

2024 York Region Accessibility Status Report

An annual update on the actions and progress by The Regional Municipality of York and York Regional Police to remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities and to implement the York Region 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.




York Region

Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that York Region is located on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Peoples including the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Métis peoples and the treaty territories of the Haudenosaunee, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and Williams Treaties First Nations. Today this area is home to many diverse Indigenous Peoples, and we recognize their history, spirituality, culture and stewardship of this land. We also acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our closest First Nation community.



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2024 York Region Accessibility Status Report

Purpose and Commitment

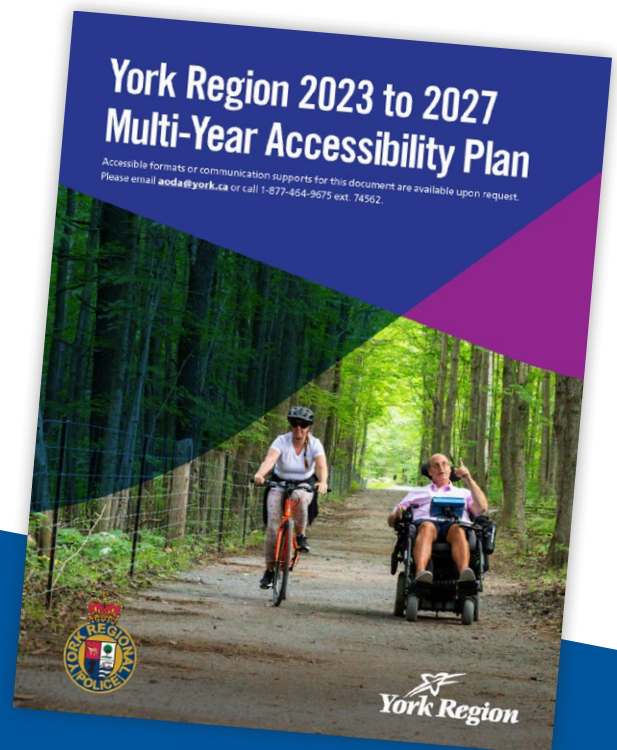
The Accessibility Status Report highlights the actions and accomplishments of The Regional Municipality of York and York Regional Police over the past year to make Regional programs, services and facilities more accessible. This Status Report serves as update on our progress in implementing the [York Region 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan](#).

The Accessibility Status Report is prepared and posted in compliance with the [Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation](#) under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA).

