



# Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

A Comprehensive Guide for Developing Accessibility Policies and Accessibility Plans





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This guide can help people develop their organizations' accessibility policies and accessibility plans.

## What you need to do

Under Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, all public sector organizations, as well as private and non-profit organizations with 50 or more employees must:

- Develop statements of commitment to accessibility and make them publicly available
- Create written accessibility policies and make them publicly available
- Create written multi-year accessibility plans, update them at least once every five years and post them on their websites, if they have one

If requested, organizations must provide their statement of commitment, accessibility policies and plan in an accessible format.

**Public sector organizations** must develop their accessibility plans in consultation with people with disabilities and post annual status reports to let the public know what they have accomplished in their accessibility plans. They must also provide their annual reports in an accessible format on request.

### Organization

### Compliance Date

Public sector organizations with 50+ employees

January 1, 2013

Public sector organizations with 1-49 employees

January 1, 2014

Private and non-profit organizations with 50+ employees

January 1, 2014

A **statement of commitment** establishes an organization's vision and goals for accessibility. It is an important first step in the development of accessibility policies and plans as it gives an organization purpose and direction.

**Accessibility policies** are the formal rules an organization puts in place to achieve its accessibility goals.

An **accessibility plan** outlines what steps an organization will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and when it will do so.

These three elements work in tandem. Together, they should make accessibility a permanent part of your organization's culture and business practices.

## Steps to consider

The law is flexible, so you can develop your accessibility policies and plan in a way that works best for your organization. There is no right or wrong way. This guide provides some useful steps for consideration.

### Choose your team

A team or working group approach may be a good way to work on the development of your accessibility policies and plan. The team members will need to have a good working knowledge of your organization's business, policies, programs and services.

Removing and preventing barriers to accessibility requires cooperation among many parts of an organization, so select members from different departments. For example, consider inviting members from communications, human resources (HR) and information technology (IT) departments. Include employees who have disabilities or have experience working with people with disabilities.

In order to drive change from the top of your organization, you may want to include an executive who has the enthusiasm and commitment to champion the multi-year accessibility plan.

## Step 1: Determine what you have to do

Once you have your team in place, learn more about accessibility and Ontario's accessibility laws under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Here are some ideas to get you started.

### Learn what the law says

- Visit the AODA Compliance Wizard at [ontario.ca/AccessON](https://ontario.ca/AccessON). With just a little information about your organization, it will produce a customized list of what the law says you have to do between now and 2021. The Wizard will also link you to policy guidelines, free tools and resources to help you meet your requirements.
- For information on the AODA and its accessibility laws, read:
  - [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\)](#)
  - [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service \(or Ontario Regulation 429/07\)](#)
  - [Integrated Accessibility Standards \(or Ontario Regulation 191/11\)](#).

### Learn about accessibility

- Get in touch with disability- and accessibility-related organizations and take advantage of their resources
- Attend disability-related community events or invite guest speakers from local disability organizations
- Read the definition of disability in [Appendix A](#), Definitions
- Read about barriers in [Appendix B](#), Barriers and Solutions.

## Step 2: Assess your level of accessibility

This can help you set accessibility priorities and develop strategies that can maximize your organization's resources.

### **Review what has been done**

What are your workplace's accessibility achievements so far? What have you already done to meet Ontario's accessibility laws? Look at all areas in your organization such as sales, maintenance, human resources, programs, communications and training.

This exercise should help you and your team to understand your organization's readiness to meet its legal obligations.

### **Accessibility Achievements – SAMPLE**

#### Maintenance/facilities

- Cleared clutter from the hallways and corridors.

#### Customer Service

- Updated the customer feedback process to allow customers to provide comments through the website, by email, phone or in-person.

#### Information and Communications

- Converted existing emergency and public safety information into a digital file for easy conversion to accessible formats.
- Developed a procedure so that company communications are available to employees with disabilities at the same time as everyone else.



