



MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

North Eastern Ontario Family And Children's Services
November 2013



INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

In 2005, the government of Ontario passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (the “AODA”). It is the goal of the Ontario government to make Ontario accessible by 2025. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (IASR), under the AODA, require that North Eastern Ontario Family and Children’s Services (NEOFACS) establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities and to meet its requirements under the IASR.

Under the AODA, the following accessibility standards set certain requirements that are applicable to North Eastern Ontario Family and Children’s Services:

- Client Service;
- Information and Communications;
- Employment; and
- Proposed Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment

This multi-year plan outlines the Agency’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers, to address the current and future requirements of the AODA in order to fulfill the Agency’s commitment as outlined in NEOFACS Accessibility Policy. This 2012 – 2021 accessibility plan outlines the steps that NEOFACS will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

In accordance with the requirements set out in the IASR, NEOFACS will:

- Establish, review and update this plan in consultation with persons with disabilities;
- Post this plan on its website (www.neofacs.org);
- Report as required on its website (www.neofacs.org) on the progress of the implementation of this plan;
- Provide this plan in an accessible format, upon request; and
- Review and update this plan at least once every five years.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Accessibility Standards for Client Service
2. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations
3. Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information
4. Workplace Emergency Response Information
5. Training
6. Information and Communication Standards
 - a) Feedback, Accessible Formats and Communication Supports
 - b) Accessible Websites and Web Content

1. Employment Standards

- a) Recruitment
- b) Informing Employees of Supports
- c) Documented Individual Accommodation Plans/Return to Work Process
- d) Performance Management, Career Development and Redeployment

2. Proposed Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CLIENT SERVICE

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT:

NEOFACS has been in compliance with the Accessible Client Service Regulation under the AODA, and will continue to comply with the Regulation.

NEOFACS is committed to excellence in serving all clients, including persons with disabilities and it will carry out its functions in a manner which delivers an accessible client service experience.

NEOFACS is committed to providing services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This commitment will be integrated wherever possible and will ensure that persons with disabilities will benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other clients.

ACTION TAKEN:

The following measures have been implemented by NEOFACS:

- Ensuring all persons who, on behalf of NEOFACS, deal with the public or other third parties and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of client service policies, practices and procedures, as well as all others providing services to our clients, are trained to communicate and provide the best possible client service to all clients, including persons with disabilities;
- Ensuring staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities who are accessing the Agency's services;
- Ensuring completion of accessibility training is tracked and recorded;
- Providing fully-accessible telephone service to clients, offering to communicate with clients by TTY if telephone communication is not suitable to their needs;
- Ensuring clients accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal in areas of NEOFACS open to the public and other third parties, are accommodated;
- Ensuring that if a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the support person is accommodated. If the support person is assisting the client participating in an Agency program or service, but that person is not participating in the program or service on his or her own behalf, the support person is not charged a fee to attend the program or service;
- Providing clients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of service or inaccessibility of facilities used by persons with disabilities, by placing such notices at all public entrances. If the disruption is long-term, NEOFACS posts an announcement on its website informing clients of the location, duration of the disruption and alternate solutions;
- Continuing to welcome and appreciate feedback from persons with disabilities through multiple communication channels;
- An "Accessibility" tab will be added to the footer of the website (www.neofacs.org) to communicate the Agency's accessible client service policy including related procedures and guidelines; and

- NEOFACS's has filed compliance reports with the client service standard through the Accessibility Compliance Reporting tool at Service Ontario's One-Source for Business website.

Required legislative compliance:	January 1, 2012
Implementation timeframe:	September 2011 to December 31, 2011
Completion date:	January 1, 2012

INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATIONS

EMERGENCY PROCEDURE, PLANS OR PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION

Commitment:

NEOFACS is committed to providing and maintaining premises that respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Action taken:

The following measures were implemented by the Employer effective January 1, 2012:

- Emergency procedures, plans and public safety information that are prepared by NEOFACS and made available to the public, will be made available in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request; and
- An Accessible Format Request Form was developed and will be available online on the Agency's internal website when available, for completion by NEOFACS staff upon receipt of a request from the public for such documentation in an accessible format. In addition, an internal referral process is in place for fulfilling the accessible format request.

Required legislative compliance:	January 1, 2012
Implementation timeframe:	September 2011 to December 31, 2011
Completion date:	January 1, 2012

WORKPLACE EMERGENCY RESPONSE INFORMATION

Commitment:

Where NEOFACS is aware that an employee has a disability and that there is a need for accommodation, individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to the employee as soon as practicable if such information is necessary given the nature of the employee's disability.

