



AODA – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

Intent

This 2014 to 2021 accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that AnswerPlus will put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities in accordance with the requirements communicated under the [Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11](#).

Statement of Commitment

AnswerPlus is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including our clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and its associated regulations.

AnswerPlus understands that we have a responsibility for ensuring a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone. We are committed to ensuring our organization’s compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training, and best practices. We will review these policies and practices annually, as organizational changes occur, or in anticipation of compliance deadlines. In addition, we will strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Providing an accessible and barrier-free environment is a shared effort, and we are committed as an organization to working with the necessary parties to make accessibility for all a reality.

Plan

General Requirements

Accessibility Requirement:	Establishment of Accessibility Policies
AODA Requirement	<p>Develop a policy that complies with the AODA and applicable regulations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; • The use of assistive devices; • The use of service animals; • The use of support persons; • Notice of service disruptions; • Customer feedback; • Training; and <p>Notice of availability and format of documents (if applicable).</p> <p>Develop practices and procedures that follow policy guidelines and that are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity.</p>
Action	<p>Develop and communicate policies, practices and procedures to all employees;</p> <p>Add to employee manual.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2014

Accessibility Requirement:	Accessibility Plans
AODA Requirement	<p>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 this Regulation;</p> <p>Post the accessibility plan on their website, if any, and provide the plan in an accessible format upon request; and</p> <p>Review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.</p>
Action	<p>Establish an AODA committee to understand and assess requirements;</p> <p>AODA Committee responsible for creation of Accessibility Plan;</p> <p>AODA Committee identify barriers by soliciting feedback and subject-matter experts;</p> <p>Update accessibility plans in consultation with persons with disabilities;</p> <p>AODA Committee to meet ongoing until compliance deadlines have been met.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2014 and January 01, 2019
Accessibility Requirement:	Training on IASR and the <i>Human Rights Code</i>
AODA Requirement	<p>(1) Every obligated organization shall ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in this Regulation and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (a) all employees, and volunteers; • (b) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and • (c) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization. <p>(2) The training on the requirements of the accessibility standards and on the Human Rights Code referred to in subsection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons; • Every person referred to in section (1) shall be trained as soon as practicable; • Every obligated organization shall provide training in respect of any changes to the policies described above on an ongoing basis; • Keep a record of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.
Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop training program to educate staff and managers on AODA legislation;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out training to all employees and volunteers; • Assess training needs (e.g. separate training for managers and employee levels); • Training to be added to new employee orientation program; • Training will be mandatory and training will be available online; • Training to incorporate accessible format – review training modes and materials to determine what accessible formats – review training modes and materials to determine what accessible formats currently exist and what accessible functions may be incorporated in the training design; • Determine mechanism for managing and tracking completion of training.
Status	Complete and Ongoing (training for new employees)
Compliance Date	January 01, 2015

Information and Communications Standard

Accessibility Requirement:	Feedback Process
AODA Requirement	<p>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.</p> <p>Nothing in this section detracts from the obligations imposed under section 7 of Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service) made under the Act.</p>
Action	<p>The AODA Committee engage with all necessary groups who could potentially process requests for accessible formats and discuss how to escalate.</p> <p>Review and determine existing feedback process and identify methods for increasing accessibility.</p> <p>Develop an understanding of current accessible formats, information, communication and technology tools available to adequately respond to requests for accessible formats that take into consideration the requestor's disability needs.</p> <p>Develop and implement a communication plan on this requirement to educate staff regarding receiving and responding to feedback from the public and employees.</p>

Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2015
Accessibility Requirement:	Accessible formats and communication supports
AODA Requirement	<p>Except as otherwise provided, every obligated organization shall upon request provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and • at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. <p>The obligated organization shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.</p> <p>Every obligated organization shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.</p> <p>Every obligated organization that is required to provide accessible formats or accessible formats and communication supports by section 3, 4, 11, 13, 19, 26, 28, 34, 37, 44 or 64 shall meet the requirements of subsections (1) and (2) but shall do so in accordance with the schedule set out in the referenced section and shall do so only to the extent that the requirements in subsections (1) and (2) are applicable to the requirements set out in the referenced section.</p>
Action	<p>As needed, update current process for requesting accessible formats – including alternative methods of feedback if what is in place or is available doesn't meet the needs of the individual.</p> <p>Develop communication strategy for educating employees on the availability of and process for requesting accessible formats and communication supports.</p> <p>Understand the functionality of accessible formats and communication supports available to better consult on requests for accessible formats that take into account the individual's disability needs.</p> <p>Develop a process for responding to, approving or declining a request.</p> <p>Incorporate language in marketing materials and website to advise that, in accordance with AODA, accessible format may be made available upon request.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Accessible websites and web content

