

Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre's 2022/2023 Status Report March 31, 2023 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation establishes accessibility standards and introduces requirements for Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation and the Built Environment. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation applies to all public, private and not-for-profit organizations, with at least one employee. DPNCHC falls under Large Private and not-for-profit organizations with 50+ employees' category.

A Statement of Commitment establishes the vision and the goals for an organization and it is a first step in the development of accessibility policies as it gives an organization purpose, clarity and direction. DPNCHC has written its Statement of Commitment and has made it available to the public by posting it on the agency website, in the "About" menu on the "Accessibility" page, and it is posted in the lobby of both 1900 and 1892 Davenport Road sites. We will also provide our Statement of Commitment in an accessible format upon request.

Accessibility Policies

In 2011, we developed and wrote the agency's Accessible Customer Service Policy and Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Training Policy, to comply with the Customer Service Standard. Both of these policies were presented to the Policy Review Committee and approved by the Board in December 2011.

In January 2014, we developed and wrote the agency's Employment Policy, Information and Communications Policy, to meet the IASR standard. These policies describe what we do, or what rules and principles we will put in place to support achieving our accessibility goals to meet the requirements of the regulation.

The deadline to meet this requirement was January 1, 2014. The Employment Policy, Information and Communication Policy were presented to the Policy Review Committee and approved by the Board January 2014. Both policies were made public and are posted on the agency's website, in the "About" menu on the "Accessibility" page.

We are complying and there is nothing to add at this time.

Availability of Policies

Public sector organizations, as well as private and not-for-profit organizations with 50 or more employees must make their accessibility policies available to the public.

- DPNCHC has posted signs on our accessibility policies at both 1900 and 1892 sites, so that the public is aware the information is available.
- We must also provide a copy of our policies to any person who requests one. As well, the copy must be provided in an accessible format, if requested.
- Policies are living documents and should be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect current practices of the organization. It is DPNCHC's standard practice to review and update policies every 4 years, unless a major change/update is implemented. July 1, 2016, the Ontario Government announced 2 significant changes to the Customer Service standard. To this effect, our AODA-Customer Service Policy was updated to include delivery of training on Accessible Customer Service to all staff, volunteers and Board Members, regardless of their interaction with the public and the list of professionals who are now authorized to provide documents indicating the need for a service animal has been expanded.

We are complying and there is nothing to address at this time.

Accessibility Plan

An accessibility plan describes the actions an organization will take to prevent and remove barriers. The plan creates a road map to increase accessibility and puts into action the organization's commitment to accessibility and its accessibility policies. To meet this requirement we must do the following:

- Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the regulation.
- Post the plan on our website, and upon request, provide the plan in an accessible format.
- Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.
- Establish, review and update our accessibility plans in consultation with persons with disabilities.
- Prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to meet the requirement.
- Post this status report on our website, and provide the report in an accessible format upon request.

The Accessibility Plan is posted on the agency's website in the "About" menu on the "Accessibility" page. The 2021/22 Annual Status Report will be posted by March 31, 2023.

Training

The intent of this requirement is that all organizations train employees, volunteers, and those who participate in developing the organization's policies and all others who provide goods or services on behalf of the organization about the requirements in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, as well as the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

DPNCHC is continuously meeting this requirement. Since February 2014, we have been using HRdownloads Training Systems to train our staff on the Customer Service Standard, Employment and Information/Communications Standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code AODA edition.

Newly hired staff will meet with the HR Coordinator before or within the first days at work for an orientation to the agency's policies, AODA policies and mandatory training. New staff are registered with HRdownload Training Systems to complete the training modules on the AODA Standards. Records of training for all staff are kept in the HR Coordinator's office. All staff are required to complete these training modules, read the agency's AODA policies and sign a waiver that they have read them.

Since they participate in developing DPNCHC's policies, Board members on the policy committee, are asked if they have already had AODA training. The few that have not been trained, are set up with HRdownloads and completed the training on Accessible Customer Service, Employment and Information/Communication Standards and Ontario Human Rights Code AODA edition. Committee members will review any changes to AODA policies at the beginning of the Board year and new members to the committee will receive the full on-line orientation.

The Volunteer Coordinator provides a full orientation and training on the Customer Service and Information/Communications Standard and other relevant DPNCHC policies to all new volunteers. Because of the ongoing pandemic, DPNCHC has moved to a hybrid model of accepting new volunteer placements; new volunteers have the opportunity to participate in virtual and in person volunteer opportunities.

We are complying and there is nothing to address at this time.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

The intent of this requirement is that the Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly, designated public sector organizations, as well as private and not-for-profit organizations with more than 50 employees make their websites accessible to people with disabilities by conforming to international standards for website accessibility.

- To conform to Level AA, it was decided that rebuilding the website from the ground up was best way to go. The website now has a language translator that translate website content to various written languages spoken within our community. The website is mobile and tablet friendly but it's been reported that content does not display properly on older phones and tablets. Our website consultant is currently looking into this.

We will ensure that going forward; all new web content for use by the public is checked for accessibility, our intranet; internal website that is used privately and securely by our employees is accessible and that our extranet; a controlled extension of the organization's intranet is accessible to outside users over the internet.

The deadline for compliance was January 1, 2021. Work was delayed because of the pandemic, but we are now in compliance, except where mentioned above.

Feedback

Every obligated organization that has processes for receiving and responding to feedback shall ensure that the processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communications supports, upon request. Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre makes public the opportunity to provide feedback on services provided to clients. Information about the feedback process is made available by notice on the agency's website and by program staff. Clients who wish to provide feedback by completing an onsite client feedback form or verbally can do so to any DPNCHC employee. Clients who provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted. Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, website or email), will be available upon request. Notices are posted at 1900 Davenport Road; Main Reception and at 1892 Davenport Road; Health Centre Reception.

