## ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

[Organization Name] is firmly dedicated to promoting equitable access and participation for individuals with disabilities. Our company is devoted to treating persons with disabilities in ways that respect their dignity and independence, and we firmly believe in fostering an inclusive environment. We are committed to addressing the challenges of accessibility barriers and ensuring that the needs of all individuals are met. To achieve this, we pledge to comply with the guidelines established in the *Accessible Canada Act* (the Act).

POLICY

[Organization Name] is dedicated to ensuring equal access in all aspects of our organization for individuals with disabilities and fulfilling the requirements outlined in the Act. To achieve this, we will implement the following measures:

* The formation of an accessibility committee,
* The development of an accessibility plan, and
* The establishment of a comprehensive feedback mechanism.

[Organization Name] also commits to:

* A comprehensive review of all programs, services, and new initiatives, ensuring they are fully accessible to all individuals; and
* Ensuring effective communication with persons with disabilities by providing accessible information and communication support tailored to the unique needs and circumstances of each individual.

As a private sector organization with 100 or more employees, [Organization Name] will ensure that this accessibility plan is published on or before June 1, 2023. Subsequently, [Organization Name] will publish and update this policy every three years.

Upon request [Organization Name] will provide this policy in alternate formats, with the exception of braille and audio formats, within 15 days of the request. A request for this policy in either Braille or an audio format must be fulfilled within 45 days of the request.

**Accessibility Committee**

[Organization Name] recognizes the importance of ensuring that accessibility committees represent the diversity of Canadians, including persons with disabilities and Indigenous representation, as outlined in the Act. Guided by the principle of "Nothing Without Us," we acknowledge that persons with disabilities are equal participants in all areas of life and should be involved in all decision-making on policies, programs, practices, and service delivery.

Where feasible:

* at least 50% of committee members will comprise
	+ persons with disabilities, or
	+ represent disability-serving organizations.
* membership may also include individuals from both within and outside the organization to provide a range of perspectives and expertise.

**Accessibility Plan**

The implementation of [Organization Name]'s accessibility plan will adhere to the following guiding principles:

* Every individual must be treated with dignity, respect, and equality.
* Every individual must have the same opportunity to lead the life they desire and are capable of.
* Every individual must be able to fully and equally participate in the company.
* Every individual must have meaningful choices and the freedom to make their own decisions, with appropriate support if necessary.
* All policies must consider and address the various barriers and forms of discrimination that exist.
* Persons with disabilities must be actively involved in the development and design of policies, programs, services, and structures.
* Accessibility standards and regulations must be created to achieve the highest level of accessibility for all individuals.

To fulfill its commitment to accessibility, [Organization Name] will undertake the following actions:

1. **Prepare and publish accessibility plans:** The company and the accessibility committee will create accessibility plans that identify, remove, and prevent barriers in our policies, programs, practices, and services, with priority given to the most critical areas. These plans will be updated every three years or as necessary, and persons with disabilities will be consulted during the creation and update process. This plan will also cover key areas of accessibility, employment, built environment, technology, service, and culture.
2. **Set up a feedback process:** The company will establish a mechanism to receive and address feedback on accessibility to ensure that individuals with disabilities can voice their concerns or suggestions.
3. **Prepare and publish progress reports:** The company will regularly prepare and publish progress reports describing the actions taken to implement their accessibility plans. These reports will include information on feedback received and how it was taken into consideration. People with disabilities will also be consulted during the preparation of these reports.

The Accessibility Commissioner must be notified within 48 hours of these policies and procedures being published.

**Accessibility Plan at [Organization Name]**

The following plan has been created and modified by [Organization Name] and will serve as the Accessibility Plan within the workplace. It contains seven required sections, at minimum.

1. Employment

[Organization Name] acknowledges that persons with disabilities represent a significant portion of the Canadian workforce. In support of this, [Organization Name] is committed to enhancing the recruitment, retention, and promotion of employees with disabilities. The following initiatives have been identified to create a workplace that is inclusive and welcoming to job seekers with disabilities.

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objective** | **Short-Term Action** | **Medium-Term Action** | **Long-Term Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Analyze and benchmark hiring, promotion, and retention rates for employees with disabilities. | * Continue quarterly analysis of employment equity data of our workforce to identify underrepresented occupational groups.
 |  |  |
| Improve opportunities for employees and potential employees with disabilities. | * Clarify staffing options to address underrepresentation
* Expand dissemination to all hiring managers and employees.
 | * Establish a dedicated recruiter for persons with disabilities.
* Hold targeted recruitment events for persons with disabilities.
* Collaborate with postsecondary institutions, communities, and employment agencies for persons with disabilities.
 |  |
| Make accessibility considerations part of the onboarding process | * Cover duty to accommodate and accommodation process for new employees during onboarding (rights and obligations).
 | * Create a process to check in with new employees who self-identified with a disability at 1, 3, and 6 months post-hire to ensure their needs are met. Managers will be informed if additional tools are required.
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1. Built Environment

[Organization Name] strives to make their work locations barrier-free for the full participation of employees with disabilities. The organization will ensure that all buildings meet the accessibility codes and standards. Recently, new barriers have been identified during consultations for the Accessibility Plan, which will soon conclude after five years of removing barriers and ensuring compliance.

