

OTTAWA WINDOW PROS

Accessibility

Easy-operating hardware, sill heights, and
accessible window design

3 Expert Answers from Construction Brain

ottawawindowinstall.ca/construction-brain

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Are there grants available for accessibility window modifications in Ontario?

Accessibility window modifications can qualify for several grant programs in Ontario, though the specific eligibility depends on the type of modification and your personal circumstances.

Federal Programs

The **Canada Greener Homes Grant** is primarily focused on energy efficiency upgrades rather than accessibility, so standard accessibility modifications like egress window enlargements or easier-to-operate hardware may not qualify on their own. However, if your accessibility upgrade also improves energy efficiency (for example, replacing a difficult-to-operate old window with a new triple-pane unit), you may be able to claim the energy efficiency portion.

The **Home Accessibility Tax Credit (HATC)** is worth knowing about - it's a federal tax credit (not a grant) that allows eligible homeowners to claim up to **\$20,000 in qualifying renovation expenses**, resulting in up to \$3,000 back. Window and door modifications that improve accessibility for seniors or persons with disabilities can qualify. This is administered through the CRA, so confirm eligibility with your accountant or tax advisor.

Ontario and Ottawa-Specific Programs

The **Ontario Renovates Program** through the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit can provide funding for accessibility modifications for low-to-moderate income homeowners. The **City of Ottawa** also periodically offers local housing assistance programs. These programs change frequently, so checking directly with **Ottawa Community Housing** or **Service Ottawa** will give you the most current information.

What Qualifies as an Accessibility Window Modification

Common modifications include easier-to-operate hardware (lever handles, single-hand operation), lower sill heights for wheelchair users, larger egress windows for emergency exit, and impact-resistant glazing. Keep in mind that **enlarging an existing window opening is a structural change and requires a building permit** in Ottawa - your installer can help manage that process.

For the most current and accurate grant information, the best starting points are the **Canada.ca Greener Homes portal**, **CRA's HATC page**, and **Ottawa's Housing Programs office at 613-580-2400**. Grant programs update regularly and eligibility rules can be specific.

If you'd like to talk through accessibility modifications, Ottawa Window Pros can connect you with an installer, and it's worth asking them which upgrades tend to qualify for current programs.

Q2

Can I get electric windows that open with a button for accessibility?

Yes, motorized windows are available and can be an excellent accessibility solution for homeowners with mobility challenges. These windows open and close at the push of a button, eliminating the need to manually turn cranks or lift heavy sashes.

Motorized window systems work with most window types including casement, awning, and even some double-hung styles. The motors are typically integrated into the window frame and can be operated via wall switches, handheld remotes, or even smartphone apps. Many systems also include rain sensors that automatically close windows when moisture is detected, and some can be integrated with home automation systems.

In Ottawa's climate, motorized windows are particularly valuable for **hard-to-reach locations** like high windows, basement egress windows, or windows above kitchen sinks. They're also beneficial for elderly homeowners or those with arthritis who find traditional window cranks difficult to operate. The systems are designed to handle our temperature extremes and can operate reliably even when windows are partially frozen.

Installation considerations include ensuring adequate electrical supply to each motorized window location. Most systems operate on low-voltage power with a transformer, but proper wiring is essential for reliable operation. The motors add some thickness to the window frame, so existing openings may need minor modifications.

Cost-wise in Ottawa, expect to add \$800-1,500 per window for motorization, depending on the window size and control system complexity. While this represents a significant investment, the improved accessibility and convenience often justify the cost for homeowners who need this functionality.

For motorised window options, request a free quote through Ottawa Window Pros and an installer can look at your existing windows and what suits your budget.

Q3

How low does a door threshold need to be for wheelchair access?

Door thresholds for wheelchair accessibility must be no higher than 13mm (1/2 inch) under the Ontario Building Code, with beveled edges when the threshold exceeds 6mm (1/4 inch).

The **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)** and Ontario Building Code set specific requirements for barrier-free design. For residential applications, thresholds should ideally be as low as possible -

preferably flush or no more than 6mm high. When thresholds must be higher due to weather sealing requirements, they need beveled edges at a maximum slope of 1:2 (50% grade) and cannot exceed the 13mm maximum height.

In Ottawa's climate, achieving low thresholds requires careful planning because we need effective weather sealing against snow, ice, and heavy rain. Modern accessible door systems use advanced weatherstripping and drainage systems to maintain weather protection while keeping thresholds minimal. Entry doors often incorporate adjustable threshold systems that can be set to the lowest practical height while maintaining proper drainage away from the home.

Professional installation is crucial for accessible thresholds because improper installation can create water infiltration issues or actually increase the effective threshold height. The door frame must be perfectly level, and the threshold must integrate properly with your home's drainage system. Many accessible door systems also include features like wider door openings (minimum 32 inches clear width) and lever-style handles.

City of Ottawa requirements may vary for specific accessibility modifications - confirm with your installer. For accessible door installation that meets all code requirements while maintaining weather protection, request a consultation with experienced door installers who understand barrier-free design principles.

Disclaimer: This guide is provided for informational purposes only by Ottawa Window Pros. It does not constitute professional advice. Always consult qualified, licensed contractors and your local building authority before starting any construction or renovation project. Information is current as of October 11, 2026 and may change. Visit ottawawindowinstall.ca for the latest answers.