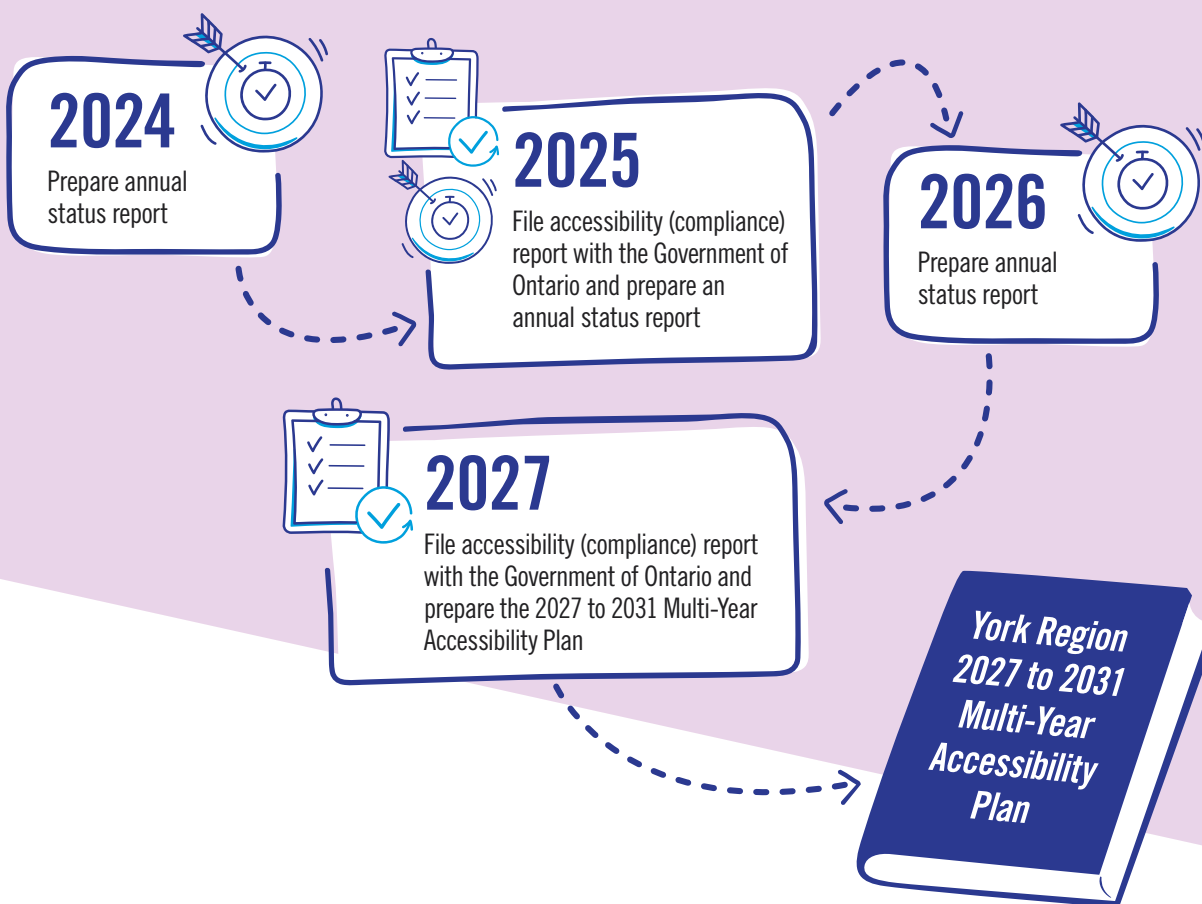
York Region 2023 to 2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

In December 2023, York Regional Council approved the 2023 to 2027 Multi-Accessibility Plan (The Plan). The Plan was developed in consultation with people with disabilities, staff, community members and the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC).

The Plan, renewed every four years to coincide with the term of Council and [York Region's Strategic Plan](#), outlines how York Region and York Regional Police continue to meet and exceed the requirements of the AODA.



York Region and York Regional Police have a legislated commitment to accessibility which includes:



A Joint Commitment to Accessibility

York Region and York Regional Police are jointly committed to creating a community that is welcoming, inclusive and accessible for everyone, including people with disabilities. This commitment to accessibility is formalized in York Region's Accessibility Policy and the York Regional Police AODA Procedure.

York Region Statement of Organizational Commitment



York Region is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person's dignity and independence.

Source: [York Region Accessibility Policy, 2024](#)



York Regional Police AODA Procedure Statement



York Regional Police is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner so that all people may have equitable access to programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects their dignity and independence.

Persons with disabilities shall be given an opportunity equal to those given to others in obtaining, using and benefiting from our services.

This Procedure [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act] and the principles contained herein apply to all York Regional Police practices and Procedures.

