



Annual Accessibility Plan 2025

Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC)

County of Huron

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Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the County of Huron is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Neutral peoples and is connected to the Dish with One Spoon wampum, under which multiple nations agreed to care for the land and its resources by the Great Lakes in peace. We also acknowledge the Upper Canada Treaties signed in regard to this land, which include Treaty #29 and Treaty #45 ½.

We recognize First Peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water and the historical and ongoing injustices they face in Canada. As a committee dedicated to fostering accessibility and inclusion, we acknowledge our responsibility to engage meaningfully with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples, reinforce our efforts toward reconciliation and uphold and value the traditions, rights, and contributions of Indigenous Peoples.

Chair's Address

People with disabilities often face barriers that limit their ability to work, shop, travel, and engage fully in their communities. One of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee's (HCAAC) greatest strengths is our dedicated members, who are passionate about informing, educating, and inspiring our community to make Huron County accessible for all. Our committee is committed to providing comprehensive accessibility training to community members across various sectors in alignment with the [O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#).

We focus on:

- Customer Service
- General Requirements
- Human Rights
- Employment
- Information & Communication
- Design of Public Spaces

Training is tailored to job responsibilities. Facilities staff focus on Human Rights, General Requirements, and Customer Service, while management completes all modules. All stakeholders receive training on accessibility standards and assistive devices. Through training opportunities and resources, we aim to increase awareness and engagement and foster a deeper understanding of government legislation among entities—such as businesses, organizations, institutions, services, and facilities.

Governance: Since 2021, our committee has successfully operated virtually. We appreciate the dedication and passion of all our committee members, who contribute to creating an inclusive society.

Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment.

Trevor Bazinet (he/him),
Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee Chair

Foreword

Accessibility is a cornerstone of an inclusive community, ensuring that every individual can participate fully in their community. Disability affects a growing number of Canadians. From 2017 to 2022, the disability rate increased across all provinces and most territories. There were most considerable increases in mental health-related disabilities (10.4% prevalence, +3.2 points), pain-related disabilities (16.7% prevalence, +2.2 points), and seeing disabilities (7.4% prevalence, +2.2 points; see [Infographic](#)). These trends emphasize the growing need for accessible environments and inclusive practices to accommodate the evolving needs of individuals with disabilities nationwide.

Huron County is committed to creating an inclusive and accessible community, ensuring everyone can engage fully in all facets of life. In line with this dedication, we introduce our 2025 Annual Accessibility Plan (AAP), detailing our strategic plan to identify, eliminate, and prevent barriers faced by individuals with disabilities in Huron County.

This plan reflects our dedication to meeting and exceeding the standards set by the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#).

We encourage you to review this plan and join us in our commitment to championing accessibility. Please feel empowered to contact us with any questions, comments, or suggestions.

This report is available on the County of Huron website and can be provided in various formats upon request. If your inquiry concerns our partner municipality, please contact them directly.

Together, we can make Huron County a place where everyone belongs.

Contact Information

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Executive Summary

The 2025 Annual Accessibility Plan (AAP) of the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) reflects County of Huron's ongoing commitment to building a more inclusive and accessible community. This plan outlines the achievements from 2024, highlights our strategic goals for 2025, and underscores our dedication to ensuring that Huron County continues to lead in accessibility and inclusivity.

In 2024, the HCAAC made significant strides in enhancing accessibility across Huron County. Key achievements included the development of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, thorough site plan reviews, and the continued success of the HCAAC Accessibility Awards. HCAAC enhanced its collaborations with partner municipalities, businesses, and community groups, advocating for accessibility initiatives and exchanging best practices.

In 2025, HCAAC aims to advance its achievements by concentrating on several significant goals. These include ongoing evaluations and recommendations regarding accessible spaces, strengthening ties with partner municipalities, and raising awareness about accessibility through events like National AccessAbility Week. Furthermore, HCAAC will collaborate with the County of Huron's staff to review its policies to ensure they meet accessibility standards and seek funding opportunities for new initiatives.

