



Algoma Family Services Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

June 2021

Algoma Family Services – Accessibility Plan and Policies

Introduction

Algoma Family Services (AFS) is a Not for Profit multi-service agency that is subject to the provisions of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Its purpose is to ensure greater accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities. Since becoming law, AFS has been required to comply with its provisions, which are being phased in between 2010 and 2025. The AODA is Ontario's roadmap to become barrier free by 2025. Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) establishes accessibility standards for:

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

This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines AFS's compliance with AODA, outlines current achievements with regards to accessibility, sets out AFS's upcoming obligations pursuant to the AODA and identifies how AFS will meet those obligations. AFS is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the AODA and making it premises and services accessible to all. This document will be provided in an alternative format upon request.

In accordance with IASR, AFS will:

- Report annually on progress in implementing this plan and out ongoing efforts to prevent and remove barriers by updating this document and posting the updates on our website
- Provide all information relating to this plan in an alternative format upon request

1. Commitment to persons with disabilities

AFS is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. AFS believes in integration and equal opportunity and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do this by preventing and removing barriers and meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

2. AFS Inclusion and Diversity Committee

In 2017, AFS created an Inclusion and Diversity Committee to ensure that all employees, volunteers, clients and partners are safe, included, respected and equal. This committee works to inspire leadership in inclusion throughout AFS by:

- Reviewing all AFS policies and procedures to ensure they are accessible for all
- Support and coordinate inclusion initiatives, as shown throughout this document
- Sharing AFS's accessibility and inclusion best practices and experience with our partners
- Providing alternative formats, upon request

Anti-Oppressive Practice Implementation

Implementation of AODA is one element of a larger initiative being undertaken by the Agency on Anti-Oppressive Practice. AFS is committed to anti-oppressive practice in which we challenge the impacts of power and privilege, eliminate barriers, and are inclusive of the broad range of diversity in our community. It is imperative that our organization challenge ableism, and is fully inclusive, both as a workplace and service provider, for peoples with disabilities.

Definitions

Accessible Elements, as defined by the Accessibility Directorate, refers to any element that is meant to serve people with disabilities. This may include, but are not limited to, elevators, escalators, voice announcement systems.

Accessible Formats, as defined by the Regulation, may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Barrier, as defined by AODA, means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of a disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier or a policy or practice.

Communication, as defined by the Regulation, means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.

Communication Supports, as defined by the Regulation, may include but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Disability, according to the Ontario Human Rights Code, also referenced by the AODA, disability means:

1. Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
2. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
3. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
4. A mental disorder, or
5. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

Extranet website, as defined by the Regulation, means a controlled extension of the intranet or internal network of an organization to outside users over the internet.

Feedback is considered as any comments, concerns, suggestions, or complaints about AFS's services received the AFS clients

Information, as defined by the Regulation, includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.

Intranet website, as defined by the Regulation, means an organizations, internal website that is used to privately and securely share any part of the organization's information or operational systems within the organization and includes extranet websites

Internet Website, as defined by the Regulation, means a collection of related web pages, images, videos or other digital assets that are addressed relative to a common Uniform Resource Identifier (URI) and is accessible to the public

New Internet Website, as defined by the Regulation, means in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the person with disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, as defined in the Regulation, mean the World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled "Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0"

Web Page, as defined in the Regulation, means a non-embedded resource obtained from a single URI using Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) and any other resources that are used in the rendering or intended to be together with it by a user agent

AFS's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The AFS's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance and adherence to best practices. AFS will implement policies in accordance with this multi year plan and work to refine practices and plans as required. AFS will review and where appropriate update this multi-year plan and policies annually. AFS is committed to this practice on an annual basis to ensure that the multi-year plan and policies are updated at least once every five year as required by the IASR.

1. Information and Communication

AFS is committed to making information and communication accessible to persons with disabilities. AFS will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports to persons with disabilities in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs and in consultation with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Actions Taken and Ongoing Activities

AFS's Policies reflect AFS's commitment to ensuring documentation is accessible to persons with disabilities. AFS's policies and this Multi-Year plan are reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

Status: Requirement met

2. Employment

AFS is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities.

Accessible Emergency Information – AFS will offer an individualized workplace emergency response plan to be created for all employees upon hire and as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation. Only with the employee's consent, AFS will also provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by AFS to provide assistance to that employee.

Accessible Emergency Information - AFS is committed to providing its clients with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. Emergency procedure information is available to visitors of all AFS offices.

Recruitment – AFS will ensure that employees and the public are notified and aware that accommodations for applicants with disabilities are available upon request. This will include job applicants selected to participate in the selection process.

Information for Employees – AFS will ensure that current and new employees are notified and aware of the AFS’s policies for accommodating and supporting employees with disabilities and employees are informed of any changes to such policies.

Process to accommodate employees – Where AFS is aware of an employee’s disability, and where it has been requested by an employee, AFS will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports suitable to the employee for any information that is needed in order to perform their job and any information that is generally available to employees in the workplace. AFS will work with employee to develop documented accommodation plans when required. AFS will ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and their accommodation plans are taken into account when assessing an employee’s performance, when providing career development and advancement to an employee, and when redeploying an employee.

Status: Requirement met

3. Transportation

The transportation standard sets out the requirements for transportation service providers. Particularly, features and equipment on vehicles, routes, and services offered must be accessible to people with disabilities. For example, no conventional or specialized transportation service is permitted to charge a fare to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability. AFS does not offer any transportation services at this time.

4. Design of Public Spaces

AFS will ensure that any new construction or redevelopment of areas, facilities or structures that AFS intends to maintain meet the requirements set out in section 80 of IASR. If any construction or redevelopment of AFS public spaces is planned, AFS will evaluate plans to ensure they meet the standards set out in Section 80 of the IASR, including technical requirements relating to service counters, queuing guides and waiting areas.

Status: Requirement met

5. Customer Service

Establishment of Policies – Please see ADM-0125 Accessible Customer Service which is available in alternative formats, upon request

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons – Please see ADM-0125 Accessible Customer Service which is available in alternative formats, upon request

Notice of Temporary Disruptions - Please see ADM-0125 Accessible Customer Service which is available in alternative formats, upon request

Training for Staff - Please see ADM-0125 Accessible Customer Service which is available in alternative formats, upon request

Feedback Process - Please see ADM-0125 Accessible Customer Service which is available in alternative formats, upon request

Format of Documents - Please see ADM-0125 Accessible Customer Service which is available in alternative formats, upon request

Status: Requirement met

For more information:

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact the Director of Human Resources:

- 705-945-5050, ext. 2032
- hr@algotmafamilyservices.org

Alternative accessible formats of this document are available, upon request.