

# Multi-Year Accessibility Plan for House of Friendship

Date Updated: June 2023

## Statement of Organizational Commitment - AODA – Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

House of Friendship is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario’s accessibility laws.

House of Friendship is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination. House of Friendship understands that obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

House of Friendship is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all participants including people with disabilities. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

### Introduction:

House of Friendship strives to meet the needs of its employees and participants with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

House of Friendship is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years. We train and maintain records of every person prior to starting work and will provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

### **Requirement: Accessibility policy**

We are committed to maintaining an AODA policy. The policy includes an organizational statement of commitment and requirements for employees at all levels of the organization to meet the accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities in a timely manner.

#### **Actions taken:**

- The AODA policy was reviewed and revised June 2023
- The AODA policy will be made available in an accessible format to participants requesting a copy of the policy

#### **Actions planned:**

- Continue to review the AODA policy at least every three years or whenever the House of Friendship practices and/or procedures change to ensure it is up to date and all AODA requirements are integrated
- Continue making the AODA policy available in an accessible format to participants requesting a copy of the policy

### **Requirement: Multi-year accessibility plan**

House of Friendship is committed to developing and implementing a multi-year accessibility plan to meet the requirements of the AODA and the needs of House of Friendship stakeholders with disabilities.

#### **Actions taken:**

- A multi-year accessibility plan was developed in 2014 and updated in 2017 and 2023.
- Updated version is posted on the House of Friendship website

#### **Actions planned:**

- Post updated multi-year accessibility plan to the House of Friendship website as updates are made
- Provide the plan in an accessible format on request
- Prepare annual status updates on what has been done to achieve the accessibility plan, post to the website and make the update available to the public in an accessible format if requested
- Review and update the multi-year accessibility plan at least every 5 years based on changing accessibility requirements and feedback from internal and external stakeholders
- Engage with the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion working group to provide direction to the multi-year plan

### **Requirement: Self-service kiosks and computer stations**

House of Friendship does not currently use self service kiosks however we will comply with this standard if kiosks are to be used in the future.

### **Requirement: Training**

- We are committed to providing appropriate AODA training to all employees, students and volunteers
- Training content includes the requirements of AODA, the IASR

#### **Actions taken:**

- All employees and students have taken the required AODA training
- AODA training is included in the pre-employment on-boarding and training process
- Mandatory training continues to be provided to all new employees
- We are able to track and report on training compliance and organization-wide training compliance check reports can be run as needed

#### **Actions planned:**

- Incorporate Human Rights Code training into the pre-employment training bundle
- Train all current employees/students on Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities
- Institute a refresher training cycle at least every three years or as changes occur to ensure knowledge remains current
- Ensure all people who provide goods, services and facilities on the House of Friendship's behalf are appropriately trained

### **Requirement: Accessible formats and communication supports**

We are committed to making information and communication accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the ways we communicate are key to delivering our programs and services to the public.

#### **Actions taken:**

- Feedback can be provided in multiple formats including phone, email and in person at program sites

**Actions planned:**

- Develop processes to ensure information can be made accessible to people with disabilities upon request
- Develop guidelines and best practices for creating accessible documents
- Continually improve accessibility of our information and communications by reviewing feedback received to identify accessibility barriers and striving for barrier removal
- Continue to use the accessible feedback and request mechanism as a means for enabling people with disabilities to request accessible formats or communication supports

**Requirement: Accessible websites and web content**

External-facing websites and web content controlled directly by House of Friendship conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the IASR.

**Requirement: emergency procedures, plans or public safety information**

We strive to ensure that our facilities are safe for participants, visitors and employees. We will prepare building related emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and provide this information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as possible, upon request.

**Action Planned:**

- Undertake a review of emergency procedures at each of its facilities and ensured that property and program managers are able to provide building related emergency and public safety information in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practical, upon request

**Employment standards**

House of Friendship strives to be a leader in providing a healthy and safe workplace for all staff, students and volunteers. We have a strong organizational history of accommodating employees with disabilities and creating an inclusive work environment. We are committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices and we recognize that by removing barriers across the employment life cycle will create a workplace that is diverse, accessible and enables employees to reach their full potential.