The 2025 AAP also emphasizes the importance of accountability and reporting. HCAAC is committed to regularly monitoring progress, providing updates to the County Council, and engaging with the community to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

This plan reaffirms the HCAAC's mission to create a barrier-free Huron County where everyone can fully participate and enjoy all aspects of community life. By prioritizing accessibility in all County of Huron operations and collaborating with partners, HCAAC is confident that the goals outlined in this plan will lead to meaningful and seminal developments.

HCAAC at a Glance



The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) serves as the Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) for Huron County, mandated by the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#). HCAAC is dedicated to advising Huron County Council on the implementation of accessibility standards across the County's nine partner municipalities (see [Appendix](#) for HCAAC's objectives and priorities). Comprising primarily of individuals with disabilities, the committee plays a vital role in creating an accessible community by providing input on accessibility plans, site developments, and public spaces. Through education, consultation, and advocacy, HCAAC works to ensure that Huron County remains inclusive and accessible for everyone.

- [Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh](#)
- [Bluewater](#)
- [Central Huron](#)
- [Goderich](#)
- [Howick](#)
- [Huron East](#)
- [Morris-Turnberry](#)
- [North Huron](#)
- [South Huron](#)

Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC)
accessibility@huroncounty.ca

Strategic Alignment

HCAAC is dedicated to ensuring that the County's operations are accessible and inclusive for all individuals.

Integrated Approach to Inclusion and Accessibility

In alignment with the County of Huron's commitment to inclusion and diversity, the Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) embraces an integrated approach where accessibility is seamlessly woven into the broader framework of inclusion. Rather than being a standalone aspect, accessibility is a fundamental component of our overall Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) strategy. This approach ensures that all initiatives and programs reflect HCAAC's dedication to creating a community where everyone can fully participate and thrive. By integrating accessibility into the IDEA lens, HCAAC strives to foster an environment where accessibility is not just an add-on but a core element of the County of Huron's inclusive practices and policies.

Intersectionality and Disability

Intersectionality highlights how various aspects of identity, such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, and disability, intersect and influence an individual's experiences. Disability is deeply intertwined with these factors, affecting how individuals experience barriers and discrimination. For example, a person's experience with disability can differ significantly based on their gender, race, or socioeconomic background.

By recognizing these intersecting identities, we can better understand and address the unique challenges faced by individuals with disabilities. This perspective guides our approach to creating inclusive environments, ensuring that our accessibility initiatives consider and accommodate the diverse needs of all community members. This approach helps us move beyond a one-size-fits-all model and fosters a more equitable and supportive community for everyone.

Reporting and Accountability

The Huron County Accessibility Advisory Committee (HCAAC) is committed to ensuring transparency and accountability in its efforts to enhance accessibility across the County. To achieve this, the Committee adheres to a robust framework for monitoring progress, evaluating effectiveness, and reporting outcomes.

- **Regular Monitoring and Evaluation:** HCAAC reviews its initiatives and programs to assess their impact and effectiveness. This involves collecting feedback from stakeholders, analyzing data on accessibility improvements, and evaluating the progress of ongoing projects against established goals and standards.
- **Annual Reporting:** HCAAC publishes an annual accessibility plan update to provide a comprehensive overview of its activities, achievements, and future goals. This report includes details on compliance with accessibility standards, progress on key projects, and any challenges encountered. It is made available to the public and shared with the County Council and partner municipalities to ensure accountability, transparency, and trust.
- **Public Engagement:** HCAAC encourages input from the community through various channels, including public meetings and feedback mechanisms. This engagement helps ensure that the Committee's work is aligned with the priorities and perspectives of the community.
- **Accountability Framework:** HCAAC operates within a clear accountability framework, with defined roles and responsibilities for Committee members and subcommittees. Regular meetings are held to review progress, address issues, and adjust strategies and actions as needed.
- **Reporting to County Council:** HCAAC provides regular updates to the County Council, including detailed reports on accessibility initiatives and their outcomes. These updates help ensure that accessibility remains a priority within the County's broader strategic goals and facilitate informed decision-making.