## Identify barriers to accessibility

Barriers to accessibility are obstacles that make it difficult — or sometimes impossible — for people with disabilities to fully participate in life. Meeting Ontario’s accessibility laws can help you remove many barriers; however there may be some that are unique to your organization.

Many people think disabilities are the barriers, but that’s not the case. Barriers usually develop because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered. Once you understand what accessibility barriers are, you will be able to identify them more easily in your organization.

Barriers may be visible or invisible. There are many different types of barriers. Here are a few examples.

Type of barrier	Example of barrier
<b>Attitudinal barriers</b> may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A receptionist who talks to an individual’s support person rather than the individual with a disability.</li></ul>
<b>Informational and communication barriers</b> arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Communicating important messages over an intercom that people who have hearing loss cannot hear clearly.</li><li>• Publications that are not available in large print, digitally, Braille or other accessible formats.</li></ul>
<b>Technological barriers</b> occur when technology or the way it is used does not meet the needs of people with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A website that does not support screen reading software.</li></ul>

Type of barrier	Example of barrier
<p><b>Systemic barriers</b> in policies, practices and procedures result in people with disabilities to being treated differently than others or sometimes excluded altogether.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility criteria that effectively exclude people with disabilities. For example, requiring a job applicant to have a driver's licence even though it isn't essential to do the job.</li> <li>• Meetings or conferences that are held in locations that are not accessible to people with disabilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical and architectural barriers</b> occurs in the environment and prevent access for people with disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A door knob that cannot be twisted by a person with limited mobility and strength, such as someone with arthritis.</li> <li>• A hallway or door that is too narrow for a person who uses a wheelchair to pass through safely.</li> </ul>

Look for barriers in all areas of your organization. Include policies, procedures, programs and services.

When looking for barriers, remember that Ontario's accessibility laws define disability broadly. The definition includes invisible disabilities such as mental illness, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, colour blindness, etc. For the definition of disability, please go to [Appendix A](#).

Here are some other tips.

- Review "Barriers and Solutions" in [Appendix B](#)
- Brainstorm with employees, volunteers, customers or other people outside of your organization to generate a list of policies, procedures, programs and services that are known to cause — or are suspected to cause — barriers to people with disabilities. When consulting employees, consider using an anonymous questionnaire so those who have not disclosed having a disability can identify barriers they have encountered.

- Think about the barriers that your organization might inadvertently create during major initiatives such as office relocations, renovations, program changes, software upgrades or website launches.

## Set priorities

Now that you have a list of barriers, you are ready to set your priorities.

- Using the results you received from the **AODA Compliance Wizard**, list the accessibility laws that your organization has not met.
- List any other barriers beyond Ontario's accessibility laws that might significantly affect employees with disabilities or that exist in programs, facilities and services that are frequently used by the public.

## Step 3: Create your accessibility policies and accessibility plan

Now that you understand your organization's level of accessibility and know where the barriers exist, you'll need to develop:

- statement of commitment
- accessibility policies
- accessibility plan.

Your policies set out the rules your organization will put in place to become more accessible. Your plan is a road map to help you meet Ontario's accessibility laws and remove the accessibility barriers you have identified.

# Writing your statement of commitment

The statement of commitment summarizes your organization's commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

As you write it, consider your organization's vision, overall goals and its current level of accessibility. Think about the accessibility message you want to convey to your employees and the public.

Once you have finished the statement

- tell your employees about it by posting it on your intranet or asking an executive on the team to send an email message to all employees.
- make the statement of commitment publicly available.
- provide it in an accessible format on request.

Consider posting it on your website if you have one, or incorporating the statement into your accessibility policies (see [Appendix C](#)), or the "Message from the CEO" section of the accessibility plan (see [Appendix D](#)).

## **Statement of Commitment – SAMPLE**

[Name of Organization] is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

# Developing your accessibility policies

Accessibility policies, like all policies, are organizational rules that outline how an organization should operate and interact with its employees and its customers.