## **Requirement : Recruitment**

### **Actions taken:**

- All postings to the public-facing careers website include notice about the availability of accommodations for disabilities, where needed, to support their participation in recruitment processes. All postings include the statement:
- Job applicants who are selected for an interview and/or testing will be notified that accommodations are available, upon request.
- When written offers of employment are made, we notify the successful applicants of the policy for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### **Actions Planned:**

- Develop written processes to consult with any applicant who requests an accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's unique abilities
- Continue addressing barriers to recruitment
- Continue to accommodate employees

## **Requirement: Accessible formats and communication supports for employees**

### **Actions taken:**

- Assistive technology in use includes Dragon Naturally Speaking, ZoomText, various keyboards, specialty mice, and ergonomically designed workstations and components

### **Actions planned:**

- Ensure all learning products and systems are WCAG Level A and AA compliant
- Continue to provide assistive devices as required

## **Requirement : Documented individual accommodation plans**

### **Actions taken:**

- We have a workplace accommodation policy in place and a process to support return to work and accommodation requirements

### **Actions planned:**

- Continue to review documented processes and procedures and look for ways to enhance the accommodation program

## **Requirement: Workplace emergency response information**

### **Actions Planned:**

- Develop Emergency Specific Protocols which include Person's Requiring Assistance and AODA requirements
- Send out employee-wide communication to identify employees with disabilities requiring workplace emergency response assistance
- Prepare individualized workplace emergency plans for employees who have disclosed a disability and who require accommodation and plan for updates every two years

## **Design of Public Spaces Standard**

### **Requirement: Accessible public spaces:**

We will incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or redesigning any space owned or leased by the organization. When House of Friendship constructs or redevelops public spaces such as, service counters and waiting areas we will do so in keeping with the requirements set out in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards - The Design of Public Spaces Standards* and Ontario's Building Code.

**Actions taken:**

- Property department adheres to the requirements in the Ontario Building Code, the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the Guide to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and any other Ontario government requirement governing accessibility.

**Actions planned**

- Continuously improve physical accessibility in House of Friendship locations

**Customer Service Standard****Requirement: Accessible Customer Service:****Actions taken:**

- All employees and students have been trained on interacting with participants of all abilities and we maintain records of the training that is provided
- Assistive devices and service animals are permitted on all House of Friendship premises locations in areas where participants have access
- Support persons that accompany a person with a disability are welcome in areas where the public or third parties are permitted and or served

**Actions Planned:**

- Develop emergency procedures to ensure participants with varying abilities are assisted in building emergencies
- Continue to train new employees on accessible customer service
- Continue enabling participants to use assistive devices and welcoming the assistance of service animals and support persons
- Work to ensure all online forms are accessible
- Develop tip sheets for employees on interacting with person of varying abilities
- Develop meeting/public information protocols to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are met

## **Requirement: Feedback**

Feedback on how services were delivered to people with disabilities will be invited, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback will be collected by phone, email, via the House of Friendship website and in person at any of our program locations. Feedback will be accepted in accessible formats and with other communication supports as required. Feedback will be considered to improve services and when reviewing the multi-year plan.

### **Actions taken:**

- Implemented an accessible customer service feedback process. Feedback can be provided in multiple formats including phone, email, website and in person

### **Actions planned:**

- Continue to use the accessible feedback mechanisms as a means for improving services to persons with different abilities
- Ensure any internal feedback mechanisms for employees are accessible

## **Measuring results**

### **Accessibility status reports**

We will prepare annual accessibility status reports. The report will include how we have met our goals, commitments and the legislative requirements for that period, as laid out in this plan. The report will be available on our website, and will be provided in alternate formats upon request.

### **Reviewing feedback**

We will monitor and evaluate any feedback the organization has received throughout the year related to accessibility. This information will be used to continuously improve our processes and may be integrated into our accessibility reports and/or multi-year plan.

### **Revisions to the Multi-year Accessibility Plan**

If, through public consultation, feedback and our own accessibility action and planning processes, we determine that the Multi-year Accessibility Plan needs revision, we will update it to reflect these insights. Revisions will be available on our website, and will be provided in alternate formats on request.