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objective** | **Short Term Action** | **Medium Term Action** | **Long Term Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Assess the feasibility of an accessible boardroom for employees with hearing disabilities. |  | * Assess the feasibility of an accessible boardroom for employees with hearing disabilities.
 |  |
| Update parking policies. |  | * Review policies to meet obligations for employees and visitors.
 |  |
| Make space near elevators more accessible at office buildings. |  | * Install seating near elevators to accommodate employees with mobility issues.
 |  |
| Explore the possibility of wider doors for mobility devices. |  | * Study door size for large wheelchairs.
 |  |
| Update the exterior of the office building to meet accessibility standards | * Identify areas needing improvement, making sure to consult people with disabilities
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1. Information and Communication Technologies

Making information and communication technologies accessible is crucial to enable everyone to interact with technology effectively. To achieve this, we must ensure accessibility for users with disabilities, injuries, or ergonomic needs. This will ensure equal participation and contributions to fulfilling the organization’s mission. The following initiatives are proposed to achieve this at [Organization Name].

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objective** | **Short-term Action** | **Medium-term Action** | **Long-term Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ensure new systems meet accessibility and security standards. Integrate accessibility into the review process. |  |  | * Train technicians in accessibility, job accommodations, and adaptive technology,
* Provide hands-on support and accessibility evaluations for applications and websites.
* Offer accessibility boot camps for application developers.
 |
| Make software accessible |  | * Ensure all software is WCAG 2.0 compliant and compatible with assistive technologies.
 |  |
| Update existing software for accessibility. |  | * Consider accessibility gaps in current user-facing technologies when prioritizing software updates or replacements.
 |  |
| Create enterprise-wide design standards that prioritize accessibility and incorporate it into UI/UX design systems. |  |  | Establish accessible UI/UX design standards and systems for enterprise-wide use. |
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1. Communication

Clear and direct communication benefits all audiences, and to achieve this, it's important to consider that people communicate in different ways, such as speech, writing, sign language, and pictures. To remove communication barriers and create a more inclusive environment, the following initiatives have been identified:

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objective** | **Short-term Action** | **Medium-term Action** | **Long-term Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Use plain language in communications. |  | * Launch a plain-language awareness campaign.
 |  |
| Make all communication accessible by default, both internal and external. | * Include accessible document creation in onboarding and improve templates for briefing notes, presentations, agendas and other documents.
 | * Promote WCAG 2.0 compliant communication practices and provide training and support for creating accessible content.
* Train current employees and provide tools and guidance for creating accessible internal and external documents.
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| Accessible intranet and internet sites. |  |  | * Make intranet and internet sites accessible for all information posted.
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1. Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities

[Organization Name] is committed to ensuring that accessibility is a fundamental consideration in the procurement of goods, services, and facilities. Accessibility criteria will be integrated into procurement processes to identify and remove barriers, ensuring that all acquired goods and services meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objective** | **Short-term Action** | **Medium-term Action** | **Long-term Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Consider accessibility needs at the start of procurement processes. | * Mandate accessibility training for procurement officers.
* Promote awareness and provide resources for accessible procurement.
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| Improve accessibility in vendor selection. | Provide accessibility guidelines to suppliers. | Include accessibility as a weighted criterion in vendor evaluations | Establish partnerships with accessibility-focused vendors. |
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1. Design and Delivery of Programs and Services

[Organization Name] is committed to ensuring that all programs and services are designed and delivered in a way that is inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities. Consideration of accessibility will be integrated into program development, service delivery, and user experience design to remove barriers and improve accessibility.

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objective** | **Short-term Action** | **Medium-term Action** | **Long-term Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ensure accessibility in the development and implementation of programs and services. | * Review existing programs for accessibility barriers.
* Consult persons with disabilities in program design and delivery process.
 |  | Implement universal design principles across all programs and services. |
| Improve digital and physical accessibility in service delivery. | Ensure service locations and digital platforms meet accessibility standards. | Provide multiple service delivery formats (e.g., online, phone, in-person) | Regularly assess and update accessibility features in all service areas. |
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1. Transportation

[Organization Name] is committed to identifying, removing, and preventing transportation-related barriers that may affect employees, clients, and visitors with disabilities. We will take proactive steps where necessary to improve the accessibility of transportation services, ensuring equitable and inclusive access to all.