You have the flexibility to determine what accessibility policies best fit your organizational culture and business practices. You are not required to have a formal policy for each of Ontario's accessibility laws.

Here are four easy steps to help you develop your accessibility policies.

## Identify gaps in your current policies

Some of your current policies may already address accessibility or Ontario's accessibility laws. For example, you may already have a policy about making information accessible to people with disabilities on request.

Alternatively, when assessing your organization's level of accessibility, you may have discovered that some of your existing policies create barriers. For example, a policy that requires all purchases to be returned within seven business days creates a barrier for people with disabilities who are not able to travel easily.

Review what you are required to do under Ontario's accessibility laws, the barriers you discovered in your assessment, and your overall accessibility goals. Next, think about whether creating a policy could help you achieve your goals.

You may also adapt your current policies to include accessibility. For example, if your organization has human resource policies on recruitment or performance management, you could integrate accessibility requirements into these existing policies rather than creating new ones.

## Organize and write your policies

Once you have decided what content to include, organize it in a clear, logical sequence that's easy to understand. Consider starting with your statement of commitment and then adding your other accessibility policies. Your policies must be consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. You can choose how to format your policies, but they must be documented.

See **Appendix C** for a sample accessibility policies template.

### **Example**

[Name of organization] will provide, on request, information in an accessible format or with communication supports to people with disabilities, in a manner that takes into account their disability.

### **Best practice**

In your office software, use a structured electronic file to prepare your policies and multi-year plan so it can be easily shared in a variety of accessible formats on request.

A structured electronic file includes information about the format of the document such as titles, section headings, font size and colours. This makes it easy to produce the same document in an alternate accessible format such as a web page, large print, Braille or audio version.

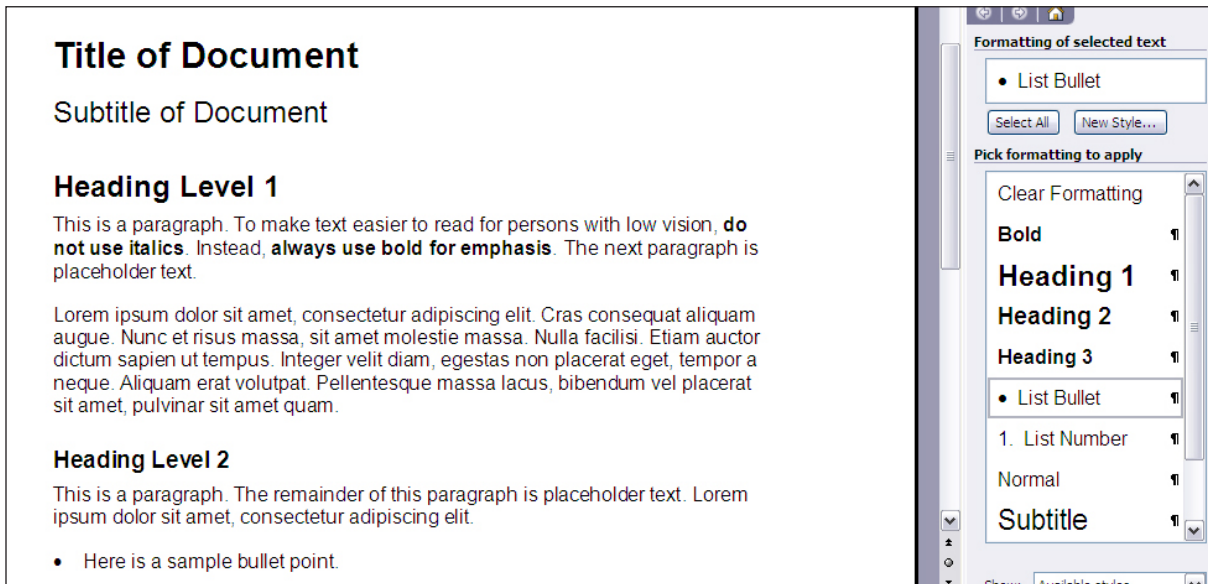


Figure 1: A structured electronic file composed in Microsoft Word.