Source: York Regional Police Procedure AI-345



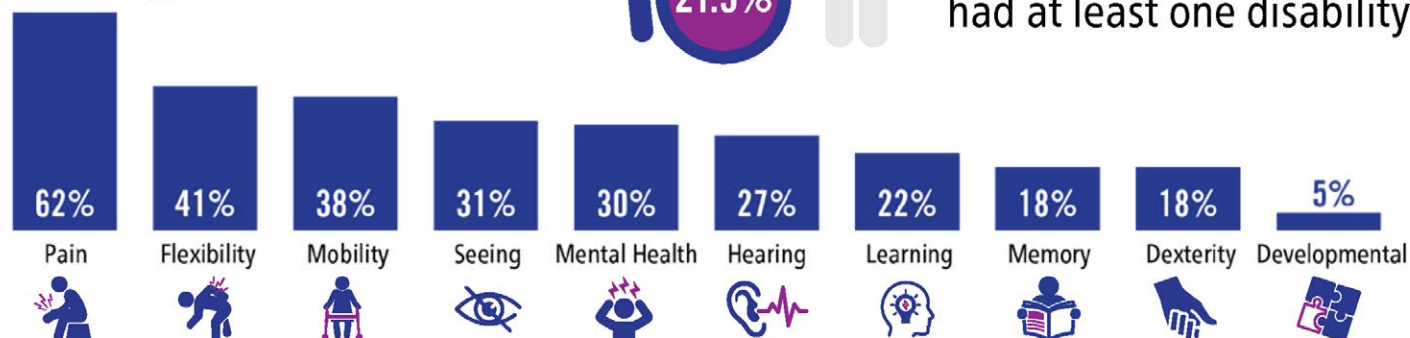
Disability in York Region

2022



21.3% of York Region residents aged 15 and older (206,250 people) had at least one disability

Disability types



Citizenship

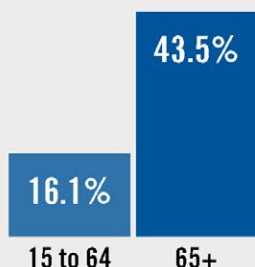
57% of persons with disabilities were born outside of Canada



Gender*

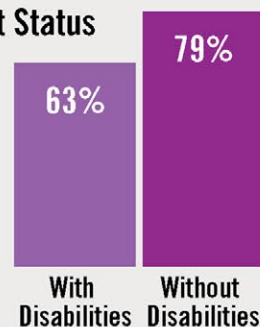


Age

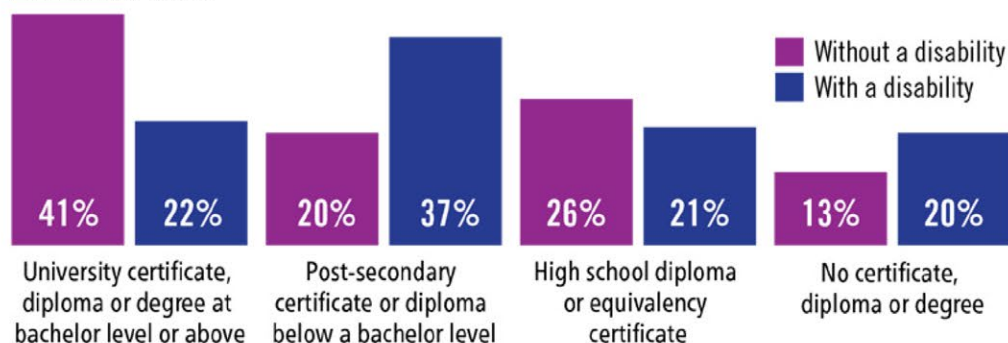


Employment Status

(adults aged 25 to 64)



Education level



Race



42% of persons with disabilities belong to racialized groups

York Region is committed to welcoming and inclusive communities.

Visit york.ca/accessibility for details.

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

Please contact: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74562 or email aoda@york.ca

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022

*The category "Women+" includes women and some non-binary persons, while the category "Men+" includes men and some non-binary persons. Given the small size of the non-binary population, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is most of the time necessary to protect the confidentiality of the responses provided.


York Region

Meeting Legislated Requirements in 2024

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) requires organizations to meet the following accessibility standards and general requirements:



Information and Communications – Create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities



Employment – Incorporate accessibility practices across all stages of employment



Transportation – Make it easier to move around through accessible public transportation services



Design of Public Spaces – Make public spaces more accessible



Customer Service – Provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities



General Requirements – Implement actions, including accessibility policies and plans, to enhance accessibility across the organization



Compliance Requirements – File accessibility reports every two years and comply with other compliance requirements

As part of meeting these accessibility standards, the ongoing and shared accessibility commitments of York Region and York Regional Police include (but are not limited to):

- Accessible websites (conforming to WCAG 2.0 Level AA)
- Accessible kiosks
- Accessible formats and communication supports
- Accessible purchases and procurement processes
- Accessibility policies
- Accessibility training
- Compliance monitoring and reporting
- Emergency response plans for employees

York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC)

Appointing and regularly consulting with an accessibility advisory committee is another important AODA requirement.

The end of 2024 marks the midpoint of the 2023 to 2026 York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee (YRAAC) term. The dedicated and diverse group of 12 citizen members and three Regional Council members continue to advise York Region and York Regional Police on accessibility for the Region's programs, services and facilities.

Consultations informed by lived experience

Committee members have received and consulted on 20 presentations, including two public deputations, through meaningful discussions and feedback. York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee presentations and consultations for 2024 included:

- York Region's Homelessness Service System Plan
- Incorporating Accessibility into the Administrative Penalty Tribunal Program
- Accessible Recruiting and Hiring Practices
- York Region Community of Belonging for Staff with Disabilities
- Food Insecurity in York Region

Agendas and minutes from past meetings are available online through York Region eSCRIBE Published Meetings. All YRAAC meetings are open to the public and broadcasted online via live stream.



Meaningful experiences for committee members

Annual review meetings are held with each committee member at the end of each year to discuss their experience and engagement. These review meetings provide members with the opportunity to share feedback and suggest future presentation topics.

Based on feedback received from the 2023 review meetings, the following process improvements were introduced throughout 2024:

- Arranging for presentations based on topics of interest to committee members
- Assigning a facilitation role to the YRAAC Vice Chair who actively engages and prompts committee members during the consultation periods
- Sharing professional learning opportunities with committee members to support their personal and professional development as accessibility champions
- Providing opportunities to network and build capacity outside of formal YRAAC meetings

Agendas and minutes from past meetings are available online through

[York Region eSCRIBE Published Meetings](#). All YRAAC meetings are open to the public and broadcasted online via live stream.

National AccessAbility Week 2024 Professional Development Forum

In celebration of National AccessAbility Week, accessibility advisory committee members from York Region, Newmarket, Markham and Richmond Hill hosted a professional development forum that brought together municipal accessibility advisory committee members and staff who support accessibility portfolios. The theme was “Forward Together: Accessibility and Inclusion for York Region Spaces and Places.” Based on this theme, the forum featured speakers from March of Dimes Canada, Daniels Group, the Accelerating Accessibility Coalition, York Region Transit, and the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility.



Doing More to Create Accessible Communities in 2024

York Region and York Regional Police continue to meet and exceed accessibility standards through actions set out in the multi-year plans. This section highlights the actions achieved throughout 2024 under each accessibility standard.

Refreshed York Region Accessibility Policy

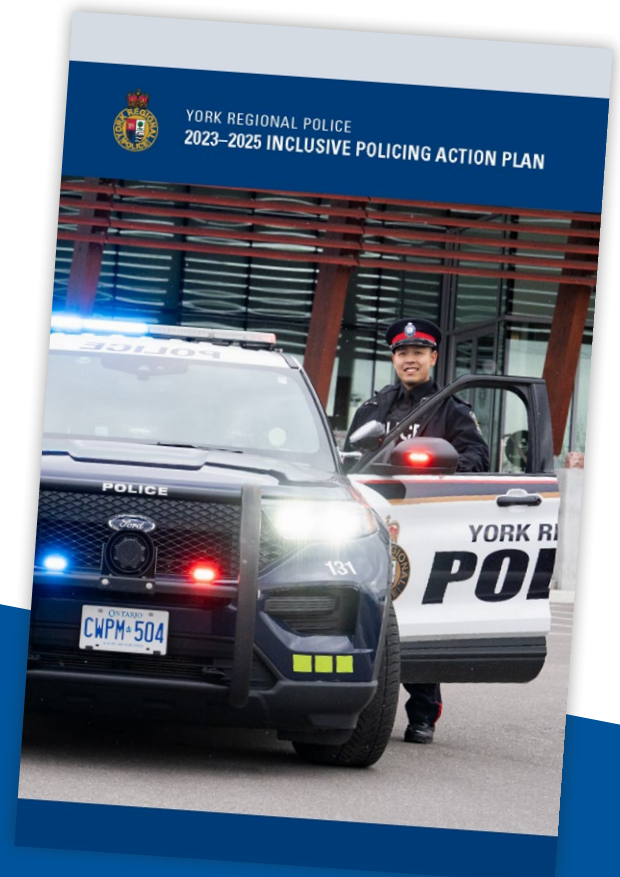
In 2024, minor revisions were approved to the [York Region Accessibility Policy](#), including:

- Clarifying which departments are responsible for implementing specific requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation
- Updating reference materials

York Regional Police 2023 to 2025 Inclusive Policing Action Plan

York Regional Police (YRP) continues its accessibility work internally and throughout York Region, including commitments to accessibility through the [Inclusive Policing Action Plan 2023-2025](#) and [Business Plan 2023-2025](#). This involves support for the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee and programs for YRP members and their families in the areas of wellness and accommodations. In addition, YRP is currently undertaking an organizational review on accessibility and accommodations for members with restrictions.

York Regional Police also established an internal Accessibility Working Group in 2024 to promote compliance with AODA standards in employment and service delivery. Accessibility training opportunities were offered for YRP members to better understand and serve people with disabilities.





The Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) 2024 Spring Conference

In May 2024, York Region hosted the Ontario Network of Accessibility Professionals (ONAP) spring conference at its Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certified Gold office building in Newmarket, Ontario. The hybrid conference welcomed more than 100 in-person and virtual accessibility professionals who engaged in professional development and learning over two days. The conference included the following accessible event best practices:

- Sharing all presentation and conference materials in advance, including a dedicated Accessibility Features of the Conference information sheet
- Live captioning
- Inclusive introductions
- Designed quiet rooms (private meeting rooms)
- Designated service animal relief areas
- Recommended hotel with accessible suites (meeting CSA/ASC B652:23 Accessible dwellings standards)



2024 Legal and Court Services Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility Action Plan

Legal and Court Services developed a focused Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility (IDEA) Action Plan for 2024. This Action Plan was informed by staff feedback obtained through previous departmental and corporate surveys, and analyses performed by internal and external partners. The Action Plan aims to enhance departmental initiatives and strategies through the application of IDEA-informed principles and alignment with commitments outlined in York Region's Inclusion Charter.

Installation of Hearing Loop Devices

Audio Frequency Induction Loops (AFILS) or Hearing Loop devices were installed at all front counters of York Region's Provincial Offences Court in Newmarket. These assistive listening devices help enhance service delivery to customers with hearing disabilities by using a microphone to transmit sound directly to the listener's Telecoil enabled hearing aid or cochlear implant. This allows for clearer sound and understanding by reducing sound interference typically caused by glass barriers, distance and ambient noise.

“



The tool we are now using [for people who are hard of hearing] is awesome, at first the gentleman came to a counter without the device, and this was very frustrating and then we had him go to the next counter where the device was, the relief instantly on his face gave you chills as he was all smiles and thumbs up that he could hear us explaining the process. The relief on this person face was priceless. I would love to see these devices at each of our counters.

Court Professional Team Lead

”

Contributing to Safe Communities, One Learner at a Time

Each year, Emergency Management educates more than 5,000 young learners on Fire and Life Safety and Emergency Preparedness. This is core curriculum for kindergarten to Grade 5 students, and teaching methods are reviewed annually to support student needs. For example, a special education lesson on preventing scalds and burns was developed after the National Fire Protection Association identified people with disabilities being at higher risk. Teachers can identify necessary accommodations in advance of the lesson or onsite. Lesson plans incorporate accommodations such as visual cueing, “hands on” materials, repetition and rephrasing, strategic seating, proximity to instructor and minimizing audio stimuli.