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objective** | **Short-term Action** | **Medium-term Action** | **Long-term Action** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Improve access to company-provided transportation (if applicable). | Ensure company vehicles accommodate employees with disabilities where required. | Provide accessibility training for drivers or transportation providers. | Implement and maintain policies ensuring accessible transportation options for all users. |
| Provide equal access to fare payment and support persons. | Ensure fare parity between persons with and without disabilities. | Implement alternative fare payment options for those unable to use standard payment methods. | Regularly assess and update fare payment accessibility options. |
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**Optional Addition to the Plan**

1. Culture, Education, and Awareness

[Organization Name] recognizes the importance of a positive workplace culture and its impact on employee performance, job satisfaction, and engagement. The company is committed to creating a healthy and equitable workplace environment where employees are valued and have access to equitable employment opportunities and will establish a safe space where employees can freely express and advocate for themselves. To foster an inclusive and accessible workplace, the company will focus on addressing awareness and attitudinal barriers through the following:

Examples (We have provided some examples - Please remove those that are not commitments in your workplace and add others as needed):

| **Objectives** | **Short-Term Actions** | **Medium-Term Actions** | **Long-Term Actions** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Ensure all employees have accessibility knowledge and tools | * Develop an Accessibility site
* Post policies and procedures
* Expand Managers' toolkit
 | * Provide a "library" of tools
 |  |
| Strengthen understanding of accessibility, empathy and respect for employees with disabilities | * Enhance programming for National AccessAbility Awareness Week
* Educate about invisible disabilities
 | * Communicate quarterly on accessibility matters
* Launch employees network for disabilities
 | * Increase communication about cognitive disabilities
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| Ensure events and meetings are accessible | * Prepare guidelines for accessible events/meetings
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| Pilot "accessibility ambassadors" | * Assess and develop options for ambassadors
 | * Measure impact of ambassadors
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**Feedback Process**

[Organization Name] aims to create a barrier-free workplace for all employees by implementing the plan developed by the company and the accessibility committee under the guidance of this policy and the Act.

Submitting Feedback

Employees are encouraged to provide feedback on accessibility-related concerns, requests, or barriers they experience. Feedback may be submitted to:

**Designated Contact:** [Insert Name/Title/Department]

**Methods of Submission:**

* By email: [Insert Email Address]
* By phone: [Insert Phone Number]
* By mail: [Insert Mailing Address]
* Through any other communication channels used by [Organization Name] to engage with employees and the public

Employees are not required to include their name or any other identifiable information in this feedback submission. Anonymous feedback will be accepted and processed in the same manner as identified feedback.

Acknowledgment of Feedback

Employees who submit feedback will receive an acknowledgment of receipt, including anonymous feedback, which will receive the acknowledgement of receipt through the same means by which the feedback was provided.

Accessible Formats

[Organization Name] will ensure that the feedback process description is provided in an accessible format upon request, including:

* Print, large print, or Braille
* Audio format
* Electronic formats compatible with adaptive technology

Requests for accessible formats will be fulfilled:

* Within 45 days for Braille or audio format
* Within 15 days for all other formats

Publication of Feedback Process

The description of this feedback process will be:

* Written in clear, simple, and concise language
* Published in an accessible digital format meeting Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) Level AA standards
* Made available on [Organization Name]’s primary digital platform or linked from its homepage
* If no digital platform exists, a printed version will be displayed alongside the accessibility plan

Amendments

If the feedback process is amended, the updated version will be published in accordance with the Act. Within 48 hours of publication, [Organization Name] will notify the Accessibility Commissioner by email or another electronic method, providing a URL, hyperlink, or mailing addresses where the description is available.

**Progress Reports**

[Organization Name] is committed to transparency and accountability in the implementation of its accessibility plan. To track progress and ensure continuous improvement, [Organization Name] will publish progress reports in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Progress reports will be published annually on the anniversary of the accessibility plan’s publication deadline in any year when an updated accessibility plan is not required. Each progress report will:

* Outline how the accessibility plan is being implemented.
* Be published on the first and second anniversaries of the accessibility plan deadline.
* Demonstrate how feedback from persons with disabilities has been considered in updates to the plan.
* Include the same seven priority areas as in the accessibility plan.
* Be developed in consultation with persons with disabilities, with a description of the consultation process included.
* Be written in clear, simple, and concise language.

Progress reports will be made publicly available in a format that meets Level AA conformance of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). If [Organization Name] has a publicly accessible digital platform, the reports will be posted on the main website or linked from the homepage. If no digital platform is available, print copies will be displayed in accessible locations at each place of business.

Additionally, [Organization Name] will notify the Accessibility Commissioner of the publication of each progress report within 48 hours by providing either the URL link to the report or the addresses of the locations where print copies are available.