AODA Requirement	Organizations shall make new internet websites and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A by January 1, 2014. All web content will conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021, unless excluded by legislation.
Action	Conduct an assessment on current web functionality to ensure compliance and adequate accessibility features;
Status	Ongoing
Compliance Date	January 01, 2021

Employment Standard

Accessibility Requirement:	Recruitment General
AODA Requirement	Every employer shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.
Action	Include a statement on our postings and Internet career section regarding the availability of accommodation during the recruitment process.
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Recruitment, assessment and selection processes
AODA Requirement	<p>During a recruitment process, an employer shall 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.</p> <p>If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the employer shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.</p>
Action	<p>Review hiring procedures to ensure applicants are advised during telephone conversations or written communications that accommodations are provided upon request.</p> <p>Provide suitable accommodations upon request throughout all stages of job recruitment process.</p> <p>Review of recruitment process (tests, assessments, etc.) to ensure barriers be removed or accessible features provided, upon request in accordance with AODA.</p>
Status	Complete

Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement	Notice to Successful Applicants
AODA Requirement	Every employer shall, when making offers of employment, notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.
Action	Incorporate in offer letter a section regarding our accessibility policies.
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Informing employees of supports
AODA Requirement	<p>Every employer shall inform its employees of its policies used to support its 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 disability.</p> <p>Employers shall provide the information required under this section to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.</p> <p>Employers shall provide updated information to its employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.</p>
Action	<p>Develop, change and communicate strategy to educate and advise employees on our accessibility policies, plan and processes.</p> <p>Accessibility policies and processes to be incorporated in onboarding/orientation process.</p> <p>Review all policies and procedures to determine whether they are compliant with the AODA legislations and standards</p> <p>Develop process and strategy to communicate any policy changes by email and on intranet.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Accessible formats and communication supports for employees
AODA Requirement	<p>Where an employee with a disability so requests it, every employer shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and • information that is generally available to employees in the workplace <p>The employer shall consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.</p>

Action	<p>Educate employees and management on the availability of accessible format and communication supports; in accordance with AODA.</p> <p>Educate employees and management on process for requesting accessible formats and communication supports.</p> <p>Review current ergonomic assessment process.</p> <p>Develop a process for consulting with employees to determine accommodation needs.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Workplace emergency response information
AODA Requirement	<p>Every employer shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.</p> <p>If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee's consent, the employer shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the employer to provide assistance to the employee.</p> <p>Employers shall provide the information required under this section as soon as practicable after the employer becomes aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.</p> <p>Every employer shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • when the employee moves to a different location in the organization; • when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and • when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.
Action	<p>Establish process to provide employees who request, or for who is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability, to receive individualized workplace emergency response information.</p> <p>Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Information includes a consent from the employee to share the information with those designated to provide assistance in the event of an emergency.</p> <p>Upon request, management will work with the individual who requires accommodation, to provide Individual Workplace Emergency Response Information as soon as possible.</p> <p>Procedure included in orientation program.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012

Accessibility Requirement:	Documented individual accommodation plans
AODA Requirement	<p>Employers, other than employers that are small organizations, shall develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.</p> <p>The process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans shall include the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan. • The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis. • The manner in which the employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the employer's expense, to determine if and how accommodation can be achieved. • The manner in which the employee can request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where the employee is represented by a bargaining agent, or other representative from the workplace, where the employee is not represented by a bargaining agent, in the development of the accommodation plan. • The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information. • The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done. • If an individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner in which the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee. • The means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability. <p>Individual accommodation plans shall,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if requested, include any information regarding accessible formats and communications supports provided, as described in section 26; • if required, include individualized workplace emergency response information, as described in section 27; and • identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.
Action	<p>Develop documented plans that will incorporate the required elements.</p> <p>Create a template for consistency.</p> <p>Educated employees and management on the Accessibility policies and processes and procedures for requesting individual plans.</p> <p>Develop, change and communicate plan to support awareness of process for, and availability of, individual accommodation plans in accordance with AODA.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Return to work process
AODA Requirement	Employers shall develop and have in place a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require