Check out our [tip-sheet on making information accessible to people with disabilities](#) available at [ontario.ca/AccessON](http://ontario.ca/AccessON).

## Publish your policies

You must make your policies available to the public. For example, you could post information about the policies on your website or in your reception area. If requested, you must also provide a copy of the policies in an accessible format.

You may also want to share your policies with your employees so they can see your commitment to accessibility. Consider sending out a memo or posting it on your organization's intranet, if you have one.

## Review and update your policies

A policy is a living document and should be reviewed and updated whenever your organization's practices or procedures change. For example, as you move forward with implementing your multi-year accessibility plan, you may need to update the policies you have written or to draft new policies.

# Developing your accessibility plan

Your accessibility plan can help you meet your policy commitments, Ontario's accessibility laws and improve accessibility.

Here are some steps that may help you develop your accessibility plan.

## **Determine your strategies**

Review the list of priorities you created in Step 2, which includes legal requirements that you have not met, as well as the barriers you identified as a priority for removal.

Your next task is to develop strategies to address your priorities.

Your organization is not required to remove or eliminate every barrier right away. You can be strategic about which ones to tackle immediately. But you must meet your legal requirements by the deadlines outlined in the report you received from the **AODA Compliance Wizard**.

Your strategies to meet these legal requirements that have an approaching deadline may be more detailed than your strategies to meet those with later deadlines.

Here are some things you may want to consider when determining your strategies.

**Consult the experts:** Consult people with disabilities throughout this process. People with disabilities are often knowledgeable about removing the barriers that affect them.

## **For Public Sector Only**

Public sector organizations must consult with people with disabilities when developing their plans. If an organization has an accessibility advisory committee, the committee must be included in the consultation process.



**Allocate resources:** Estimate the human, financial, and technical resources needed and available.

**Assign responsibility:** Decide which employee or department will lead your efforts to meet each commitment.

**Decide on a timeline:** Develop a work schedule that aligns with compliance deadlines for Ontario's accessibility laws and your organization's priorities.

For some sample worksheets with strategies to meet Ontario's accessibility laws and remove barriers please go to [Appendix E](#).

Ask yourself the following questions about each of your commitments.

### **Checklist**

1. Is the commitment practical?
2. If it's a multi-step commitment, does the sequence of actions make sense?
3. Is the timeline realistic? Is there enough time to complete each stage?
4. Will the actions taken result in the barrier being removed or prevented?
5. Will the proposed approach to meeting a requirement or removing a particular barrier create any new barrier to accessibility?

## Create your public accessibility plan

Using the information from the strategies you developed in the previous step, create your publicly available accessibility plan. It's up to you to decide how much detail to include in your plan. It should outline how you plan to remove accessibility barriers and meet Ontario's accessibility laws.

See the template for an accessibility plan in **Appendix D**. The template is divided into two sections.

- **Section One** asks you to list what your organization has done to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility
- **Section Two** asks you to list the strategies you will put in place up to 2021 to meet Ontario's accessibility laws and to remove and prevent barriers. Your list should include projects in areas such as customer service, information and communications, employment, procurement and training.

Invite people with disabilities, those who have experience with people with disabilities and others who were part of the consultative process to comment on your plan.

Keep in mind that your accessibility plan is public. So use plain language, write short sentences, avoid jargon or acronyms, and use the active voice.

## Publish your accessibility plan

### **Post your plan**

Get corporate approval and then distribute the plan throughout the organization.

The law says you must post the plan on your organization's website. If your organization does not have a website, then consider making the plan available in some other reasonable way such as notifying the public about its availability on a bulletin board, in a newsletter or through social media.

## Provide the plan in accessible format on request

You must also provide your plan in an accessible format when asked. Accessible formats include standard word processor files, web pages, Braille and large print. Check out our [tip-sheet on making information accessible to people with disabilities](#) available at [ontario.ca/AccessON](http://ontario.ca/AccessON).

