

Accessibility Plan and Policies for the Ontario Clean Water Agency (OCWA)

This 2021-2025 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that OCWA will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Statement of Commitment

OCWA is committed to treating all people in a way that allows individuals to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility, as well as meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. We comply with all [Ontario Public Service accessibility policies](#) and are continuously improving accessibility for people with disabilities when it comes to our services, programs, information and communications, websites and facilities. OCWA will ensure our Multi-Year Accessibility plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities to improve accessibility and to implement legislated requirements. We will also prepare an annual status report on actions taken that will be posted on our external website.

Message from OCWA's President and CEO, Nevin McKeown

I am pleased to present OCWA's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, outlining the next five years from 2021-2025. This Plan describes how OCWA will continue to prevent and remove accessibility barriers both as a service provider and as an employer.

At OCWA, we strive for service and operational excellence, and empowering our people and our teams. Our goal is to be a leader in accessibility by identifying and removing barriers, changing attitudes, and creating more awareness around disabilities and the importance of accessibility at OCWA.

By focusing on promoting greater awareness of accessibility solutions and opportunities among our stakeholder groups, improving our staff training and ensuring that as we update our branding and website, accessibility is kept front of mind. We welcome your feedback on our progress.

Customer Service

The Accessible Customer Service Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation requires OCWA to have policies and procedures in place to support providing people with disabilities with accessible services.

Accessible Emergency Information: OCWA is committed to providing customers and clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. Any emergency procedures, plans or public safety information that is available to the public will be provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communications supports if requested.

OCWA will continue to provide employees who have disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary for evacuation situations and all emergencies. All managers and employees have been advised of the obligation to provide this information and the process for providing assistance to an employee with a disability and for developing an individualized emergency plan.

Accessibility in Procurement: OCWA procurement provides purchasing support to all areas of OCWA throughout the province through public procurement activities and vendor contract management.

OCWA procurement commits to support both employees and vendors by through the following actions:

- Accessibility will be considered for any purchases for services, materials or equipment that are required in the provision of our services to our clients.
- Accessibility requirements will be written into the templates that are used in the development of contracts and requests for bids (RFBs) for the purchasing of services and equipment for OCWA and its clients.
- RFB templates will be updated to ensure compliance with accessibility requirements by December 31, 2021.

Client Satisfaction Survey: OCWA is committed to including questions related to the accessibility in the context of mental health needs, and to make stakeholders more aware of available accessibility options.

Commitments

Training: The Ontario Public Service (OPS) mandatory accessibility training is provided on LearnON. OCWA provides training to employees and other staff members on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members.

OCWA will continue to take the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessibility laws in accordance with the AODA Customer Service Standard. All new employees are required to complete the courses through OCWA's New Employee Orientation program.

Through OCWA's mental health strategy, we will ensure that we place particular emphasis on the mental health of employees over the next five years by:

- Reviewing the Employee Experience Survey with a Mental Health lens to strengthen our understanding of available data related to employee experience in the workplace and where further surveying may be appropriate.
- Providing Mental Health Training for Leaders and Managers to build leadership competency and foster psychological health and safety and support employees with mental illness.
- Identifying Diversity Champions with a focus on Mental Health at the local level, and helping employees understand their respective roles and responsibilities related to mental health.

Managers and employees will benefit from OCWA's Diversity and Inclusion Strategy along with the OPS plans to embed diversity and inclusion content into their training, which will include disability

awareness. This training strategy will be woven into OCWA's leadership development programs, to ensure all employees will benefit from a more diverse and inclusive work environment.

As public servants, it is vital that we continue to learn about the importance of accessibility and how we can best serve our clients. As such, we are required by law to complete mandatory training in accordance with the [AODA](#) and adhere to the principles of the [OPS Accessibility Customer Service Policy](#).

New Employees/Managers are required to take the following mandatory accessibility training on LearnON:

- **All employees:** Customer Service Standard or May I help you? (Module 1 and 2)
 - Working Together – The OHRC and the AODA (video)
 - IASR Module 1: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) in the OPS (e-learning)
 - IASR Module 2: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Information and Communications Standards (e-learning)
- **Managers:**
 - IASR Module 3: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Employment Standards (e-learning)
 - Accessible Built Environment in the OPS

All OCWA employees are also encouraged to complete the Customer Service Training by:

1. Taking an e-learning Serve-Ability course;
2. Reading the [OPS Accessible Customer Service Policy](#) and OPS Accessibility Guideline;
3. Reading OCWA's Customer Service Policy.

Information and Communication: The Information and Communications Standard under the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) require us to communicate and provide information in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

OCWA is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine how best to communicate with them based on their needs. Several meetings and consultations have taken place with managers of the Information Technology and Communications Division to implement the requirements of the AODA (IASR).

OCWA has taken the necessary steps to make all new websites and content on those sites conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA by **January 1, 2021** and will continue ensuring accessibility through to the 2023 Level AAA.

- OCWA's website meets the following criteria for IASR:
 - Ensure all text on websites have the ability to be enlarged.
 - Provide text alternatives for any non-text content.

- Provide alternatives for time based media (text transcript for live audio or captions for pre-recorded video).

OCWA will take the following steps to ensure existing feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities upon request.

- OCWA will continue to use the process that was established as part of the Customer Service Standard.

