



Annual Accessibility Status Report

A SUMMARY OF ELGIN COUNTY'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS TOWARDS INCLUSION IN 2015-2016

Objectives and Purpose

This is the County of Elgin's Annual Accessibility Report Status update. In 2013, Elgin County released our first Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11). The plan outlined our strategy to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, which included how we will meet phased-in requirements under the AODA.

In 2015, the County released its second Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, which will take the County's accessibility efforts into 2020.

This Status Report includes the accessibility initiatives that were completed in 2015 and 2016 to implement the strategy outlined in our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

The purpose of this Status Report is to make the public aware of Elgin County's progress with accessibility implementation and to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the AODA.

Compliance Reporting

Elgin County filed its third Accessibility Compliance Report in 2015 with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario under the Ministry of Economic Development Trade and Employment Services.

Elgin County's Commitment Statement

Elgin County's statement of commitment establishes the vision and goals for the County to meet the legislated accessibility requirements. The County's statement of commitment is publicly available on the County website.

The County of Elgin is committed to eliminating barriers and improving accessibility for people with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

The County of Elgin recognizes the diverse needs of all our residents and customers and will respond by striving to provide goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all.

The County of Elgin is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and employees. In order to meet the needs of people with disabilities the County will:

- Ensure policies address dignity, independence, integration and provide for equal opportunity for people with disabilities.
- Allow people with disabilities to use their own personal devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the County.

- Accommodate the accessibility needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can obtain, use or benefit from the County's goods, services, programs and facilities.
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

The County will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Timelines for compliance vary. In order to ensure that timelines are met, the County will establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The plan will outline the County's strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities.

Continuous Achievements in Accessibility

- The County focuses on removing barriers which may exist in our buildings and facilities, while ensuring that new buildings, leases, and renovations do not create any new barriers.
- Elgin County adopted an Accessibility Policy which outlines what the County will do to comply with the Regulations and what our customer and employees can expect.
- Elgin County/Central Elgin Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee continues to meet and review accessibility initiatives.
- The County continues to comply with the requirements of the Customer Service Standards including continuing to train staff, volunteers and third parties who interact on behalf of the County on an ongoing basis.
- The Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee is consulted on matters of accessibility for municipal site plans and legislated areas under the AODA.
- All library branches continue to provide accessible materials and communication supports upon request. In addition the library has several accessible materials and resources available including but not limited to: large print books, audio books, CELA Library loan access , electronic materials with zoom features, hand-held magnifiers as well as ZoomText with large print keyboards in every library branch.
- Notifying the public of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.
- Continue to review customer feedback and take appropriate action.

Highlights of 2015 and 2016

- Training for all staff on the Integrated Accessibility Standard and updated Corporate Accessibility Policy (2014)
 - Ongoing training for new staff
- Training for all staff on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities (2014)
 - Ongoing training for new staff
- On-going training for staff on the Customer Service Standard
- County strives to meet ongoing compliance with the Customer Service Standard
- Developed training manual for volunteers
- On-going training for staff on creating accessible documents
- Accessibility Coordinator continues to work with local municipalities to ensure compliance with all regulations
- Updated Performance Appraisal policy to include statement around accommodation plans (March 2015)
- Updated Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee Terms of Reference in accordance with updated legislation and repeal of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001
- Update Corporate Accessibility Policy (November 2016)
- Launched online accessibility training modules to maximize efficiency
- Created training plan to align with training requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation
- Secure funding under the Enabling Accessibility Fund in order to purchase hand-held magnifiers for the Library branches.
- Accessibility Coordinator assists local municipalities with facility audits
- Submit compliance report to Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in 2015
 - Participate in File Review with the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario in 2016

Availability of the Plan and Status Report

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Accessibility Status Reports can be accessed through Elgin County's website: <http://www.elgincounty.ca/main-menu/council/accessibility>

Contact Information

For more information contact – Elgin County's Accessibility Coordinator:

Phone 519-631-1460 ext. 167

Fax 519-633-7785

Email jcowan@elgin.ca

Mail Accessibility Coordinator

County of Elgin, Human Resources Dept.

450 Sunset Drive,

St. Thomas, ON N5R 5X7

Accessible formats and communication supports available upon request.