Action Taken:

The following measures were implemented by NEOFACS effective January 1, 2012:

- Individualized workplace emergency response information procedures have been developed for employees with disabilities, as required;
- Workplace Emergency Response Information forms have been prepared for employees who have disclosed a disability and who are being accommodated according to their disabilities;
- Where required, the Agency provides assistance to specific disabled employees, with the disabled employees' prior consent, to help them evacuate the workplace in case of an emergency or disaster. These plans for providing assistance have been set out in individualized emergency plans for the employees;
- These individualized emergency plans have been communicated to the employees' respective managers and Safety personnel, on an 'as needed' basis; and
- On an ongoing and regular basis and as per the applicable terms of the IASR, NEOFACS will review and assess general workplace emergency response procedures and individualized emergency plans to ensure accessibility issues are addressed.

Required legislative compliance:	January 1, 2012
Implementation timeframe:	September 2011 to December 31, 2011
Completion date:	January 1, 2012

TRAINING

Commitment:

NEOFACS is committed to implementing a process to ensure that all employees, volunteers and persons participating in the development and approval of the Agency's policies are provided with appropriate training on the requirements of the IASR and on the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities, and are provided with such training as soon as practicable.

Planned Action:

In accordance with the IASR, NEOFACS will:

- Determine and ensure that appropriate training on the requirements of the IASR and on the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities, is provided to all employees, volunteers and persons participating in the development and approval of North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services' policies;
- Ensure that the training is provided to persons referenced above as soon as practicable;
- Keep and maintain a record of the training provided, including the dates that the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided; and
- Ensure that training is provided on any changes to the prescribed policies on an ongoing basis.

Required legislative compliance:	January 1, 2015
Implementation timeframe:	January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2015
Completion date:	N/A

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

Commitment:

NEOFACS is committed to making Agency information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities. The Agency will work to meet new accessibility requirements under the information and communication standard to ensure that its information, and communications systems and platforms are accessible and are provided in accessible formats that meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

1. Feedback, Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Planned Action:

In accordance with the IASR, NEOFACS will:

- Ensure that existing and new processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request and in a timely manner;
- More broadly, as a general principle where accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities are requested:
 - a) Provide or arrange for the provision of such accessible formats and communication supports;
 - b) Consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support;
 - c) Provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability, and at a cost no more than the regular cost charged to other persons;
 - d) Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
 - e)

Required legislative compliance	January 1, 2014 – Feedback, January 1, 2015 – Accessible formats and Communication Supports
Implementation timeframe	January 1, 2014 to January 1, 2015 (as applicable)
Completion date	N/A

2. Accessible Websites and Web Content

Accomplishments to Date:

- North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services' public website (www.neofacs.org) is currently undergoing a complete rebuild to ensure compliancy with the AODA standards.
- New website content will be coded in a compliant fashion to empower both the essential Accessibility software and third-party consumer tools. The Website will be accessible by readers with the inclusion of descriptive alt tags on all links and images directed through the site-map page;
- Internet technology will ensure the public website is compatible with the above-mentioned tools and have moved away from non-W3C formats (World Wide Web Compliant) to more flexible Internet rich media in the website implementations;

- AODA compliance was included as one of the criteria in selecting technology vendors for the new website and will be included in the criteria for the intranet development initiatives.

Planned Action:

In accordance with the IASR, NEOFACS will:

- Ensure development of its next generation digital platform for public websites, mobile applications, and information technology infrastructure meet AODA Information and Communication Standards and that partnering vendors have necessary expertise with such technology;
- Use guiding principles in the development of new Agency intranet applications as outlined by the Ontario Government’s new Online Design Program standard, which specifies compliance with international accessibility guidelines, W3C WCAG 2.0;
- Develop and Update System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) documents and processes to outline roles and responsibilities regarding content compliance for new intranet sites;
- Follow the mandated Accessibility Directorate of Ontario (ADO) guidelines and Province of Ontario I&IT solutions that support obligated Private Sector and Broader Public Sector organizations in compliance initiatives;
- Communications will provide guidelines to all staff to ensure public documents and media are readily available in alternate accessible formats;
- Develop and communicate Agency e-mail best practices; and
- Expand Agency awareness of requirements for compliance with Information and Communication Standards of AODA.

Required Legislative Compliance	January 1, 2014 – WCAG 2.0 Level A – new Internet websites and web content, January 1, 2021 – WCG 2.0 Level AA – all Internet websites and web content, except for exclusions set out in the IASR
Implementation timeframe	January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2017
Completion date	N/A

EMPLOYMENT

1. Recruitment

Commitment:

NEOFACS is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain employees with disabilities. This includes providing accessibility across all stages of the employment cycle.

Planned Action:

In accordance with the IASR, NEOFACS will do the following:

Recruitment General

NEOFACS will notify employees and the public of the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in the recruitment process. This will include:

- A review and, as necessary, modification of existing recruitment policies, procedures and processes;
- Specifying that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities, on the Agency's website and on job postings; and
- Working with suppliers to ensure external Web pages are compliant with the Information and Communication Standards under the IASR's requirements.