Consider setting up a process to respond to comments and questions from the public. Include contact information in the “For More Information” section of the accessibility plan.

## Monitor progress and report to the government

To measure the success of the accessibility plan, consider checking its progress every six to 12 months.

You need to file a report with the government regarding your compliance with Ontario’s accessibility laws every two years (public sector organizations) or every three years (private and non-profit sector organizations). These reports are filed online at [ontario.ca/AccessON](http://ontario.ca/AccessON).

Reviewing the plan prior to reporting will give your organization the opportunity to see what it has accomplished and what it still needs to do.

## Review and update your plan

You are required to review and update your accessibility plan at least once every five years and post it on your website, if you have one.

For example, public sector organizations with 50 or more employees must have an accessibility plan in place by January 1, 2013 and must review and update the plan by January 1, 2018.

## **For Public Sector Only**

### **Consultation**

When developing, reviewing and updating their accessibility plans, all public sector organizations must consult with people with disabilities as well as their organizations' accessibility advisory committees (if they have one). Consultations will provide people with disabilities an opportunity to provide feedback and help organizations to maintain an awareness of the needs of people with disabilities.

### **Annual Status Update**

Public sector organizations must also prepare annual updates on what they have done to achieve their accessibility plans. These could include updates about meeting their legal requirements as well as other accessibility achievements. Updates must be available to the public and posted on their websites if they have one. Like an accessibility policy or plan, the annual status report must be provided in an accessible format on request.

Private and non-profit organizations with 50 or more employees must have their accessibility plans in place by January 1, 2014 and must review and update them by January 1, 2019.

When updating your plan, note the achievements your organization has made and make adjustments to your strategies where necessary. Remember to check [ontario.ca/AccessON](http://ontario.ca/AccessON) for any changes to accessibility standards so that you may update your plan accordingly.

### **Best practices**

- Update accessibility plans annually so that the public can see your organization's progress.
- Build accessibility planning into the existing corporate and strategic business cycles as well as other planning processes.
- Make sure your accessibility policies remain in step with your accessibility plans.

# Appendix A

## Definitions

**Accessibility** — The term accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life. It is used to describe how widely a service, product, device, or environment is available to as many people as possible. Accessibility can be seen as the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product or environment.

**Barrier** — Barriers are obstacles that limit access and prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. Most barriers are not intentional. Barriers usually arise because the needs of people with disabilities are not considered from the beginning.

**Disability** — Ontario's accessibility law adopts the definition for disability that is in the Ontario Human Rights Code. It defines disability broadly:

- 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."

# Appendix B

## Barriers and solutions

Some people see disabilities as the barrier. But that's not the case. For example, Sarah has low vision and has a hard time reading some restaurant menus. Her low vision is not the barrier. It is the small print on the menus. When a restaurant gives Sarah a large print menu, she can read it and place her order independently and barrier free.

The tables below illustrate the various types of barriers that exist and some possible solutions for their removal.

**Attitudinal barriers** may result in people with disabilities being treated differently than people without disabilities.

Attitudinal Barriers	Possible Solutions
Thinking that people with intellectual disabilities are not able to make decisions.	Do not assume what employees or customers with disabilities can or cannot do. Ask them.
Assuming that a person who has a speech impairment cannot understand you.	Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities.
Believing a person who has a mental health disability or someone who uses a wheelchair would not be a good employee.	Learn about ways you can accommodate employees with disabilities.

Attitudinal Barriers	Possible Solutions
Assuming that a person with vision loss cannot enjoy movies, TV or concerts.	Learn about the different ways and available technologies that help people with vision loss enjoy movies, TV and concerts.
Avoiding a person with a disability in fear of saying the wrong word or offending them.	Train staff to interact and communicate with people with different types of disabilities.
Thinking that every person with a disability will need costly accommodation.	Learn about the types of accommodations for people with disabilities. Many are low cost.