OCWA is committed to ensure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request as follows:

- Any information that is requested by our clients or public will be provided in an alternate format or with communication support in a way that will help meet the needs of the individual who has made the request.
- OCWA will work with the individual to determine the appropriate format in which the information will be provided.
- Once requested, accessible information will be provided as soon as possible, although it may depend on the quantity of information, the complexity and the format requested.
- We will notify our clients and public that we will make our information accessible on request E.g. note on our website.

We plan to ensure that a D&I lens for accessibility is part of planning any and all communications, both internally and externally.

Website and Publications:

- We will ensure that our websites keep up to date with WCAG 2.0 Level AA recommendations. OCWA'S Communications Group will lead this initiative.
- We will also ensure that accessibility is a lens in any planning and redevelopment of communications products and service delivery platforms (website, Intranet, client and employee communications)
- We will explore ways to ensure accessible versions (e.g. transcripts, captions) of time-based media, such as videos, are made available.
- We will continue to ensure that key reports such as OCWA's *Annual Report* and our Business Plan and similar publications are published in an accessible format.
- As responsibility for web content creation is distributed across the agency, we will ensure that all staff understands the principles of creating accessible documents, particularly as it relates to PDF documents posted to the website.
- We will avail ourselves of OPS resources such as I&IT Accessibility Centre of Excellence workshops and promote these within OCWA to build awareness of best practices for creating accessible documents.

Resources:

- We will develop an internal document to guide employees on accessible communications and documents.

- When necessary, we will utilize external companies to ensure our documents meet accessibility guidelines (tagged PDF's, screen reader technology etc.)

Employment

OCWA is committed to fair and accessible employment practices in accordance with all OPS policies, procedures and guidelines. OCWA as an Agency of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and the Ontario Public Service (OPS) adheres to all OPS Employment policies and ensure that they are incorporated into OCWA's HR plans and programs. The OPS policies that support the IASR Employment Standard are: Preventing Barriers in Employment, Disability Accommodation Policy, Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy, Employment Policy, Performance Management Policy, Learning and Development Policy.

We will continue to ensure employment policies and practices are inclusive of people with disabilities and take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, **OCWA** will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired:

- Job applicants are notified that accommodation is available and will be provided as required as indicated on all job postings.
- If required, accommodation is provided to candidates during the interview process including the completion of tests, presentations and accessibility to the meeting facility.

OCWA will take the following steps to develop and put in place a process for developing individual accommodation and return-to-work plans for employees with a disability:

- OCWA will continue to provide accommodation support, on a temporary or permanent basis, if an employee has an injury, illness or disability that is affecting their ability to do their job and to fulfill job requirements.
- Employment Accommodation is provided on an individualized basis to ensure that barriers are removed from the workplace which would otherwise keep the employee from participating equally in all aspects of work.
- Employees are advised that if they have accommodation needs they should speak to their Manager as soon as possible.
- An individualized plan will be developed to meet the employee's accommodation needs and the employer's operational requirements.
- OCWA, as an agency of the OPS, will follow the OPS Employment Accommodation and Return to Work Operating Policy that governs the Employment Accommodation process and related responsibilities.

OCWA is committed to embedding accessibility in our employment practices to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account; the following measures are incorporated into the performance management and career development processes:

- All new managers are advised of the requirement to take accessibility needs into account for the above-mentioned processes during the new manager training program.

- Encourage managers and staff to participate in ongoing inclusion, diversity and accessibility training.
- Model the values of inclusion by ensuring that meetings are held in venues that are accessible to people with disabilities.

We will make performance management documents available in accessible formats to employees if requested.

- We will provide feedback and coach employees in a way that is accessible to them to meet their individual needs because of a disability.
- When providing career development opportunities, we will take accommodation into consideration when employees with disabilities are learning new skills or taking on new responsibilities.

OCWA will take the following steps to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified:

- Review all new policies and programs to ensure any barriers are removed from the workplace.
- Ensure diversity and accessibility discussions take place at management meetings to ensure that any barriers identified are removed.

Design of Public Spaces Standards

OCWA will put the following procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to accessible parts of its public spaces:

- OCWA will take steps to prevent a service disruption in its public spaces and would implement our Emergency Management Program and Continuity of Operations Plan in the event of any emergency that would cause a service disruption.
- In the event of a service disruption, we will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available.

General Requirements

OCWA will continue to implement the general requirements of the AODA through the following actions designed to enhance accessibility across the organization:

- Continue to use the accessibility policies and directives that are currently in place within the Ontario Public Service which governs how the OPS achieves and maintains compliance with the requirements of the AODA.
- Implement a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan that outlines long-term strategies to achieve AODA requirements and improve accessibility within programs, services and facilities. Report annually on the status of the Plan.
- Provide training to all employees on the AODA Integrated Accessibility.
- Continue to review accessibility Standard, Regulation and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities.

For more information

Accessible formats of this document are available free upon request from: OCWA's Corporate Communications Branch by:

- E-mail: CCommunication@ocwa.com
- Website: www.ocwa.com

Let us know what you think

We welcome your feedback. Please let us know what you think about the Ontario Clean Water Agency's 2021 to 2025 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and accessibility matters in general.

To view this plan online visit <http://www.ocwa.com/>

To request a copy of the plan in another format or to send us your comments or questions, please contact us at: Email: CCommunication@ocwa.com

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OCWA will review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.

OCWA's plan is reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities