

Independent Living Centre Waterloo Region Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Policy-Plain Language Version

Part 1 General Information

- The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) states that the Province of Ontario must be accessible for people with disabilities by the year 2025

ILCWR must:

- Make policies that explain how we will be accessible
- Train staff, board members and volunteers on our accessibility plans
- File accessibility reports

Part 2 Accessible Customer Service

We will provide:

- Services that are accessible to all people
- Services that protect the dignity and independence of all people
- Education to staff, board members, volunteers and all other people we work with about accessibility

Communication

We will:

- Communicate with people that have disabilities in the way that works best for them
- Provide our documents in formats that work best for them

Communication is the sharing of information between two people or systems. This might be in person, by email, fax, TTY, Bell Relay Services, ILCWR website, mail or telephone.

Assistive Devices

- We respect the use of assistive devices
- We will train staff on different assistive devices
- ILCWR staff will learn how to use the accessibility features onsite

Assistive Devices are equipment or products that help people with disabilities. For example: wheelchairs, electric door openers and more.

Service Animals

- We welcome service animals in all ILCWR spaces
- If a service animal is not allowed in for some reason (for example animal allergies) we will provide assistance to the person as well as a comfortable place for the animal to stay

Service animals are animals (usually dogs) that are trained to help people with disabilities with different of tasks.

Support Persons

- We welcome support persons in all ILCWR spaces

Support persons help a person with a disability to communicate, help with their medical needs or with access to goods and services.

Notice of Disruption

- We will tell the public about planned and unexpected disruptions in services or places used by people with disabilities
- If there is enough time we will put notices on outside doors, front desk, on our outgoing telephone message and website

Service disruptions are planned or unplanned unavailability of ILCWR spaces and services. This might be washrooms, elevators or websites.

Training Staff

- We will give Accessible Customer Service Training to staff

- This includes all paid staff, volunteers, board members and others who work with the public for ILCWR

Feedback Process

- We like to hear feedback from the community
- Feedback will be sent to the Public Awareness and Education Coordinator
- We will get back to you within 10 business days

Part 3 Accessible Information and Communication

- We will give information and communication that is accessible to people with disabilities

Information includes things such as text, numbers, images and sound. For example: reports, budgets, advertising and voice mail.

Communication is the sharing of information between two people or systems where information is provided, sent or received. For example, websites, posted mail and email.

Plain Language

Plain language is clear, direct writing, using only as many words as necessary. It is language that is easier for everyone to understand.

We will offer:

- Plain language copies of all ILCWR information and communication
- Plain language copies as soon as possible

Alternative Formats

- We offer all public information and communication in different ways if you ask
- We will give them to you as soon as possible
- If you ask for an interpreter, captioner or note-taker, we will give you one

Alternative formats are formats other than standard print. This might be: audio, large print, Braille, the services of captioners, intervenors, interpreters and more.

An *Intervenor* is a person who communicates with people who are deafblind.

A *captioner* is a person who types what people are saying for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

An *ASL Interpreter* is a person who communicates with people who are culturally deaf by using sign language.

Notification and Feedback

- We will let the public know about the accessible information and communication we provide
- People can request another format through our website
- People can comment on our information and communication process through our website

Part 4 Information and Communication Plan

Electronic Information and Communication

- All emails and documents sent through email will use one of the following fonts: Arial 14, Verdana 12 or Tahoma 12
- All electronic communication will be written in plain language or we will offer separate plain language versions
- The ILCWR website will meet the guidelines of the AODA

Printed Documents

- All printed documents will be written in a minimum of either Arial 14, Verdana 12 or Tahoma 12 and will be offered in plain language

Emergency and Public Safety Information

- We will tell staff and the public know what to do in an emergency while in an ILCWR building

Training Staff

- ILCWR will train staff, board members, volunteers and third party contractors on the AODA and the ILCWR accessibility plan

Part 5 Accessible Employment

- We will let staff and the public know that workplace accommodations are available for people with disabilities applying for jobs
- We will let people applying know before the interview that accommodations are available if they ask for them
- We will let people know about our policies on accommodation when offering someone a job

Communication Supports and Accessible Formats for Employees

- We will let employees know about the policies we have that support employees with disabilities
- We will let people know if there are changes to our policies
- When staff ask, we will provide other formats for:
 - a) Information that is needed for the employee to perform their job
 - b) Information that is available to all employees in the workplace

Workplace Emergency Response Information

- ILCWR will make individualized workplace emergency response information for employees who need accommodation
- We will do this as soon as an employee lets us know that they need accommodation

We will look at the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) When the staff moves into another position
- b) When accommodation plans are being reviewed; and
- c) When we look at our general emergency response policies

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

- There is a written process for making accommodation plans
- We may ask outside experts to help with the accommodation plans

Return to Work Process

- When a staff person with a disability misses work because of their disability, we will help them return to their position by making an individualized accommodation plan

Performance Management

- When we evaluate an employee's performance, we will consider the accessibility needs of staff with a disability and individual accommodation plans

Career Development and Advancement

- When staff change positions we will consider any accessibility needs and individual accommodation plans

Part 6 Responsibilities

- We will look at these plans at least once every five years
- No changes will be made to this document without considering how they will affect people with disabilities

Accountability

- This policy and our accessibility plans are available to the public and are available in alternative formats when you ask

Questions about this Policy

- Any questions or concerns about this policy can be given to the Public Awareness and Education Coordinator