**Informational and communication barriers** arise when a person with a disability cannot easily receive and/or understand information that is available to others.

Informational and Communication Barriers	Possible Solutions
Print that is too small to read.	Make everyday documents, like signs and menus, easy to read by making sure that the print is legible for most people.
Presentation materials for meetings, such as slide decks and videos are not accessible to employees with low vision or who have hearing loss.	<p>Develop a template for slide decks using large fonts, high contrast colours and clean layout.</p> <p>Provide a visual description of the slides when making a presentation.</p>

<b>Informational and Communication Barriers</b>	<b>Possible Solutions</b>
<p>Include captions for videos. When this is not possible, provide a text transcription of the video.</p>	<p>Provide descriptions or alt tags for pictures for people with vision loss.</p>
<p>Brochures, guides and advertisements are not clear or easily understood.</p>	<p>Use plain language, symbols and pictures to get your message across.</p>
<p>Website pictures don't have descriptions.</p>	<p>Provide descriptions or alt tags for pictures for people with vision loss.</p>
<p>Complicated, busy or confusing signs.</p>	<p>Keep signs clean and clear. Make information available in another form, such as a chart or pictogram.</p>
<p>Seating arrangements make it difficult for people who have hearing loss to fully participate in meetings.</p>	<p>Arrange seating at a round table to facilitate lip reading. Use assistive listening or amplification devices as appropriate.</p>
<p>Marketing and communications are not inclusive, either in depicting people with disabilities, including them as a potential target audience, or in considering them.</p>	<p>Check that your marketing and communications efforts reach people with disabilities. Include people with disabilities of all generations in photos, testimonials and other communications.</p> <p>Ensure marketing collateral such as flyers, brochures, podcasts and YouTube videos, are accessible.</p>



**Technological barriers** occur when technology or the way it is used does not meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Technological Barriers	Possible Solutions
Emails or other electronic communications are not accessible to people who use screen readers.	Make sure every email is accessible to people who use screen readers and offer alternative methods of communication.
Having only one way for your customers to reach you, for example, by telephone only.	Allow customers to contact you in a variety of ways including telephone, email, TTY or train your staff on using the relay service over the phone.
Accepting only online job applications.	Welcome job applications in a number of formats.

**Systemic barriers** in policies, practices and procedures and result in people with disabilities being treated differently than others or sometimes excluded altogether.

Systemic Barriers	Possible Solutions
People with disabilities are excluded from events, or included as an after-thought when planning events.	Make sure that accessibility is considered when making plans for events and invite attendees to tell you if they have different needs. Consider using an accessibility checklist for events.
Not knowing about the different types of accommodations an employee might need to return to work after an absence due to a disability.	Learn about the types of accommodations employees might need. Talking with employees about their specific needs is a good first step.

Systemic Barriers	Possible Solutions
There is no leadership or accountability for issues related to accessibility for people with disabilities.	Designate a point person to implement accessibility policies and procedures.
Hiring policies do not encourage applications from people with disabilities.	Review current hiring processes to identify and remove barriers such as inaccessible locations for interviews.
Procedures may exclude some employees, such as directing maintenance/ housekeeping staff to only use certain cleaning products that can cause allergic reactions.	Implement a “fragrance-free” policy.

**Physical and architectural barriers** in the environment and prevent access for people with disabilities.

Physical/Architectural Barriers	Possible Solutions
Aisles are blocked by displays or merchandise making them too narrow for a person using a wheelchair or walker.	Consider the paths that your employees and customers take when creating displays or storing merchandise.
Event or meeting spaces are inaccessible.	Think about potential barriers when selecting a venue. Do not just look for a ramp. Consider the washrooms, lighting and signage.
Accessibility features such as power-operated doors are broken and not fixed promptly.	Develop a maintenance plan and ensure prompt response times when equipment is broken.

# Appendix C

## Accessibility policies – sample template

### **Statement of organizational commitment**

[Name of organization] is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario's accessibility laws.