2024 Achievements

Public Accessible Spaces Simplified (PASS)

In 2024, HCAAC sponsored the PASS program, enabling free access to the educational content it generates for employees of County of Huron and partner municipalities. This program emphasizes best practices for developing accessible environments. By ensuring this content is available, HCAAC fosters the advancement of accessible practices throughout the region and addresses a significant need for resources in accessible design.

Updated Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP)

The MYAP was updated to incorporate new goals, strategies, and timelines to enhance accessibility across Huron County. This comprehensive revision introduced specific action items and implementation strategies to address emerging accessibility considerations. The updated plan reflects current accessibility standards and aligns with provincial legislation, ensuring that the County of Huron's initiatives are effective and compliant with legal requirements.

HCAAC Awards for Accessibility Excellence

The nomination process for the HCAAC Accessibility Awards underwent a significant transformation to enhance accessibility and improve user experience. This revision sought to facilitate submissions, allowing individuals and organizations to participate more easily. Key updates feature simplified application forms, more precise criteria, and better support for nominators and nominees. These changes were effectively conveyed through multiple media platforms, resulting in a rise in nominations and greater community involvement.

Accessible Tourism Initiative

This initiative, spearheaded by HCAAC, focuses on identifying and cataloging accessible spaces throughout the County, such as parks, trails, and other public spaces. By listing these locations on the County of Huron's tourism website, [Ontario's West Coast](#), HCAAC aims to make it convenient for residents and visitors to find and enjoy accessible amenities. This

effort will enhance inclusion in the County's tourism offerings and promote greater awareness and accessibility within the community. In spring 2025, the Site and Plan Review Subcommittee will begin evaluating municipal spaces as part of this tourism initiative.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Space Review

The County of Huron's Planning Department has created an innovative guide for EV charging stations that prioritizes accessibility to enhance the user experience for everyone. This novel guide establishes an essential resource for making EV infrastructure accessible to individuals with disabilities. It offers recommendations on accessible layouts, signage, and user support.

AccessSLED Incentive Program

HCAAC initiated the AccessSLED program to provide vital funding to the community for accessibility improvements. In 2024, efforts were made to ensure that the program aligns with the needs of grassroots entities and is sustainable. This included identifying community outreach as part of the communication strategy and pursuing additional funding from the Government of Canada to expand the program's impact. AccessSLED is set to launch in March 2025.

National AccessAbility Week

To honour National AccessAbility Week (May 26 - June 1, 2024), HCAAC organized events to highlight accessibility concerns and encourage inclusive practices. These events featured media campaigns focused on educating the public and nurturing a culture of accessibility in the community.

Goderich Downtown Renovation

HCAAC was invited to review the Town of Goderich's downtown renovation plans and provide expert input on integrating accessibility considerations into the redevelopment project. This review involved assessing various aspects of the renovation plans, including pedestrian pathways, accessible parking, and public spaces, to ensure that they meet accessibility standards and are inclusive of all individuals.

2025 Goals

Initiative	Action	Who	Timeframe
Launch AccessSLED	Roll out the AccessSLED program using a multi-channel media strategy, feature informative programming, partnerships with local stakeholders, and collaboration with partner municipalities.	Accessibility Coordinator, Corporate Comms, Economic Development, Partner Municipalities	March 2025
Enhance Accessibility in Public Spaces	Promote awareness among public entities through targeted campaigns, educational workshops, and partnerships to facilitate more accessibility audits. Conduct audits based on demand and provide resources and guidance to support ongoing accessibility enhancements.	HCAAC, Accessibility Coordinator, Partner Municipalities	Ongoing, Based on Demand
Advance the Accessible Tourism Initiative	Develop and list accessible municipal sites on the County of Huron’s tourism website, Ontario’s West Coast ; collaborate with County of Huron’s Economic Development department and Partner Municipalities to implement accessible practices.	Economic Development, Partner Municipalities, Accessibility Coordinator	December 2025
Strengthen Collaboration	Collaborate with community organizations, advocacy groups, and stakeholders; participate in	HCAAC, Accessibility Coordinator	Ongoing

