



Access Alliance
Multicultural Health and Community Services

2022 PROGRESS REPORT

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

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Introduction

Ontario Human Rights Code

Under the [Ontario Human Rights Code](#), everyone has the right to equal treatment without discrimination. There is a positive duty to accommodate short of undue hardship, meaning that wherever unequal treatment or discrimination exists it must be remedied unless the remedy would cause undue hardship. The Ontario Human Rights Code has primacy over the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act legislation.

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

The [Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(ODA\)](#) is a planning act that builds on the foundation of the Ontario Human Rights Code. The Act requires various sector organizations to plan and undertake activities to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

The purpose of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 \(AODA\)](#) is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025 through the development, implementation and enforcement of standards. The standards require the persons or organizations named or described in the standards to implement measures, policies, practices or other requirements within the time periods specified in the standards.

Standards developed to date through AODA are:

[Accessibility Standards for Customer Service](#) (O. Reg. 429/07) which establishes what organizations must do to make the delivery of their goods and services accessible to people with disabilities.

[Integrated Accessibility Standards](#) (O. Reg. 191/11) which provides a number of general and specific requirements in the areas of employment, information and communication, transportation and the design of public spaces.

Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services (AAMHCS) is committed to:

- Meeting the objectives and requirements of both the *Ontario Regulation Reg. 429/07 Customer Service* and the *191/11- Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)* under the *accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*
- Providing quality services to all clients and their family members and to members of the community with disabilities in manner that respects the dignity and independence to all clients so that persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of Access.
- Continually improving *accessibility for persons with disabilities* to AAMHCS facilities,

programs, and services by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers. It is understood that certain barriers may take longer to remove and implementation of these initiatives may span several years. Milestones in progress will be flagged in progress reports.

- Appointing an Accessibility Compliance Lead/Coordinator, who will ensure the standards are met and a plan is publicly accessible, at minimum the plan will be available on AAMHCS web site as a link from the home page.

For a full description of AAMHCS programs and services please refer to the Website: <http://accessalliance.ca/>

The 2015 Accessibility Progress Report is AAMHCS annual update on the progress made to implement the activities introduced in the 2011 – 2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and other measures taken to improve accessibility thought the year.

ACCESSIBILITY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE (2011 – 2022)

PHYSICAL/ARCHITECTURAL:

Jane Site

- Renovations took place to connect different office suites, integrate and enlarge reception and waiting room area. This additional space better accommodated mobility aids, wheelchairs, and seating for clients, as well as seamless access to different parts of the agency
- Barrier free exam tables were purchased and installed
- Service counters lowered
- Push Button for automatic doors for entrance to client washroom installed
- Installed levered door handles

College Site

- Barrier free exam tables purchased and installed
- Service counter lowered
- Push Buttons for automatic doors at reception and program meeting space installed
- Glass partition barrier removed

Danforth Site

- Renovations took place to alter ground floor reception and community resource centre areas to differentiate spaces better; community resource area (CRC) from medical reception and waiting room areas. Layout is better for mobility aids, wheelchairs, seating, as well as seamless access to different parts of the organization.
- Barrier free exam tables purchased and installed
- Community Resource computer tables accessible, wheelchair accommodating

- Metal Ramp placed at entrance to eliminate trip barrier with mobility aids
- Installed new flooring in public resource space (prior flooring tripping hazard)
- Community Kitchen renovated to make space for wheelchair access

INFORMATIONAL AND COMMUNICATIONAL:

- Signage installed to improve access to washrooms
- Questions regarding Accessibility & Organization culture are included in employee engagement surveys
- Job postings, flyers, brochures, registration forms, client experience surveys provides notice that accommodations are available upon request
- Accessibility symbols added to printed materials, flyers, brochures, invitations
- Procedure developed on Event Safety that includes planning accessible meetings & events. Invitation notices/flyers include information about the accessibility of the program/event
- Jane site, installed signage to improve access and way finding inside the premises to programs and services (tactile, non-glare/matte finish, using recommended fonts and contrast)

TECHNOLOGICAL:

- AAMHCS Website Audit completed for Accessibility (hired Accessibility Experts Ltd.)
- Upgraded Website to be compliant with highest level of AODA standards (WCAG 2.0/Level A/AA)
- Browse Aloud Software installed, online speech & reading support tool. Website visitors browsing the web from their Smartphone, Tablet, PC or Mac can utilize Browse Aloud and benefit from the reading support that suits their individual needs and preferences, from home, in the Office or on the go. Reads all accessible content:
 - ALT Tags Behind Pictures
 - Accessible Flash and JavaScript
 - Online PDF Documents
 - Secure HTTPS Web Pages
 - Online Form Fields
 - Intranets and Extranets
 - Social Media Pages (such as Twitter)
 - Search Results Pages (such as Google)
- Larger screens installed for public resource areas to assist those with low vision, learning and intellectual disabilities (Jane & Danforth Sites)
- AAMHCS Language Services, Remote Interpretation Ontario (RIO) Network Call centre computer applications & interpreter interface of online portal is compatible with JAWS screen reading software
- AAMHCS has access to TTY & We have American Sign Language Interpreters (For deaf/hard of hearing we can pre-schedule on site or video remote interpreting on demand)

- AAMCHS has access to ASL interpreters on-demand through an application installed on mobile device at each site (InSight on Interpreter on Wheels)

ATTITUDINAL/TRAINING:

- All staff, students, volunteers, Board have been trained on the AODA Customer Service and Integrated Standards and is encouraged to be sensitive and to accommodate needs of all stakeholders and community at large.
- New staff is required to take on-line training and then sign/submit a declaration form that they've completed the training and read/understand the policies in place.
- Designated staff completed training on how to Create Accessible Office Documents
- Management & relevant support staff received specific/additional training on Accessibility Standards for Employment; e.g. recruitment, selection process, notice to successful candidates, accommodation, putting together individual's workplace emergency response plan etc.

POLICY/PRACTICE

- AAMHCS has designated key staff/Lead to ensure compliance with all aspects of the AODA standards
- On-going Training, written policies procedures and processes are in place. Also various tools and resources such as guides and templates for the development of documented individual accommodation plans, emergency individualized response, recruitment, selection, performance, career development, return to work etc. for employees with disabilities
- Pursuant to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (section 80.44) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, AAMHCS has procedures in place for preventative and emergency maintenance of accessible elements in its public spaces.

Accessible public space elements maintained by AAMHCS include Interior and exterior paths of travel such as walkways, stairs, ramps, parking lots and lifting devices (e.g. elevator) where these elements are not already covered by the Ontario Building Code.

AAMHCS procedures include the following:

AAMHCS Compliance Lead is responsible for ensuring maintenance to accessible elements, in conjunction with appropriate personnel and has developed preventative maintenance schedules to keep the elements in good working order or restore them to their original condition when necessary.

To the extent possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs impacting customer accessibility will be posted in advance, including information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a

description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting notices in a conspicuous place on AAMHCS premises, website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

AAMHCS personnel will inspect applicable accessible elements that are available for use by the public on Access Alliance premises on a regular basis. Any elements that are found to have defects or need maintenance will be identified and reported to AAMHCS Accessibility Compliance Lead so they can be addressed. Typically, a work order will be generated and sent to the appropriate contractor(s) to correct the defect(s) or perform the necessary maintenance.

In the event AAMHCS receives third party information that an accessible element needs maintenance or repairs, the information will be sent to AAMHCS Accessibility Compliance Lead, so the element can be inspected and appropriate action taken, as noted above.

In cases where it is determined that emergency maintenance or repairs to an accessible element are required, the element will be taken out of service and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority.

To the extent possible, AAMHCS personnel will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to safety, and to provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist. Steps taken may include putting in place barriers and temporary wayfinding signage, and/or posting notices, as indicated below.

Notice of a disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and, to the extent possible, will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting information notices in a conspicuous place on AAMHCS premises, the website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

RECRUITMENT:

Access Alliance posts information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. Job applicants who are individually selected for an interview and/or testing are notified that accommodations for material to be used in the process are available, upon request. Access Alliance consults with applicants who requests accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's disability.

Successful applicants are notified about Access Alliance’s policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment.

EMPLOYEE SUPPORTS

Access Alliance at onboarding, informs employees of the policies used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee’s accessibility needs due to disability. Access Alliance developed and has in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

CONCLUSION

AAMHCS remains committed to continue to improve accessibility and to engage our diverse community in that process. Despite the significant budgetary challenges faced by AAMHCS, principles of accessibility are increasingly taken into consideration in AAMHCS operations and planning. As public awareness of the barriers faced by persons with disabilities grows, AAMHCS will continue to make improvements in order to assist in overcoming those barriers.