

	CATEGORY:	ADMINISTRATION - Human Resources
	SUBJECT:	Accessibility
	POLICY #:	200
	APPROVED:	February 2, 2023
	REVIEWED/REVISED:	Last Update: June 2016 Revised: February 2, 2023

PREAMBLE

It is the policy of North of Superior Counselling Programs (NOSP and/or the Agency) that employees, students, volunteers, clients and visitors with disabilities achieve accessibility in the delivery and provision of services, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity, as set out in the regulations of the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.

This policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of policies, procedures and guidelines of the Agency, in order to comply with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) established by Ontario Regulation 191/11 under the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005*.

POLICY

A core value of NOSP is to embrace diversity and to support inclusion. NOSP believes in equal opportunity and is committed to providing a barrier-free environment that allows all people to maintain their independence and dignity. We respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and strive to meet the needs of all individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Accessibility Committee (to be initiated in 2023)

The Accessibility Committee is established by the Agency. The Committee is responsible for advising the Leadership team on the development and implementation of the Accessibility Plan and on issues relating to people with disabilities. The Committee will meet quarterly to review progress in meeting the requirements of the AODA and to monitor progress on implementing the accessibility plan and to ensure that barrier-removal and barrier-prevention strategies are implemented effectively.

Accessibility Plans (to be developed in 2023)

The Agency shall produce a multi-year accessibility plan outlining the strategies to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities. The plan will be reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once every three years. An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan will be prepared on an annual basis. The multi-year accessibility plan and accompanying status report will be posted on the Agency's website.

Accessibility Policies (website updates in 2023)

NOSP shall maintain policies governing how the Agency shall meet the requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005* and all regulations pursuant to this Act. The policies will be reviewed annually and posted on the Agency's website.

Procurement

The Agency will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring goods, services, or facilities, unless it is not feasible. In the event that it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features, the Centre shall provide an explanation, upon request.

Information and Communication Standards (formal review to occur in 2023)

The Agency shall comply with the requirements and timelines set out in the *Information and Communication Standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)*.

Accessible Formats and Communications Supports

The Agency will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual. The Agency will take into account the person's accessibility needs when customizing individual requests.

Accessible Website and Web Content (formal review and updates as part of web updates in 2023)

The Agency's website shall conform to the *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)*.

Employment Standards

The Agency is committed to creating an inclusive work environment for all employees, students and volunteers and to providing accessibility for people with disabilities throughout the employment life cycle in accordance with the requirements set out in the Employment Standards of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)* July 1, 2011.

- **Recruitment and Selection**

The Agency will notify employees, students and volunteers and members of the public of the availability of accommodation for people with disabilities during the recruitment and selection process. The successful candidate will be informed of the policies and supports for accommodating people with disabilities.

- **Performance Management, Career Development and Return to Work**

Performance management, career development and return to work processes will take into account the accessibility needs of employees, students and volunteers with disabilities.

- **Workplace Emergency Response Information and Individual Accommodation Plans**

The Agency will provide individualized workplace emergency response information and individual accommodation plans to persons with disabilities, when needed. The workplace emergency response information and accommodation plans will be developed and updated on an as needed basis.

Built Environment

The Agency shall comply with the requirements set out in the *Design of Public Spaces Standards* when undertaking new construction and when making major changes to public spaces including service counters and waiting areas, counselling spaces, points of building access and outdoor paths of travel.

Training

The Agency will provide accessibility training to all employees, students, volunteers and third parties providing goods, services or facilities to the public on behalf of NOSP. The training shall include a review of the accessibility standards referred to in the AODA *Integrated Accessibility Standards* (Ontario Regulation 191/11). Training will take place as soon as is practical; and, upon completion the Agency shall keep a record of the training provided, including the dates on which accessibility training took place. Contractors providing services to NOSP shall be required to provide employer waivers, verifying training to have occurred. On occasions where training has not occurred, NOSP will provide this training prior to the initiation of any contracted services. This training will be the same as what is provided to all new employees, students and volunteers during their orientation to the Agency.

Feedback

The Agency shall maintain an accessible feedback process. Feedback shall be invited, forwarded to the appropriate staff person, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback can be provided in multiple formats including in person, by mail, phone and email.

ATTACHMENTS

N/A

CROSS-REFERENCE

N/A