Recruitment, assessment and selection

NEOFACS will notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used in the assessment/selection process. This will include:

- A review and, as necessary, modification of existing recruitment policies, procedures and processes;
- Inclusion of availability of accommodation notice as part of the script in the scheduling of an interview and/or assessment; and
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, consult with the applicant and arrange for provision of suitable accommodations in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

Notice to Successful Applicants

When making offers of employment, NEOFACS will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. This will include:

- A review and, as necessary, modification of existing recruitment policies, procedures and processes; and
- Inclusion of notification of the Agency's policies on accommodating employees with disabilities in offer of employment letters.

Required legislative compliance	January 1, 2016
Implementation timeframe	January 1, 2014 to January 1, 2016
Completion date	N/A

2. Informing Employees of Supports

In accordance with the IASR, NEOFACS will inform all employees of policies that support employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability. This will include:

- Informing current employees and new hires of the Agency's policies supporting employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's needs due to disability;
- Providing information under this section as soon as practicable after the new employee begins employment, specifically in the orientation process;
- Keeping employees up to date on changes to existing policies on job accommodations with respect to disability;
- Where an employee with a disability so requests it, NEOFACS will provide or arrange for provision of suitable accessible formats and communications supports for:
 - a) Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job
 - b) Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace
- In meeting the obligations to provide the information that is set out in the paragraph above, NEOFACS will consult with the requesting employee in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Required legislative compliance	January 1, 2016
Implementation timeframe	January 1, 2014 to January 1, 2016
Completion date	N/A

3. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans/Return to Work Process

Commitment:

NEOFACS will in Agency new accessibility requirements under the IASR to ensure that barriers in accommodation and return to work processes are eliminated and Agency policies surrounding accommodation and return to work are followed, where applicable.

Planned Action:

North Eastern Ontario Family and Children's Services' existing policies include steps that NEOFACS will take to accommodate an employee with a disability and to facilitate an employee's return to work after absenteeism due to disability.

NEOFACS will review and assess the existing policies to ensure that they include a process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with a disability, if such plans are required.

NEOFACS will ensure that the process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans includes the following elements, in accordance with the provisions of the IASR:

- Include in the process the manner in which the employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the plan;
- Include in the process the means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis;
- Include in the process the manner in which NEOFACS can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, to assist NEOFACS in determining if and how accommodation can be achieved;
- Include in the process the manner in which the employee can request participation of a representative from his or her bargaining agent where an employee is in the bargaining unit, or the participation of another representative from the workplace where an employee is not in the bargaining unit;
- Steps are in place to protect the privacy of the employee’s personal information;
- Outline the frequency in which individual accommodation plans will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which this will be done;
- Provide the employee with the reasons for the denial if an individual accommodation plan is denied;
- Include in the process the means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee’s accessibility needs;
- If individual accommodation plans are established, the Agency will ensure that they include:
 - a) Individualized workplace emergency response information that is required
 - b) Any information regarding accessible formats and communication supports that have been provided for or arranged, in order to provide the employee with information that is needed in order to perform the employee’s job and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace
- Identify any other accommodation that is to be provided to the employee; and

NEOFACS will ensure that the return to work process as set out in its existing policies outlines the steps NEOFACS will take to facilitate the employee’s return to work after a disability-related absence, outlines the development of a written individualized return to work plan for such employees, and requires the use of individual accommodation plans, as discussed above, in the return to work process.

Required legislative compliance	January 1, 2016
Implementation timeframe	January 1, 2014 to January 1, 2016
Completion date	N/A

4. Performance Management, Career Development and Redeployment

Commitment:

NEOFACS will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans:

- When using its performance management process in respect of employees with disabilities;
- When providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities; and
- When redeploying employees with disabilities.

Planned Action:

In accordance with the IASR, NEOFACS will:

- Review, assess and, as necessary, modify existing policies, procedures and practices to ensure compliance with the IASR;
- Take the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and, as applicable, their individualized accommodation plans, into account when:
 - a) Assessing performance
 - b) Managing career development and advancement
 - c) Redeployment is required
- Review, assess and, as necessary, include in Performance Management workshops, accessibility criteria;
- Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities, including notification of the ability to provide accommodations on internal job postings;
- Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when redeploying employees, including review and, as necessary, modification of employee transfer checklist.

Required legislative compliance	January 1, 2016
Implementation timeframe	January 1, 2014 to January 1, 2016
Completion date	N/A

Built Environment

NEOFACS attempts to remove barriers and prevent them for any new or future building renovations or developments.

Required legislative compliance	January 1, 2017
Implementation timeframe	January 1, 2013 to January 1, 2017
Completion date	N/A

For More Information:

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact Laura Michel, Director of Human Resources at:

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