with Community Stakeholders	joint projects, share resources, and establish regular communication for accessibility initiatives.		
Promote Accessibility Awareness and Education	Organize educational programs and workshops for personnel, launch media campaigns to highlight successes, and train volunteers on AODA Customer Service Standard.	HCAAC, Communications Team, Training Leads	Ongoing

Closing

As we reflect on the progress and goals set for the coming year, HCAAC remains unwavering in its commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible community. Guided by the principles of diversity, equity, intersectionality, inclusion, and belonging, we recognize that the achievements of 2024 have established a strong foundation. Our 2025 goals are designed to build upon this progress, addressing emerging needs and advancing accessibility in impactful ways.

HCAAC sincerely appreciates the ongoing support and collaboration from the community. Together, we are advancing towards a more inclusive and accessible Huron County.

As we progress on this journey, we remain dedicated to accountability, transparency, active engagement, and ongoing improvement and invite all stakeholders to participate.

Appendix

Priorities for HCAAC Objectives Mandated by Legislation

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and Annual Updates

In compliance with the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11](#), and the [O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#), the County of Huron is required to develop and maintain a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. This plan outlines strategies for identifying, preventing, and removing barriers for people with disabilities over five years.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Accessibility Coordinator will annually review and update (if needed) the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. Following County Council approval, the revised plan will be posted on the County's website.
- **Council Responsibility:** The County Council will approve and submit the updated plan to the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility. The County Clerk will ensure the plan is shared with the CAO and Senior Management Team for implementation. Local Municipal Councils will also approve and implement the plan.
- **HCAAC Municipal Working Group:** Representatives will present the plan to their Councils for approval and post it on their respective municipality websites.

Timeline Targets: The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed every five years, and updates shall be posted annually. The County Council shall approve it by January 1st of each year, and partner municipalities' Councils shall also approve it by the same date.

Annual Accessibility Plan

The County of Huron is required to create and publish an Annual Accessibility Plan under the [AODA](#). This plan will include the County's goals and achievements from the previous year.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Accessibility Coordinator will develop the Annual Accessibility Plan in consultation with the HCAAC and County staff, presenting it to the committee by December each year.

- **Council Responsibility:** The County Council will approve and submit the plan to the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade.
- **HCAAC Municipal Working Group:** Representatives will present the plan to their Councils for approval and post it on their respective municipality websites.

Timeline Targets: The Annual Accessibility Plan shall be approved by the County Council and partner municipalities’ Councils by January 1st of each year.

Alignment of Both Plans

The goals outlined in the Annual Accessibility Plan should align with those of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Annual Accessibility Plan will be posted on the County’s website following County Council approval.
- **Council Responsibility:** The County Clerk will ensure the plan is implemented across all departments and shared with local municipalities.
- **HCAAC Municipal Working Group:** The Annual Accessibility Plan will be posted on partner municipalities’ websites once approved.

Timeline Targets: The plans will be aligned with the Annual Accessibility Plan and updated with the Multi-Year Plan.

Review of Building Plans for Renovation, Construction, Purchase, Lease, and Exterior Site Plans

[AODA](#) requires timely reviews of building plans to ensure accessibility for renovations, new constructions, and exterior site plans.

- **HCAAC Responsibility:** The Site and Plan Review Subcommittee will review sites and plans to provide feedback.
- **Council Responsibility:** The County Council will ensure that partner municipalities understand their duty to request reviews before purchasing, constructing, or leasing properties.

Municipal Working Group: Representatives will inform their staff and share reviewed site plans with building officials.