Professional Development towards Accessible Information and Communications

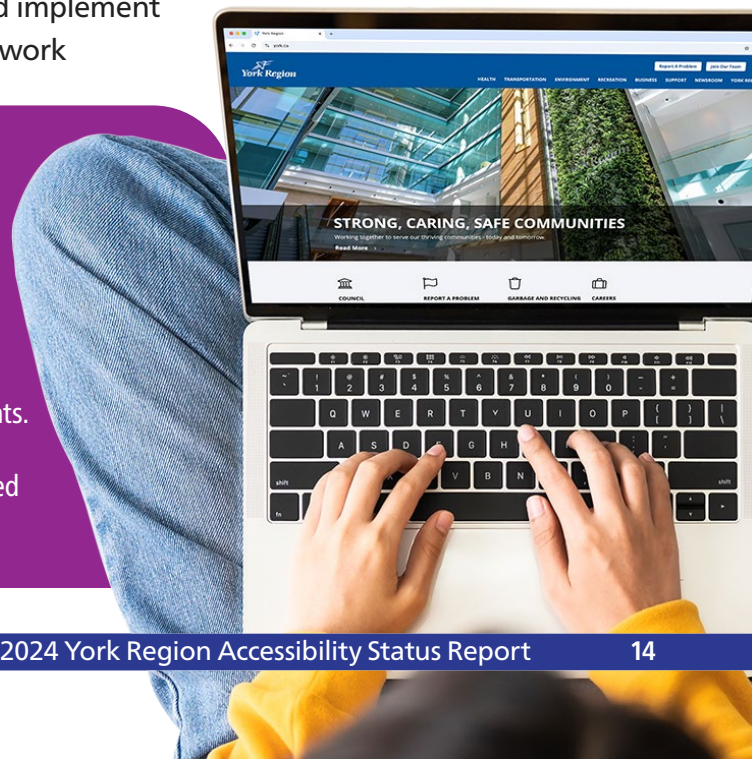
Creating and disseminating accessible communications is vital to ensuring all residents can easily and freely access the information they need without barriers. In 2024, Corporate Communications led two initiatives to continue supporting York Region staff in understanding and adopting the Information and Communication Standards:

1. Coordinated specialized training for communication staff on creating accessible documents.
2. Renewed and launched extensive accessible information and communication guidelines on the Region's employee facing Intranet. This dedicated resource hub supports all staff in the Region's shared commitment to build and implement accessible communication practices into their everyday work

york.ca ranks in the top 5% of all accessible websites worldwide

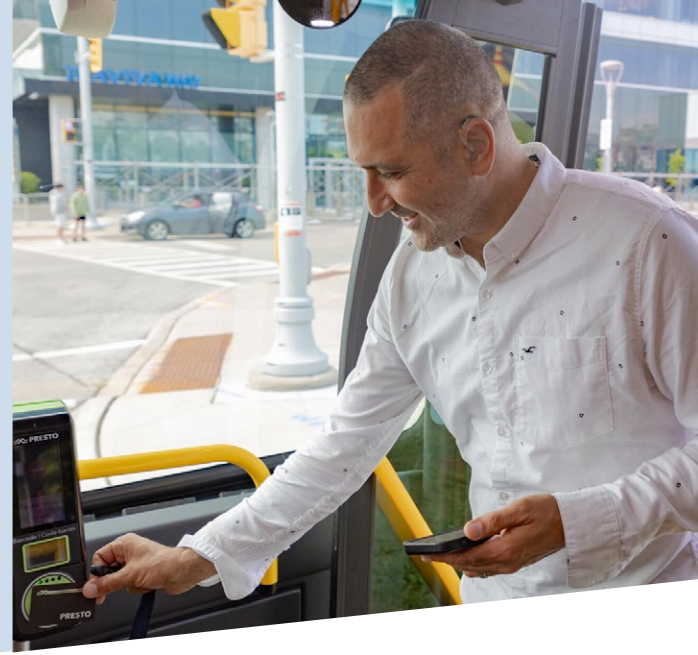
Each year, WebAIM conducts a web accessibility evaluation of the top one million websites, known as the “WebAIM Million”. York Region's ranked in the top 5% (47,400 out of 1,000,000), reporting no accessibility errors based on 2,793 home page elements.

The WAVE accessibility rank is a metric based on number of detected errors, error density, potential errors, and popularity ranking.



York Region Transit Accessibility Review

York Region Transit (YRT) conducted an accessibility review as part of the Five-Year Business Plan and York Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. YRT has taken measures to improve the accessibility of its services and remove barriers throughout the customer journey. The review summarizes YRT's AODA compliance, recent accessibility improvements, state of transit accessibility and recommendations to improve system accessibility in the future.