DPNCHC provides clients with the opportunity to provide feedback on services provided to them. Information about the feedback process is made available on the agency's website, "About" menu, "Accessibility" page, Statement of Commitment and in the AODA Customer Service Policy. The Feedback Form is available in the "About" menu, "By-Laws, Policies and Client Rights page.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

The Information and Communications Standard outlines requirements for organizations to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities. This helps people with disabilities access sources of information and communications that many of us rely on every day.

The intent of this requirement is that all organizations must provide information and communicate in an accessible manner about their goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities, on request. The information must be provided in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the regular price charged to others.

The deadline to meet this requirement was January 1, 2016 and we have set up processes to meet this requirement. In the process of making accessible documents available to the public, a disclosure is written into the Statement of Commitment, in the "About" menu, "Accessibility" page, and it discloses who the contact person is and their contact information.

A general statement "Reasonable accommodation will be provided upon request." is included in the agency's flyers and registration forms that invites individuals to let us know about their assistance or accommodation needs when registering for a program or event.

We are complying and there is nothing to address at this time.

Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

The intent of this requirement is that publicly available emergency and public safety information is provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request. Organizations are not required to develop or create new emergency or public safety information.

Further, organizations are not required to convert this information into accessible formats or provide communication supports if they do not share the information publicly. Some organizations have confidential internal plans, such as those for security lockdowns that are not shared publicly.

As we do not have emergency and public safety information available to the public, we do not have to develop or create this information. However, we have requirements under the Accessible Employment Standard to provide individualized emergency information to its employees.

The HR Coordinator meets with every newly hired staff for their “New Staff Orientation”; at that time staff is made aware of agency’s accessibility policies and are asked if they self-identify as having a disability and require accommodation. DPNCHC will work with anyone requesting accommodation to create an Individual Accommodation Plan. A written section in the Staff Emergency Information Sheet form addresses this disclosure. Since the pandemic started, the HR Coordinator continues to meet with newly hired staff either virtually and/or in person, in a work location that allows for social distancing.

We are in compliance and there is nothing to address at this time.

Employment Standard

This standard requires employers to provide for accessibility across all stages of the employment life cycle. By pro-actively removing barriers across the employment life cycle, employers can help to create workplaces that are accessible and which allow employees to reach their full potential. This standard applies to paid employees and includes, but is not limited to, full-time, part-time, and seasonal employment. As good business practice, employers may apply the Standard to volunteers and other forms of unpaid work. The Employment Standard is a framework for integrating accessibility into regular workplace processes.

Requirements under the Employment Standard

The requirements covered in this section are:

- Recruitment, assessment and selection
- Accessible formats and communication support for employees
- Workplace emergency response information
- Documented individual accommodation plans
- Return to work processes
- Performance management
- Career development and advancement
- Redeployment

The agency advertises in all job postings “DPNCHC encourages applications from candidates whose background is diverse in terms of culture, race, language, religion, class, gender/sexual orientation. Reasonable accommodation or any other special needs will be provided in all parts of the hiring process. If you require any accommodation, please advise Human Resources”.

As well, job offer letters include the statement “DPNCHC has an accommodation process in place and provides accommodation for employees with disabilities. If you require accommodation because of a disability or a medical need, please contact HR, so that arrangements can be made for the appropriate accommodations to be in place before you begin your employment.” In the process of conducting every “New Staff Hire Orientation”, the HR Coordinator informs the newly hired employee that accommodation in the workplace will be provided upon request.

We are in compliance and there is nothing to address at this time.

Transportation Standard

The requirements in the Transportation Standard will help transportation providers as well as municipalities, universities, colleges, hospitals and school boards make their services and vehicles accessible to people with disabilities.

This standard does not apply to DPNCHC.

The Built Environment Standard

The Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment focus on removing barriers in two areas:

- buildings
- public spaces

In 2014, we started improvements, well ahead of the January 1, 2017 deadline. Since then and going forward, we will ensure that when building new or making significant alterations to existing public areas, accessibility is considered into these improvements.

For the year 2022, improvements were made:

- In the Spring of 2022, the existing backyard grass lawn was replaced with artificial green turf, which has made the ground area more accessible for seniors and other persons using canes, walkers and wheelchairs, when attending outdoor programs.
- A great gazebo was also built to shelter clients from the elements when attending outdoor programs and events.

For the year 2021, improvements were made to:

- The gravel trail that leads to the Early Years backyard playground was replaced with concrete, and a ramp was built for stroller/wheelchair access.
- Artificial green turf was also laid to create a safe infant space in the same EY playground.

For the year 2020, there was no new construction or renovations made with accessibility in mind.

For the year 2019 improvements were made to:

- To our existing back lawn, new grass was put in and shrubs were planted around the perimeter, but with 2 entrances, to allow entry by wheelchairs, scooter, strollers, etc.
- The interlock walk way was lifted in some sections and re-installed to ensure smooth passage to walk through by everyone who uses it.

For the year 2018, improvements were made to:

- The Centre's front and back entrance doors were replaced to a wider size to allow easier entry by large size scooters, wheelchairs and children's strollers.
- New accessible push buttons were installed to ensure both doors open at same time, with the timer increased for people to go thru before the doors close behind.
- The men and women's public washroom on the main floor were renovated to include new toilets, installed to a higher height, thus more comfortable for those who need it.
- The half wall leading to the entrance to the women's public washroom on the main floor was trimmed to allow easy entry by wheelchairs, scooters, etc.
- In the women's public washroom, the stalls were set back by approximately 1-2 inches, allowing to wheelchairs scooters, walkers, etc. for easier walk/drive through.

Submitted by Ana Rodrigues, HR Coordinator.