



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

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA), the 2021-2026 multi year accessibility plan outlines the policies and actions that the Canadian Hearing Services (CHS) has developed and will continue to put in place to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. The Multi-year Plan will be modified at least once every five years to reflect CHS's accomplishments in improving our services for those with disabilities, and to maintain compliance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS:

LAUNCH OF A NEW ACCESSIBLE WEBSITE:

Canadian Hearing Services (CHS) launched a new accessible website in September 2020. The original scope of work included AODA compliance at the time of development.

Prior to the launch of the website, content was reviewed by staff to ensure that it was accessible for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. Through our feedback process we continue to make updates based on feedback and suggestions from our stakeholders and clients.

This newly designed website is part of the organization's major rebrand efforts, which began in January 2020. It aligns with the organization's renewed strategic focus to advance barrier-free communities for Deaf and hard of hearing Canadians.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL NEWSLETTER:

CHS launched an internal newsletter to keep employees updated on corporate information, client success stories and staff anniversaries. The newsletter also includes an information bulletin with tips related to staff health and wellbeing.

CHS also launched an external newsletter to keep clients informed of service updates, client success stories and promotions.

PAYMENT PORTAL:

CHS has built an accessible secure online payment portal for clients to process invoices online. Historically, clients would have to call in with payment information. This platform allows clients to complete this task independently, directly access the online platform and see past transactions.

HEARING HEALTHCARE REGISTRATION FORM:

We recently built an encrypted online hearing healthcare registration form for clients to complete online versus having to fill out paperwork and scan into their computer. This improves accessibility to register for an appointment as client and submit with a click of a button.

VIRTUAL SERVICE DELIVERY DURING THE PANDEMIC:

CHS recently celebrated 250,000 virtual appointments across our service delivery since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a huge success for the organization as we were able to move our service delivery to an online model and improve accessibility by providing services to our clients virtually.

WEBSITE AND LIVE CHAT FEATURE:

Our new accessible website is the hub of information for our clients. This also includes a live chat feature on the website to allow clients to speak to CHS staff members in ASL or LSQ.

PLAN: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Accessibility Requirement:	Establishment of Accessibility Policies	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>The AODA policies are available under Policies and Procedures on our internal intranet site. The following policies were updated in April 2021 and will be reviewed and updated every two years or earlier as required by legislative changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessibility Standards – Customer Service (AODA) Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation Policy Access and Accommodation policy <p>Canadian Hearing Services will provide, on request, information in an accessible format or with communication supports to people with disabilities, in a manner that considers their disability.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	April 2021
Accessibility Requirement:	Designing/procuring or Acquiring Self-serve Kiosks	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>CHS is committed to incorporating accessibility features considering accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks. All lease agreements must include assessing kiosks in the facilities and parking area to ensure that they are accessible to the public, consumers, and employees. For example, sound, vision, height, and location. When landlord installs new kiosks, CHS will advocate those new installations be accessible.</p> <p>As applicable, event venues will be sourced with a preference for those with accessible kiosks.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Managers and CFO	Last Updated:	June 2021
Accessibility Requirement:	Training on IASR and the <i>Human Rights Code</i>	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>Canadian Hearing Services is committed to providing training in line with the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.</p> <p>List of mandatory training initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AODA Accessible Customer Service training Understanding Human Rights (AODA) <p>Records of training completion including names and dates are maintained by Human Resources.</p> <p>Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices, and procedures governing the goods or services with disabilities.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STANDARD

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Accessibility Requirement:	Feedback Process	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>CHS has a communication process in place to connect and receive feedback from employees, the public, and from individuals with disabilities.</p> <p>We welcome feedback about the safety and quality of services that we provide.</p> <p>On our website we have a section geared towards quality. All reported complaints will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Received with courtesy and respect Acted upon in a timely and fair manner Confidential: only required information will be shared to investigate the complaint <p>Clients can provide feedback using several methods in English, ASL, French and LSQ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emailing feedback to feedback@chs.ca Completing an online form and/or submit a video Communicate with a CHS staff member or Manager by phone, Skype, or in person <p>Upon receiving complaint, CHS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> acknowledge receipt of client's communication, and that it is being considered a formal complaint (within 1 business day); complaint will be forwarded to the appropriate Manager, Director or Vice President to investigate contact client for further details (within 3 business days) analyze the details of the complaint work in partnership with the client to identify solutions and determine if there needs to be a process change as part of quality improvement advise the client of the outcome (within 30 business days) include it in aggregate data to support service evaluation and quality improvement <p>If clients are not satisfied with the resolution of the complaint, they may request an appeal of the decision in writing or video to feedback@chs.ca.</p> <p>We take great pride in building strong relationships with our clients and providing an excellent client experience. We value and appreciate feedback.</p> <p>CHS's new chat feature allows our clients to connect with a member of the CHS team quickly, online, and in real-time.</p> <p>In addition, the Complaint Policy is available on our website to encourage individuals to communicate and report issues or complaints to improve processes.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	April 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Accessible Formats and Communication Support	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>CHS is committed to ensuring that information is accessible to everyone.</p> <p>CHS has developed guidelines to ensure all content is written in plain language and formatting documents for reader accessibility. Content administrators are responsible for ensuring that new materials are written in plain language and that document layouts follow formatting guidelines.</p> <p>CHS will continue to communicate website updates with relevant and important content for Deaf and hard of hearing Canadians, including articles, blogs, newsletters, and company announcements.</p> <p>The live chat feature on the website provides automated prompts that allow clients to find specific information faster. Clients can speak to a CHS staff member through text chat or video call. For example, if someone is Deaf or hard of hearing and prefer to communicate in ASL or LSQ, they can use the video chat feature as staff are trained in sign language.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Marketing and Communication	Last Updated:	June 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>CHS provides information on emergency procedures, plans and public safety to all employees, clients, and stakeholders.</p> <p>Employees have access to all emergency procedures via the company intranet site.</p> <p>Clients are provided with a Client Onboarding/Welcome Package translated into seven different languages: English, French, American Signage Language (ASL), la langue de signes Québécoise (LSQ), Chinese, Portuguese and Russian. https://www.chs.ca/page/client-welcome-packages</p> <p>This package provides information on safety, emergency procedures, illness prevention, information on the complaint process, privacy, client/CHS Responsibilities and about available services at CHS.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Head of Programs/Services	Last Updated:	June 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Accessible Websites and Web Content	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>CHS is committed to removing barriers to communication, the information on CHS.ca is now also available in American Sign Language (ASL) and la langue des signes Québécoise (LSQ). Making content available in 4 languages (English, ASL, French and LSQ).</p> <p>The design for the CHS website was guided by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).</p> <p>CHS meets internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.</p> <p>CHS's E -store offers a self-serve system to allow customers to purchase their hearing devices.</p> <p>CHS offers a self-guided online hearing test.</p> <p>CHS's Fundraising site offers a self-serve system for individuals to make general or cause specific donation.</p> <p>CHS's clients can book a hearing test online through a self-serve system.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Educational and Training Resources or Materials	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>CHS is committed to providing training to all employees in the requirements of Ontario's Accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.</p> <p>CHS online orientation program provides training to all employees with respect to a wide range of issues related to diversity, respect, and accessibility.</p> <p>CHS has established an ongoing annual training plan for all CHS employees and retains records of training.</p> <p>Mandatory AODA IASR online training courses are provided to all employees and volunteers within the first 30 days of employment. This includes anyone who provides goods or services on contract.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

Accessibility Requirement:	Recruitment, Assessment, and Selection Processes	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>CHS is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. CHS will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment, assessment and hiring processes.</p> <p>In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), CHS will provide accommodation, accessible formats and communication supports for the interview upon request.</p> <p>CHS informs all employees how CHS will support them if they have a disability or should they develop a disability later in their career.</p> <p>Information related to accommodation requirements will be addressed confidentially.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Accessible Formats and Communication Support for Employees	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>External communications/updates such as e-blasts and e-newsletters are translated in ASL and LSQ to ensure that information is accessible to all CHS employees, clients, and stakeholders.</p> <p>Majority of the HR training videos, and employee surveys are translated in ASL.</p> <p>All company town halls have captioning and interpretation available.</p> <p>The AODA Policies, Statement of Commitment, and the Multi-Year Plan is available on the company intranet site and website.</p> <p>CHS Monthly Staff Newsletter is an interactive communication tool to connect with all CHS staff. Information shared varies from updates on policies and procedures, office closures, anniversaries, promotions, and company milestones. The updates on AODA policies, Statement of Commitment, and the Multi-Year-Plan is also shared on the Staff Newsletter.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Workplace Emergency Response Information	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>Individualized emergency response information and evacuation plans for employees with disabilities are uploaded annually and maintained by Human Resources on the company intranet site.</p> <p>CHS provides Emergency Response Training to all employees.</p> <p>Emergency information for the public is maintained and communicated in ways that are accessible. Alternative formats will be provided upon request.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Accommodation Plans and Return to Work Process	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	CHS develops and puts in place a process for individual accommodation and return to work plans for employees that have been absent from work due to a disability. Related Policies are listed on the company intranet site and include the Access and Accommodation policy and the Return-to-Work policy.		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Performance Management Process	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>All CHS employees complete an annual Performance Review. Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans will be taking into account when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using performance management processes • When providing career development and advancement opportunities (e.g., acquiring new responsibilities) • When redeploying, transferring to other jobs, or transferring to departments 		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	April 2021

Accessibility Requirement:	Prevention and Removal of Barriers	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>The following Human Resources policies are reviewed every two years or earlier as required by legislative changes. Managers and employees are trained on policy content regularly. Issues and complaints will be dealt with in a timely and respectful manner.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Anti-Audism / Anti – Ableism 2. Employee Conduct and Behaviour policy 3. Access and Accommodation 4. Staff Complaint policy 5. Health and Safety 6. Performance Appraisal 7. Recruitment and Selection 8. Self-Identification 9. Service Animals 10. Sign Language 11. Training and Development 		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	April 2021

DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES (ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT)			
Accessibility Requirement:	Make Service Counters, Queuing Guides and Waiting Areas Accessible	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	All existing service counters, queuing guides and waiting areas are accessible. CHS has installed plexiglass for infection control related to Covid-19.		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Manager and Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021
Accessibility Requirement:	Maintain the Accessible Parts of your Public Spaces	Ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	All major changes to public spaces in CHS facilities conform to Accessibility Standards. CHS will advocate with landlords and in the immediate vicinity of our offices for proper design of public spaces according to the Accessibility Standards. Should disruptions to the accessible parts of the public space occur, we will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available.		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Directors in Consultation with Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021
CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS			
Accessibility Requirement:	Develop, implement, and maintain policies regarding the provisions of goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities.	Complete	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	Our Accessibility Standards – Customer Service (AODA) policy covers the standards CHS has put forward to promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that persons with disabilities are given an equal opportunity to obtain, use, and benefit from the goods or services. • Allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services if this does not present a safety risk. • Using alternative methods, when possible, to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner. • Accommodating the use of personal assistive devices needed to access the goods and services. • Considering individual needs when providing goods and services and communicating in a manner that considers customer’s disability. 		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Human Resources	Last Updated:	June 2021

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	Complete	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	CHS has implemented a Service Animal policy to support the access needs of persons with disabilities and to make all reasonable efforts to accommodate them and their registered service animals. This policy provides guidance and education on the admittance of service animals into CHS facilities.		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Manager on Duty	Last Updated:	June 2021
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	Complete	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>Our Accessibility Standards – Customer Service (AODA) policy covers the standards CHS has put forward to promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.</p> <p>A person with a disability can be accompanied by their support person for a valid health and safety reason and after consulting with the person with a disability.</p> <p>At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on CHS premises.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Manager on Duty	Last Updated:	June 2021
Accessibility Requirement:	Provide notice of any temporary disruption to services that may affect persons with disabilities	Complete/ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	<p>In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, notice may be provided in a variety of ways and will be done as quickly as possible. In the event of a service disruption, alternative methods of service may be considered and those impacted by service interruption shall be informed of any alternative methods.</p> <p>Signage will be placed in strategic areas with as much notice as possible. Alternatives will be provided to the customers along with contact information. Signages will be in place before customers arrive in the area.</p> <p>CHS will endeavor to contact consumers directly if there is insufficient time to post notice of interruptions.</p> <p>CHS's external newsletter updates clients on service updates.</p> <p>Notices will also be posted on the CHS website for office closures we will also have a web banner posted. In addition, all social media channels will be updated to communicate service disruptions or office closures.</p>		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Manager	Last Updated:	June 2021

TRANSPORTATION

Accessibility Requirement:	CHS will review its policies on Transporting clients where essential as part of service delivery.	Ongoing	
Current Barriers:	None		
Progress on Requirements:	None		
Potential Future Barriers:	None		
Responsible Authority:	Manager on Duty	Last Updated:	June 2021