Multi-Use Pathway on Woodbine Avenue in the Town of Georgina

In 2024, York Region began construction on a Multi-Use Path in the Town of Georgina. The new path spans 500 metres and provides access to the new Multi-Use Recreational Centre. It connects to the new accessible intersection at Garrett Styles Drive and Woodbine Avenue, which is equipped with pedestrian push buttons, tactile plates and crosswalk markings ensuring pedestrians and cyclists have a safe crossing and access point to the Multi-Use Recreational Centre.





Designing for Independence: How Unionville Commons Leads in Senior Accessible Living

Unionville Commons is Housing York Inc.'s (HYI) newest building for seniors in the City of Markham. It offers 40 barrier-free units featuring roll-under cooktops, low threshold showers with grab bars, widened doorways and slanted mirrors. Universal design features are integrated, including wheelchair-accessible paths of travel and colour-coded elevator lobbies to enhance navigation for residents. Future HYI developments, including Mosaic House in the Town of Stouffville, will continue to prioritize accessibility for all residents.

Congregate Living Setting Vaccination Clinics

In the fall of 2024, Public Health held vaccination clinics in partnership with Reena to provide accessible COVID and Flu vaccination clinics for York Region residents with developmental disabilities in congregate living settings. The clinics were located at sites where residents with more complex medical needs could be vaccinated in their rooms. Special centralized clinics also offered in-car vaccination options for residents using mobility devices.

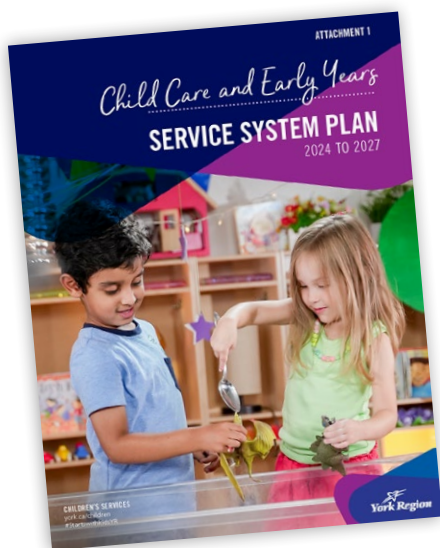
Strengthening Accessible Recruiting and Hiring Practices

The People, Equity and Culture department consulted with the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee to seek feedback on the recruitment and hiring accommodation processes. Based on feedback from the committee, job posting information and details on the accommodation process were updated, as well as email communications to candidates during the assessment invitation stage. Recognizing how a driver's license requirement may be a barrier for applicants, York Region no longer includes driver's license requirements in job postings for positions where it is not a bona fide occupational requirement.



2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan

[York Region's 2024 to 2027 Homelessness Service System Plan](#) outlines goals and priority areas that aim to improve, enhance and align homelessness services and supports including homelessness prevention, intervention, housing stability and strengthening a coordinated system response with community partners. The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted during the development of the plan by validating and refining the objectives, activities and milestones under each priority area. Committee members were also engaged to identify opportunities where they could provide advice and feedback as the Homeless Service System Plan is implemented.



Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan

The [2024-2027 Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan](#) was renewed in 2024 with the vision to support children's learning and development and families' overall well-being. The York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee was consulted on the development of the objectives, priorities and key actions involving working with partners and contributors to deliver services that are accessible, affordable, responsive, high-quality and welcoming to all children and families living in York Region. Insights from committee members provided direction on how the Child Care and Early Years Service System Plan could increase access and inclusion in children's services.

Let Us Know What You Think

We welcome your feedback. Let us know if you have any feedback or questions about this Accessibility Status Report. Previous Status Reports can be found on our [Accessibility Plans](#) web page.

To request a copy in another format or to send us your feedback or questions, please contact us at:

The Regional Municipality of York

Email: AODA@york.ca

Mail: Accessibility Unit

The Regional Municipality of York

17250 Yonge Street

Newmarket, Ontario L3Y 6Z1

Phone: 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74562

TTY: 1-866-512-6228

Should you experience a service disruption with the TTY, please contact us at accessyork@york.ca

Fax: 905-895-6616

York Regional Police

Email: accessibility@yrp.ca

Mail: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Bureau

York Regional Police

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