	<p>disability-related accommodations in order to return to work and shall document the process.</p> <p>The return to work process shall,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • outline the steps the employer will take to facilitate the return to work of employees who were absent because their disability required them to be away from work; and • use individual documented accommodation plans, as described in section 28, as part of the process. <p>The return to work process referenced in this section does not replace or override any other return to work process created by or under any other statute.</p>
Action	<p>Liaise with benefits carrier (GWL) to conduct a review of the current return to work process.</p> <p>Update and document return to work process based on gaps and compliance requirements.</p>
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Performance management process
AODA Requirement	<p>An employer that uses performance management in respect of its employees shall 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.</p> <p>“performance management” means activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness, with the goal of facilitating employee success.</p>
Action	<p>Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when using performance management processes.</p> <p>Consider training/tools/needs for manager to best supervise employees with disabilities.</p>
Status	January 01, 2016
Compliance Date	Complete and ongoing
Accessibility Requirement:	Career development and advancement
AODA Requirement	<p>An employer that provides career development and advancement to its employees shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans, when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities.</p> <p>“career development and advancement” includes providing additional responsibilities within an employee’s current position and the movement of an employee from one job to another in an organization that may be higher in pay, provide greater responsibility or be at a higher level in the organization or any</p>

	combination of them and, for both additional responsibilities and employee movement, is usually based on merit or seniority, or a combination of them.
Action	<p>Review career advancement policies and procedures and revise as necessary to incorporate AODA requirements.</p> <p>Ensure all future developed training and materials are developed with accessibility features in mind.</p> <p>Ensure advancement criteria, practices and processes take into account individual accommodation needs and plans in accordance with AODA.</p>
Status	Complete and ongoing
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Redeployment
AODA Requirement	<p>An employer that uses redeployment shall take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when redeploying employees with disabilities.</p> <p>“redeployment” means the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization.</p>
Action	<p>Review and update of current transfer and redeployment practices and processes to ensure accommodation plans are referenced.</p> <p>Educate managers to ensure redeployment efforts/activities take into account the employee’s accommodation needs.</p>
Status	Complete and ongoing
Compliance Date	January 01, 2016

Customer Service Standards

Accessibility Requirement:	Develop, implement, and maintain policies regarding the provisions of goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities
AODA Requirement	<p>Every provider of goods or services shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The provider shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. • 2. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services. <p>Without limiting subsections (1) and (2), the policies must deal with the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services or the availability, if any, of other measures which enable them to do so.</p> <p>When communicating with a person with a disability, a provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.</p> <p>Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare one or more documents describing its policies, practices and procedures and, upon request, shall give a copy of a document to any person</p>
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Prepare one or more documents describing the accessible customer service policies, provide on request, and notify that the documents are available on request
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	July 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Ensure that a person with a disability is permitted to enter the premises with their service animal and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from AnswerPlus's goods, services, or facilities if the person's service animal is excluded from the premises
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Ensure that a person with a disability and their support person are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises

AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Require a person with a disability to be accompanied by their support person only for a valid health and safety reason and after consulting with the person with a disability
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	July 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Provide advance notice if there is an admission charge for a support person
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Waive the admission charge when a support person is required to accompany a person with a disability
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	July 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Provide notice of any temporary disruption to services that may affect persons with disabilities
AODA Requirement	<p>If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the provider and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the provider shall give notice of the disruption to the public.</p> <p>Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available</p> <p>Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider of goods or services, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.</p> <p>Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a</p>

	document that sets out the steps to be taken in connection with a temporary disruption and, upon request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Prepare a document on temporary disruption of services, provide document on request, notify that the document is available on request
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Provide accessible customer service training to all staff
AODA Requirement	<p>Every provider of goods or services shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the provider, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise. • 2. Every person who participates in developing the provider's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties. <p>The training must include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this Regulation and instruction about the following matters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability. • 2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person. • 3. How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability. • 4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services <p>The training must be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.</p> <p>Training must also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities</p> <p>Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document describing its training policy, and the document must include a summary of the contents of the training and details of when the training is to be provided.</p>

	Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall keep records of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	July 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Provide training on changes to policies to staff on an ongoing basis and keep records of training
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	July 01, 2016
Accessibility Requirement:	Prepare a document on the training policy, provide a copy of the document on request, notify that the document is available on request
AODA Requirement	
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Establish a feedback process for providing goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities
AODA Requirement	<p>Every provider of goods or services shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods or services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.</p> <p>The feedback process must permit persons to provide their feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or on diskette or otherwise</p> <p>The feedback process must specify the actions that the provider of goods or services is required to take if a complaint is received.</p> <p>Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall prepare a document describing its feedback process and, upon request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.</p>
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Prepare a document on the feedback process, provide a copy of the document on request, notify that the document is available on request

AODA Requirement	<p>Every designated public sector organization and every other provider of goods or services that has at least 20 employees in Ontario shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required by this Regulation are available upon request.</p> <p>The notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.</p>
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012
Accessibility Requirement:	Ensure that documents or information given to a person with a disability are offered in an accessible format or with communication support
AODA Requirement	<p>If a provider of goods or services is required by this Regulation to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the provider shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.</p> <p>The provider of goods or services and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.</p>
Action	
Status	Complete
Compliance Date	January 01, 2012

Reviewed and Updated 2020.