



Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) aims to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people living, visiting, and working in the province of Ontario. The legislation, enacted in 2005, applies to all levels of government, non-profit organizations, and private sector businesses. The AODA is made up of five standards:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces

Working Women Community Centre (WWCC) is committed to complying with the AODA and to delivering services that are inclusive and respectful of the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Statement of Commitment

WWCC works with people at every stage of their lives, providing access to innovative and effective programs, and collaboratively building and working for an equitable, just, and vibrant community. Our vision is a resilient, inclusive society in which opportunity, empowerment, and social and economic justice create a better life for all.

WWCC is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. WWCC will do this by developing, implementing, and maintaining policies and programs that will respect the dignity and rights of people with disabilities, and to preventing and removing barriers to accessing services. This commitment will be integrated, wherever possible, to ensure that people with disabilities will benefit from the same services, in the same place(s) and in an equitable way to other service users.

WWCC is also committed to providing a respectful and accessible workplace, and promptly implementing employee accommodation plans. Working in a supportive environment enables employees to be fully engaged with their colleagues and the service users. It also allows them to continue contributing in a meaningful way to the communities WWCC serves.

To facilitate these commitments, WWCC is implementing a multi-year action plan that will be reviewed annually and updated at least once every five years, which will include progress in implementing the plan. The multi-year action plan will be made available upon request, and will be posted on WWCC's website.

WWCC furthers its commitment to equity and accessibility by working for improved services for people with disabilities, and a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

Standards of Accessibility under AODA

Accessible Customer Service

Status: Ongoing

AODA Customer Service Standards require WWCC to establish policies, practices and procedures for the provision of customer service that ensure that:

- Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- Services to persons with disabilities and others are integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary
- Persons with disabilities are given an equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the services of the organization

WWCC ensures that there are multiple ways that service users, including people with disabilities, can communicate with the organization. The use of assistive devices is welcome and encouraged to ensure access to service and information, and WWCC accommodates the inclusion of support persons wherever possible. Support animals are also welcome at WWCC sites.

WWCC will update its Accessibility Policy and ensure that it is easily accessible on the organization's website. Additionally, customer service training will be made available to all employees who are public-facing to provide the best possible service to all customers, including customers with disabilities.

Accessible Emergency and Public Safety Information

Status: Incomplete/Ongoing

WWCC will make emergency and public safety information available through multiple channels wherever possible. Information will be made available on WWCC's website, through public notices on doors and bulletin boards, and by voicemail messaging.

Public information is also available by request. These requests should be directed to admin@workingwomencc.org where the organization's Executive Director or designate will, within two (2) business days, consult with the requestor to determine the most appropriate accessible format based on the requestor's needs and WWCC's ability to deliver the information in accessible formats, and the time needed to do so.

Additionally, all service disruptions will be posted on WWCC premises as soon as possible, and communicated to impacted service users through appropriate communication channels (e.g., phone, email, verbally, online).

Accessible Emergency Information for Staff

Status: Incomplete/Ongoing

WWCC is committed to creating and maintaining a safe workplace for all employees. At present, no WWCC staff have documented a need for accommodation for individualized workplace emergency information.

WWCC will create a process for documenting accessibility issues for employees, to comply with the AODA. Existing employees will be provided with a worksheet or form to document emergency plans for those who require accommodation in the event of an emergency. On an ongoing and regular basis, these plans will be reviewed and updated.

Where required, and with proper consent, WWCC will provide assistance to employees with disabilities, to assist them in evacuating the workplace in case of an emergency or disaster. This will be included in the documentation and the agency location's fire plan.

Policies and Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Status: Complete – Approved by the Board of Directors September 6, 2022

WWCC has created operational and human resources policies to ensure that the organization and its employees comply with AODA. They form part of the organization's operations and human resources manuals. The policies will be reviewed every three years or as necessary.

Upon approval of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, it will also be kept in the operations manual.

