elector assistance with marking a ballot*
- *Providing curbside voting for electors who are unable to enter the voting station*
- *Use of a blind voter template*
- *Expedited voting and/or priority seating*

*Election workers at advance voting stations will also be trained to assist electors using:*

- *Hearing loops*
- *Elector Assistance Terminals*

**Action 5:** Update voting station selection criteria to ensure accessibility for voters and workers.

*Edmonton Elections voting station selection criteria is aligned with the City of Edmonton Accessibility Advisory Committee [checklist for accessibility and universal design](#). The distance from voting stations to the nearest transit public stop has been reduced to a maximum of 400m, from 1km in 2021. When necessary, additional equipment is ordered to improve accessibility of facilities.*

**Action 6:** Set-up voting stations to ensure physical accessibility within the voting station, including clear signage and seating areas for those who need to rest.

*Voting station layout is tested to ensure accessibility for electors. Considerations include allowing enough area for electors to move freely around the voting station, providing seating available at the voting services stations and voting booth and ensuring electors can reach the ballot boxes to deposit their ballots.*

*Signage at the voting station includes:*

- *Wayfinding signage placed outside and inside the voting station*
- *Accessible entrance and parking signs are posted at all voting stations*
- *A "languages spoken" poster is displayed at the entrance to each voting station. The election workers at the station will also indicate on their nametags which languages they can communicate with.*
- *Large print voting instructions are posted in each voting booth, with translated instructions available upon request.*

**Action 7:** Supply accessibility supports at all voting stations, including pencil grips, magnifiers and pads of paper.

*All voting stations are equipped with pencil grips, magnifiers and pads of paper. Electors may bring their own assistive devices to the voting station.*

**Action 8:** Provide hearing loops and Elector Assistance Terminals at all advance voting stations and select locations on Election Day and ensure staff are trained to support their use.

*On Election Day, assistive equipment will also be available at a city wide voting opportunity. Electors will be able to apply for and complete their special ballot package at the Elections Office until 7pm. Election workers will receive training to properly use this equipment directly from the vendors who provide the equipment.*



**Action 9:** Design ballots with accessibility considerations and provide blind voter template at all voting opportunities.

*Edmonton Elections consulted with CNIB in the development of the blind voter template.*

**Action 10:** Provide curbside voting to voters who cannot enter the voting station.

*This process is in alignment with section 72 of the LAEA. Curbside voting can be enabled for electors who cannot enter the voting station due to a protected ground (ie. disability). Election workers can assist an elector at a location outside the building, such as at the elector's vehicle.*

**Action 11:** Incorporate accessibility considerations in the voting processes.

*Specific processes are developed to support accessibility and inclusivity including:*

- *A dedicated voting booth for those who require more time to vote*
- *An expedited voting line to accommodate voters who cannot stand for long periods of time.*
- *Vouching for an elector's address*
- *Elector assistance, including being accompanied by a translator or having another person provide assistance in marking the ballot*
- *Curbside voting for electors who cannot enter the voting station*
- *Use of hearing loops, Elector Assistance Terminals or blind voter template*

**Action 12:** Inform voters of the supports they can bring with them to the voting station, including their own assistive tools or technology, a support person or interpreter, and/or a service animal.

*Electors can be accompanied by a translator or a friend or family member to assist them with marking their ballots, provided the person accompanying them completes a statement in the prescribed form.*

*Electors may also bring their own assistive tools or technology, including smartphones, flashlights or other devices that assist them in voting, provided they do not interfere with maintaining the secrecy of the vote.*

*The [Service Dogs Act](#) prohibits the discrimination of any person with respect to their service dog or from being denied accommodations, services, or facilities available in any place to which the public is customarily admitted. Service dogs with appropriate identification are allowed in all voting stations, in alignment with the City's corporate*

*guidelines for service animals. In the event a service animal cannot be permitted inside a voting station, election workers will administer curbside voting.*

## **Effective communication**

**Action 13:** Consolidate and simplify Edmonton Elections website to ensure Edmontonians can easily access all local election information.

**Action 14:** Employ a diverse mix of communications tactics to support different communications needs and media preferences.

**Action 15:** Ensure all communications related to eligibility, registration requirements and the voting process use accessible language and imagery. communications about eligibility, registration and how to vote.

**Action 16:** Promote accessible voting opportunities and processes to identified underrepresented communities, including special ballot, institutional voting opportunities, curbside voting.