Timeline Targets: Reviews will be conducted on an ongoing basis.

Provide Accessibility Information to the County and Partner Municipalities

Provide updates and information on accessibility directives and regulations per [AODA](#).

HCAAC Responsibility: The Accessibility Coordinator will gather feedback on the proposed regulations, work with the Directive and Regulation Review Subcommittee to identify concerns, and ensure compliance.

Council Responsibility: The Accessibility Coordinator will regularly update the County Council on regulatory requirements and the County's preparedness.

Municipal Working Group: Representatives will inform their respective staff and provide feedback on regulatory requirements.

Timeline Targets: Updates and feedback will remain ongoing.

Objectives Driven by HCAAC and Community

Enhancing Community Engagement and Information Sharing

Advance the Committee's vision of promoting accessibility across Huron County by building relationships with all stakeholders, including the County Council, partner municipalities, entities, and community members. Develop and distribute information on new legislation and offer educational opportunities.

Initiatives:

- Host webinars and presentations on accessibility for local stakeholders.
- Provide regular updates to the County Council.
- Review and recommend improvements for municipal facilities.
- Execute annual National AccessAbility Week programming.

Timeline Targets: Ongoing

HCAAC Awards

Recognize entities and individuals who excel in creating barrier-free access and promoting accessibility in the community.

Initiative: Execute HCAAC awards programming annually.

Community Participation

Encourage local events to incorporate accessibility into their operations.

Initiative: Provide resources to facilitators to encourage adherence to accessibility standards and promote inclusive practices.

Timeline Targets: Coordinate with local events throughout the year

Infographic

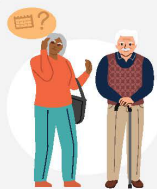
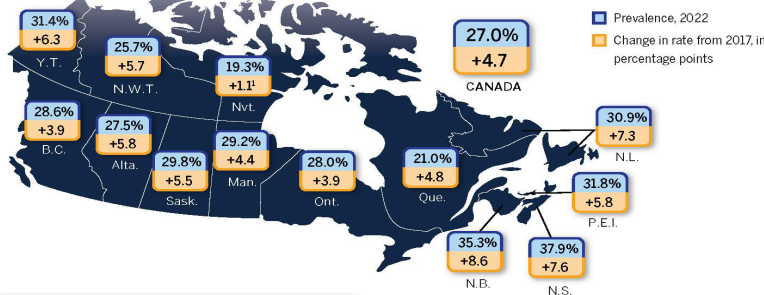
NEW DATA ON DISABILITY

in Canada, 2022

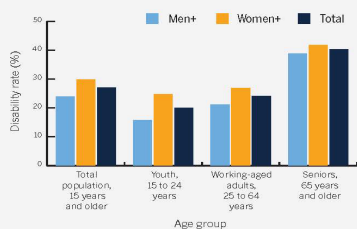
In 2022, 27.0% of Canadians aged 15 and older, or 8.0 million people, had at least one disability. This represents an increase of 4.7 percentage points from 2017.



From 2017 to 2022, the disability rate rose in all provinces and most of the territories



The disability rate increases with age. Growth of Canada's senior population between 2017 and 2022 contributed to the overall increase in the disability rate.



Women of all ages are more likely than men to have a disability²

From 2017 to 2022, mental health-related, pain-related, and seeing disabilities had the largest increases, contributing the most to the rise in the Canadian disability rate.



¹ Updated image

² The change observed since 2017 is not statistically significant at a 5% significance level, meaning that it is likely due to sampling variability.

³ 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.

Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022.

ISBN: 978-0-660-68707-0 | Catalogue number: 11-627-M

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Source: Canada. Statistics Canada. "A Demographic, Employment and Income Profile of Canadians with Disabilities Aged 15 Years and Over, 2017." ISBN: 978-0-660-68707-0.

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2023063-eng.pdf?st=qyJ2u1Yn>

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