### **Training**

We are committed to training staff and volunteers in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

We will train our employees and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

### **Procurement**

Note: Under the law, only public sector organizations have this requirement.

We will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-serve kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

## **Self-service kiosks**

Note: Public sector organizations must incorporate accessibility features. And private and non-profit organizations must have regard for accessibility in this requirement.

We will incorporate accessibility features/consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

## **Information and communications**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports.

We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

## **Employment**

We will notify employees, potential hires and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.

We will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities. We will put in place a process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes will take into account the accessibility needs of all employees. Note: This only applies to organizations that already have these processes in place.

## **Changes to existing policies**

We will modify or remove an existing policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

# Appendix D

## Accessibility plan – sample template

Note: This template provides instructions to organizations in highlighted text. Remember to delete all highlighted text from your final plan prior to publishing and any headings that do not apply to your organization.

### **Timelines for Compliance**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Compliance Date</b>
Public sector organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2013
Public sector organizations with 1-49 employees	January 1, 2014
Private and non-profit organizations with 50+ employees	January 1, 2014

# [Organization Name]

## Accessibility Plan

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## Message from the CEO

A personal message from your CEO illustrates the importance the leadership of your organization places on accessibility.

You may want to include a specific achievement, success story or best practice that demonstrates your organization's leadership in implementing accessibility initiatives.

You may also want to incorporate the statement of commitment to accessibility into this message.

## Introduction

In this section, you may choose to include some information about your organization, highlight some of your key achievements in accessibility, write a brief executive summary of the plan or include two or three paragraphs that build on the essence of your Statement of Commitment. You might want to link your accessibility plan to your diversity or inclusion strategy, if your organization has one.

### Sample content

[Name of organization] strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Our organization/business is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This accessibility plan outlines the steps [organization name] is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our plan shows how [organization name] will play its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

## Section One: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

In this section, you have the opportunity to highlight specific projects and programs your organization has implemented to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and to meet requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Under each heading, add an introductory paragraph, if you wish, and provide information in bullets. You may also want to add a paragraph describing the corporate approach to addressing barriers. Please delete any headings that do not apply.

This document includes a summary of the accessibility initiatives the [organization name] has completed.

### **Customer Service**

You can use the list below to provide information. You can also add additional information.

- A statement confirming that your organization has remained in compliance with the Customer Service Standard.
- How customer feedback was submitted.
- A summary of any actions your organization took to address the feedback it received.
- If you did not receive any feedback, outline what actions your organization took to identify and address potential barriers that may have prevented people from giving feedback.

For more information about Ontario's Customer Service Standard, visit [ontario.ca/AccessON](https://ontario.ca/AccessON)

### **Information and Communications**

List initiatives from past years.



## **Employment**

List initiatives from past years.

## **Procurement**

Note: This section may not apply to your organization. List initiatives from past years, if applicable.

## **Self-service kiosks**

Note: This section may not apply to your organization. List initiatives from past years, if applicable.

## **Other**

If your organization implemented initiatives that do not apply to any of the above headings, please list them here.

## Section Two: Strategies and Actions

Identify the projects and programs your organization plans between now and 2021 to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

### **Customer Service**

The [name of organization] is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods and services to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

List the initiatives your organization is planning to continue in order to comply with the Customer Service Standard (e.g., training new staff) and specify the timeframe for each.

## **Information and Communications**

The [name of organization] is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

List the initiatives your organization is planning and specify the timeframe for each.

## **Employment**

The [name of organization] is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

List initiatives your organization is planning and specify the timeframe for each.

## **Procurement**

The [name of organization] is committed to accessible procurement processes.

List the initiatives your organization is planning and specify the timeframe for each.

## **Self-service kiosks**

The [name of organization] is committed to incorporating accessibility features/ considering accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

If applicable, list the initiatives your organization is planning and specify the timeframe for each.

## **Training**

The [name of organization] is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

List initiatives your organization is planning and specify the timeframe for each.