Accessible Websites

Status: Incomplete/Ongoing

WWCC has two websites (our organizational website and we host a website for the Golden Mile project), which are not currently compliant with AODA legislation. We plan to hire a consultant to assess our compliance needs, to seek resources to pay for compliancy changes and to implement these changes as soon as it is feasible.

Training

Status: Ongoing

Accessibility and inclusion are essential to the work of WWCC. In accordance with the Ontario Human Rights Code, training is provided to employees and volunteers on AODA as part of onboarding. Specifically, within thirty (30) days of employment and two (2) weeks of volunteering. It is also provided to the Board of Directors within thirty (30) days of being elected.

WWCC keeps a record of the AODA training that employees, volunteers and Board members have completed.

Feedback and Complaints Policy

Status: Incomplete/Ongoing

Complaints

WWCC will ensure that its complaints policy includes accessibility information. It will include the process by which to receive and respond to complaints from service users and members of the public who self-identify as having disabilities. This policy and procedure will be posted on the organization's website. In the meantime, complaints can be made via president@workingwomencc.org or the organization's Executive Director. The complaint will be acknowledged within two (2) business days.

Feedback

WWCC will provide, or arrange for the provision, of accessible formats and communications supports when providing options for feedback methods. This may also involve consultation with the service user or member of the public to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support.

Public Information

Status: Incomplete

WWCC is committed to meeting the communications needs of people with disabilities. The organization will take steps to make public information available to people with disabilities by letting service users and the public know that accessible information is available upon request and is free.

Employment Practices

Status: Incomplete/Ongoing

WWCC is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices. It is also committed to providing information to staff through a variety of ways.

The following accessibility statement will accompany all job postings for WWCC: "WWCC is committed to reflecting the communities we serve and to nurture a respectful and inclusive work environment for all. We encourage qualified applicants of all ages, races, ethnic origins, religions, abilities, gender identities and sexual orientations to apply. Candidates invited for an interview are encouraged to inform the Hiring Committee manager in confidence of their accommodation requirements."

WWCC will ensure that all employees are aware that they can request this accommodation, and will ensure that employees are supported in bringing requests for accommodation forward. All accommodation requests are to be made in confidence to management, and are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

WWCC will develop an Employment Accommodation policy with input from senior management, which must be approved by the Board of Directors. This policy will include such sections as the physical environment, communications, performance reviews, and our existing leave/return to work process will include a section specific to employees with a disability.

Transportation

Status: Not applicable

WWCC does not provide transportation services to its service users.

Accessible Spaces

Status: Ongoing

WWCC has worked diligently since 2013 to ensure that its public spaces are accessible and that physical barriers are removed as resources allow. Part of this commitment involves meeting accessibility standards when procuring new spaces or making major modifications to current spaces. When designing office space, the management team ensures adequate spacing and accessible workspaces whenever possible.

WWCC will conduct repairs/replacements in a timely fashion.

The organization is committed to accessible spaces, and will undergo an internal accessibility audit to ensure that all locations have an accessibility plan.

All of WWCC's spaces are rental units and major renovations to make them all accessible are not possible. WWCC is committed to providing accessible service to its service users and partners by choosing accessible spaces going forward, and by accommodating requests for change of venues where accommodation is needed. Victoria Park Hub and 5 Fairview Mall Drive are fully accessible buildings.

Ongoing Commitment to Accessibility

WWCC will establish a subcommittee of our EDI committee that will include at least one (1) Director from the WWCC Board, to review compliance with the AODA. The Terms of Reference for this subcommittee will be made publicly available through WWCC's website; the minutes of each meeting will also be made available by request. This subcommittee will include, where possible, people who self-identify as having or representing people with disabilities. Part of this process will include consultation with people with disabilities to determine their needs and preferences in conducting business with WWCC.

This subcommittee will have responsibility for recommending additional training, updating this multi-year plan, and making recommendations to management on additional accessibility options.

This multi-year accessibility plan will be available online through WWCC's website. It is also available in other formats by contacting the organization.