

AODA MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (“the College”) is committed to treating all persons equally and with dignity while maintaining their independence. The College is constantly seeking to identify and remove any barriers or perceived barriers that persons with disabilities may encounter while working with the organization. The goal is to incorporate accessibility standards into its plan from the preliminary stages or during the early phases of executing such plans.

This Plan outlines actions, initiatives, and proposed initiatives the College has implemented and will put in place in future to provide inclusive and accessible services to all its stakeholders.

Introduction

The College is a designated public sector organization that is subject to the provisions of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”). Its purpose is to ensure greater accessibility for Ontarians of all abilities. AODA is Ontario’s roadmap to become barrier-free and includes accessibility standards by January 1, 2025.

The College Commitment

The College is committed to doing all we can to respect the core principles of accessibility legislation: dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. We will incorporate these principles into our policies, procedures, training, and best practices. Our aim is that all Ontarians can access our services and information when and how they need them, regardless of their abilities or disabilities.

Ensuring our operations are accessible and barrier-free is a shared effort. As an organization, we are dedicated to working with the people of Ontario to make accessibility for everyone a reality.

The following are steps the College will take to provide inclusive and accessible services to our members, applicants, employees, and the general public. It addresses the identification and removal of barriers to accessibility in the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Design of Public Spaces.

Compliance

Customer Service

We strive to consistently meet the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service by regularly updating our policies to eliminate obstacles and promote accessible customer service practices.

We welcome accommodation requests from individuals with disabilities. We provide and tailor assistance to each person based on their disclosed needs and a mutual discussion about potential accessibility alternatives.

Operating in a hybrid model, most of our staff can work remotely, and we primarily offer services online and via phone. As the College currently has limited onsite staff, in-person services are available by appointment only in our reception area. As we are in a commercial building, individuals with disabilities can be accompanied by their support person in public areas of our premises.

Employees, Council, non-Council and Committee members have been trained on the AODA principles, including the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities, and will undergo refresher training in 2024. We will maintain records of training, including dates and number of people trained.

New employees, contract and temporary agency staff, Council, non-Council and Committee members receive training and orientation on providing service to people with disabilities as part of the onboarding processes, within three months of their start date.

Our plan involves regular proactive reviews to eliminate accessibility barriers and incorporate related features into our policies. We'll formally review the plan every five years and update as needed for compliance with accessibility laws. Achievements in enhancing accessibility will be reported on our website.

Information and Communications

In 2020, the College created a registration satisfaction survey focusing on service timeliness and accessibility. Significant service improvements have been reported to the Office of the Fairness Commissioner due to increased staff, technology-driven processes, and accessible interpretation services.

Registrants, applicants, and the public can access alternative formats in communications. The College will provide information in a format that accommodates the person's disability upon request.



Evacuation information is provided verbally to guests and visitors. These can be provided in an alternate format on request. Accessibility has been included in the building Emergency Evacuation Plan. Emergency exit maps are posted in the kitchens, and staff wardens participate in training and documenting procedures.

Late 2023, the College implemented a new Registrant Management System, with a focus on increased self-service opportunities. The system design meets accessibility requirements. As of November 2021, the corporate website meets internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment

Accommodations are provided to job applicants and employees throughout the recruitment process and during employment. Employees are informed about the College's Accessibility policies and updates whenever there is a change to existing policies. Employees who were absent due to a disability follow a documented and individualized accommodation plan when integrating back to work.

The College has an Emergency Response Plan in place for employees with disabilities. Performance management, career development and redeployment processes will continue to be reviewed to ensure they consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities.

In 2024, the College will implement an online recruitment portal that will meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards and will ensure all learning products and systems are also compliant.

Design of Public Spaces

The College office space is equipped with accessible washrooms, access to the reception area and to the public boardroom area.

We continually evaluate our environment for potential accessibility barriers. This includes routine checks, identifying new issues, and developing alternative solutions and recommendations.

Accessibility Reports

The College submits accessibility reports in accordance with the AODA. The requirement in the Act is to file a report every three years. These reports outline the College's compliance with relevant accessibility standards in the Act and regulations. Since 2017, the College has filed a report annually confirming compliance to the Act and standards.



Ontario College of
Social Workers and
Social Service Workers

Contact Us

Please contact us for more information on our accessibility plan, or to receive this document in an accessible format at no cost. We will endeavour to respond within two business days.

Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers

250 Bloor St. E, Suite 1000

Toronto, Ontario M4W 1E6

Phone: 416-972- 9882

Toll free: 1-877-828-9380

Email: accessibility@ocswssw.org