**Action 17:** Use plain language and imagery in all Edmonton Elections web and print materials, and translated materials to languages outreach process.

## **Transportation to the voting station**

**Action 18:** Coordinate with Edmonton Transit Service (ETS) to reduce barriers/enhance service during voting opportunities.

*ETS reviews the locations of advance and regular voting stations and ridership data from the 2021 municipal election, to determine if there is transit service provided to each location. Adjustments may be made for voting days to ensure sufficient or enhanced service provision.*

*Dedicated Accessible Transit Service (DATS) plans sufficient resource flexibility on Election Day and during advance vote to ensure anyone relying on DATS to meet transportation needs.*

**Action 19:** Provide advance voting opportunities in each municipal ward.

*Consideration was given to developing advance voting days and hours that would be accessible and inclusive. Advance voting locations were selected considering accessibility criteria, location to transit and familiarity to voters. Advance voting stations are equipped with hearing loops and Elector Assistance Terminals.*

## **Election worker accessibility**

**Action 20:** Use City inclusive and accessible hiring strategies to ensure election workers reflect the diversity of the community.

*Election worker opportunity communications will use inclusive language and images. Partnering with the City's Talent Acquisition and Diversity team to align with existing strategies. This includes communicating with established community partners and leveraging the City's Employee Resource Networks (ERNs).*

**Action 21:** Ensure election worker training is accessible and inclusive for election workers, and instruction considers language and delivery format.

*Providing both in-person, instructor-led training and virtual training options for certain roles enhances accessibility. Online training may better accommodate individuals with mobility and/or sensory processing needs.*

*A minimum ability profile has been developed for election workers, which has allowed us to set minimum levels of vision, cognition, dexterity, hearing and speech. Training will be developed to not exceed this minimum profile.*

*Election worker training will align with the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB), targeting a minimum proficiency of CLB 6-7, which is deemed necessary for effective performance in election roles. Training content will be specifically developed to ensure it does not surpass this required minimum language proficiency level.*

**Action 22:** Use GBA+ process in reviewing job descriptions to avoid unintentionally excluding potential workers. Work tasks are clearly identified and reasonable accommodations are provided for all workers.

*To attract a diverse applicant pool, job postings undergo multiple reviews to ensure inclusive language. This includes avoiding words that may unintentionally deter certain groups, such as language that tends to appeal more to one demographic than*

*another. Additionally, all listed job requirements are verified to be essential for the role.*

**Action 23:** Election workers are asked to complete a survey at the end of their employment experience to help inform accessibility actions for the next election.

*An election worker survey will be conducted to identify successes and areas for improvement in the recruitment and selection process. Data collected will be included in the final report to guide future recruitment efforts.*

**Action 24:** Evaluate the accessibility of each location where appointments with candidates and members of the public, election worker training and other election work occurs. Where possible, ensure the provision of accessible infrastructure and amenities.

*The recent renovation to the Elections Office included creating gender-neutral and accessible washrooms next to the main lobby.*

*Since 2021, the front door ramp and automatic door have been upgraded.*

## **Candidate accessibility**

**Action 25:** Develop accessible candidate processes and provide candidate guides where appropriate.

*Processes that require the candidate to be physically present, such as the submission of nomination papers, are conducted at accessible locations that are served by a variety of transit options.*

*Supporting resources such as Virtual Information Guides and instructional documents are made available to enable candidates to engage more easily with complex legislated processes. Edmonton Elections staff who specialise in candidate processes and engagement are available to provide further in-person or remote support to candidates.*

**Action 26:** Links to resources developed by other election administrators to support candidates are made available on Edmonton Elections website. These resources are reviewed, but not endorsed, by the Edmonton Elections team.

**Action 27:** Information and guidance from other jurisdictions regarding voter accessibility and accessible voting opportunities, such as special ballots, is made available to candidates.

## **Addressing systemic and historic barriers**

**Action 28:** Use established relationships between the City of Edmonton and local organizations to build connections between Edmonton Elections and underrepresented communities.

*Edmonton Elections is committed to a long-term approach to developing relationships that support removing barriers to participating in elections. This work is detailed in our External Relationship Strategy.*

## **Reporting**

Accessibility and inclusion actions taken during the 2025 Edmonton Election will be included in the final report available on [elections@edmonton.ca](mailto:elections@edmonton.ca)