

ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2001

The Ontario government has passed legislation known as Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001. The purpose of this legislation is to improve independence and opportunities for people with disabilities. It is estimated that 1.9 million Ontarians have disabilities and that in 20 years 1 in 5 Ontarians will have a disability.

What is the definition of disability under the Ontarians With Disabilities Act?

- The ODA covers the same broad range of disabilities as the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#). These include physical, sensory, cognitive, developmental and mental disabilities, and brain injury.

- [Section 2](#) of the ODA defines "disability" as:

(a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

(b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,

(c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

(d) a mental disorder, or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the [Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997](#); ("handicap").

All municipalities are required to prepare accessibility plans and make them public.

- If municipalities under 10,000 choose to post information on a plan seeking public input they should ensure that the disability community (individuals and organizations) are aware of the posting and have an opportunity to provide comment. It is also important, however, that others in the community have an opportunity to comment as well ([Section 12\(1\)](#)).
- Many people with disabilities are actively involved with disability organizations in their community. Some examples of these organizations include: the Canadian National Institute for the Blind; Easter Seals Association; Canadian Mental Health Association; Canadian Hearing Society and Community Living Ontario as well as consumer organizations such as independent living centres, injured workers associations and self-help groups such as the DisAbled Women's Network (DAWN). Seniors organizations may also have volunteers with disabilities who might be interested in getting involved in an accessibility advisory committee.

If you are, or know of someone who falls into one of the above categories, and have concerns, please contact the Township of Blandford-Blenheim through their website (www.twp.bla-ble.on.ca) using the online contact form found on the "Contact Us" section of the website. Leave a message and we will be in touch with you. The Township of Blandford-Blenheim is currently working on their Disability Plan.