## Other

If your organization has planned initiatives that do not fit any of the above headings, list them here in bullet format and specify the timeframe.

## For More Information

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact [insert name] at

[insert contact number, TTY contact number (if any), telephone number, and email address].

Your website and social media addresses: (insert addresses).

Standard and accessible formats of this document are free on request from (insert contact information).

# Appendix E

## Sample worksheets

Here are two sample worksheets that highlight some of the things you may want to consider when developing strategies to meet Ontario's accessibility laws and to remove barriers to accessibility.

The sample strategies and timelines are based on the legal requirements of a large private sector organization, i.e., an organization with 50 or more employees.

**Sample Worksheet 1:** Highlights strategies an organization could take to address one of Ontario's accessibility laws.

**Sample Worksheet 2:** Highlights strategies an organization could take to remove other accessibility barriers identified in their accessibility assessment.

## Sample Worksheet 1: addressing a requirement of the AODA Accessibility Standards

Ontario law: Provide accessible formats and communication supports on request.			
Actions	Resources	Responsibility	Completion Date
Develop and implement a policy that documents be created in a structured electronic format to allow for easier conversion to accessible formats	Up to 5 days	Office Manager	March 1, 2015 in preparation for deadline
Assess how and what information we make available to public	1 day	Customer Service Dept.	September 1, 2015
Develop a process for responding to requests for supports and services	Up to 5 days	Customer Service Dept.	September 1, 2015
Appoint a staff person to focus on planning accessible meetings	Ongoing	Event Coordinator	September 30, 2015
Outsource select products for conversion to accessible formats	2 weeks	Customer Service Dept.	November 1, 2015
Develop accessible alternatives to telephone systems for people who have hearing loss	2 weeks	Telecommunications Coordinator	November 1, 2015
Establish or obtain a list of sign language interpreters, intervenor and captioner vendors	Up to 4 days	Customer Service Dept.	November 1, 2015
Post a notice on website, Facebook page or other social media sites and on premises that information is available in a variety of accessible formats	Up to 2 hours of work	Webmaster	December 1, 2015

## Sample Worksheet 2: addressing other barriers

**Customer Service Barrier:** The Customer Service Centre's policy that all transactions be in-person shuts out customers with physical disabilities who have difficulty accessing the centre.

Actions	Resources	Responsibility	Completion Date
Investigate alternative policy options and impacts	3 days	Customer Service Dept.	January 1, 2013
Examine on-line and other delivery possibilities	3 days		
Establish new procedures based on revised policy	3 days		
Inform all staff of revised policy and procedures	1 day		
Post a notice of revised policy on website and social media outlets	1 hour		

**Information and Communications Barrier:** Some employees complain that small fonts and serif fonts make the branch intranet site more difficult to read.

Actions	Resources	Responsibility	Completion Date
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and update intranet site templates</li> <li>Ensure that the minimum font size on templates is 12 point, and only sans-serif typefaces are used (e.g. Arial, Verdana)</li> <li>Ensure that fonts can be resized when technically feasible</li> </ul>	2 days	Webmaster	February 1, 2013

## Sample Worksheet 2: addressing other barriers (continued)

**Employment Barrier:** The customer care tracking system requires a computer mouse. So employees who cannot use or have trouble handling a mouse cannot use the system. This causes problems for people who have carpal tunnel syndrome.

Action Plan	Resources	Responsibility	Completion Date
IT team to ensure next generation system is usable by both mouse and keyboard	2 days	IT Department	March 1, 2013 Dependent on future procurement of technology
Developers to observe employees using current system and to learn about assistive technologies they use	2 days		
Keyboard accessibility will be criterion when procuring future software	5 days		

## Please note

This guide is not legal advice. Please contact your legal advisor if you require assistance in interpreting the legislation or the regulation. The guide has been created to help you understand the legislation and/or regulation and does not replace the official version of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, Ontario Regulation 191/11 and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). If there is any conflict between this guide and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation or the AODA, the regulation and the AODA are the final authorities.

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