Progress reports will also be made available upon request in accessible formats, including print, large print, Braille, audio, or electronic formats compatible with adaptive technology, within the prescribed timeframes (within 45 days for Braille or audio format and within 15 days for all other formats).

**Planning and Reporting Requirements**

As a federally regulated organization with 100 or more employees, [Organization Name] will be required to begin a planning and reporting cycle by preparing and publishing an initial accessibility plan on or before June 1, 2023.

This planning and reporting cycle will last three calendar years, with the following schedule:

* Year 1: publication of initial accessibility plan
* Years 2 and 3: Progress reports

[Organization Name] will ensure progress reports are published within one year of the previous report, as per ACA requirements.

[Organization Name] will be required to begin a new publishing and reporting cycle following the completion of the first cycle. This subsequent cycle will begin with an updated accessibility plan followed by two progress reports.

[Organization Name] will continue these planning and reporting cycles unless the average number of employees falls below 10 during a planning and reporting cycle, in which case the organization would be exempt from these obligations effective the last day of that cycle.

**Training**

[Organization Name] is committed to providing regular accessibility training and education to all employees, ensuring that the training is accessible to everyone and that employees have the necessary tools to become accessibility-confident.

Training about accessible service delivery will be provided to:

* Every person who is an employee of the service provider (including senior management) or a volunteer with the service provider.
* Any individual who is involved with the design and the delivery of a service.
* Every other person who provides services on behalf of the service provider.
* Every person who works directly with the public or whose work impacts the public.

Training will include:

* A review of the purposes of the Accessible Canada Act,
* the Accessible Canada Regulations,
* the Canadian Human Rights Act,
* the requirements of the Customer Service Standard,
* [Organization Name]’s policies on accessibility,
* It will also include:
	+ Information on in-person and digital communications,
	+ Barriers and accommodations,
	+ How to consult and interact with persons with disabilities, including those who use an assistive device, etc.
	+ How to use assistive technology or devices,
	+ What to do to assist if a person with a disability encounters a barrier to service,
	+ Visible and non-visible disabilities,
	+ The principles of inclusive design
		- **Please note: this standard is currently under review and this policy will be updated accordingly.**
* [Add more items as necessary]

**Review of Policy and Plans**

The accessibility policy and any associating accessibility plans shall be reviewed every three years, or when deemed necessary by [Organization Name] and the accessibility committee.

**Posted**

Our commitment to accessibility will be posted and available [Insert where].

**Notification to Accessibility Commissioner**

[Organization Name] will notify the Accessibility Commissioner within 48 hours after publishing any accessibility plan or progress report. This notification will be sent electronically and will include either:

* The URL address or hyperlink to the published document, if available online, or
* The mailing addresses of the locations where a printed copy of the document is publicly accessible.

**Document Retention**

[Organization Name] is committed to retaining accessibility-related records in compliance with regulatory requirements. Any version of an accessibility plan or progress report published under the Act will be retained for a minimum of seven years from the date it was required to be published.

If [Organization Name] has a publicly accessible digital platform, these documents will remain available on that platform for the required duration. If no such platform exists, electronic or print copies will be maintained in a manner that ensures public access.

Additionally, the most recent description of the organization's feedback process will be retained for at least seven years from the date of publication or until a new version replaces it. Any feedback received under the feedback process will also be retained for a minimum of seven years from the date it was received.

All records will be stored securely and made available in accessible formats upon request.

**Involvement of Persons with Disabilities**

[Organization Name] is committed to actively involving persons with disabilities in the development, implementation, and review of the accessibility plans. Before creating or updating the accessibility plan and progress reports, persons with disabilities will be invited to participate in consultations to ensure their lived experiences and accessibility needs are reflected.

Additionally, persons with disabilities will be invited to participate in the Accessibility Committee to provide direct input on accessibility initiatives, identify barriers, and contribute to meaningful improvements. The Accessibility Committee will oversee these efforts, ensuring that feedback is integrated into policies and practices to foster a more inclusive and accessible organization.

**Accommodation**

[Organization Name] is committed to meeting its duty to accommodate persons with disabilities as required under the Accessible Canada Act (ACA). Accommodation will be provided to the point of undue hardship to ensure an inclusive and accessible workplace.

The organization will implement clear, transparent, and timely accommodation processes to support employees with disabilities. Employees requesting accommodation will be provided with the necessary resources, adjustments, and support to perform their job duties effectively.

Accommodation measures will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may include, but are not limited to:

* Modifying workspaces, equipment, or tools
* Adjusting work hours or duties
* Providing assistive technologies or communication supports
* Ensuring access to information in accessible formats

Employees will be informed of their right to request accommodation, and managers will be trained to recognize and facilitate accommodation requests in a respectful and efficient manner. The organization will engage in meaningful dialogue with employees to identify appropriate solutions and will document all accommodation plans to ensure accountability and ongoing support.