



independent living
waterloo region

Independent Living Waterloo Region Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, 2020 – 2025

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Introduction

This Multi-year Accessibility Plan (the “Plan”) was prepared to meet the obligations of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). The Plan describes the actions ILWR must take to meet provincial targets and demonstrates what staff will be working towards from 2020-2025 to identify, prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities.

Intent

This 2020 to 2025 Multi-year Accessibility Plan outlines the policies/policy review and actions that Independent Living Waterloo Region (ILWR) 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*.

Message from Independent Living Waterloo Region

Through a variety of programs, ILWR partners with people with disabilities to increase opportunities while promoting accessibility and inclusion in our community.

It is with great pride that we present our Multi-year Accessibility Plan as a guide to help us ensure our organization continues to provide exemplary and accessible services to the people whom we support.

Commitment

ILWR is deeply committed to creating a barrier-free environment. We respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the AODA and will continue to review our policies and practices while continually seeking out new ways to improve accessibility within our organization committed to being respectful of each person’s dignity and independence.

ILWR will review the Plan on a quarterly basis along with its associated workplan. The purpose of this review is to facilitate ongoing work, evaluate the Plan in accordance with evolving provincial and national regulations and legislation, and look for opportunities to enhance or modify Plan objectives.

This is a living document and will be modified as we evolve as an organization.

Multi-year Accessibility Plan: Sections

The following pages list initiatives and action items to be addressed as part of the ILWR Multi-year Accessibility Plan. Each item falls within the categories of General Initiatives, Information and Communication, Employment Standard, and Design of Public Spaces, which align with the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Please note items which have been completed use a darker coloured background and use the word “completed” within the “Time Frame” column.

General Initiatives

Project Title	Description	Time Frame and Notes
Multi-Year Accessibility Plan	Develop an outline of ILWR’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	Completed 2021
Procurement process	Review the process of incorporating accessibility criteria and features when procuring and acquiring goods, services, or facilities.	Completed 2021
Virtual consumer visits	Investigate the possibility and logistics of facilitating virtual reassurance calls or visits for consumers	Completed 2023 It was determined by leadership team that these types of calls are not necessary under normal circumstances. If circumstances should arise like another pandemic with restrictions, then this topic will be revisited.

Information and Communication

Project Title	Description	Time Frame and Notes
Accessible formats and communication support	Review provincial standards and industry best practices	<p>Completed 2023</p> <p>The Executive Assistant has taken accessible PDF training.</p> <p>The ILWR Style Guide includes instructions on creating accessible text.</p>
Accessible formats and communication support	Create an agency-wide style guide which incorporates best practices for providing accessible documents	<p>Completed 2020</p> <p>The ILWR Style Guide includes instructions on creating accessible text.</p>
Accessible websites and web content	Review current web content and ensure that it meets the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA standard	This item was removed as a new website was developed and launched in 2022
Accessible websites and web content	Develop a workflow / checklist to ensure that all new web content meets the WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard	Completed 2022
Accessible websites and web content	Develop a new website that not only meets current accessibility standards but is future proofed against enhanced imminent standards	<p>Completed 2022</p> <p>Our website is accessible as per WCAG 2.0 AA (AODA) and includes additional accessibility features (AccessiBe)</p> <p>A third-party accessibility review may be performed as required.</p>
Policy formats	Research what would be required to make a plain language policy directive.	<p>2023</p> <p>Plain language policy and policy review currently being investigated</p>

Project Title	Description	Time Frame and Notes
		by the Quality Assurance Coordinator
TTY Machine NEW *	Evaluate the continued use of the TTY machine and other communication tools	Completed 2022 The TTY machine will continue to be used at the Administrative office. Additionally, Admin staff have been trained on new ASL interpretation apps.
Accessible Signage	Evaluate our main office and Assisted Living site spaces for access issues around signage	Completed 2023
Digital Communication	Develop a workflow / checklist to ensure that all digital materials are accessible. For example, implementing alt text on images and utilizing accessible formats and styles	Completed 2023 Any staff responsible for updating web content have been shown how to do so with accessibility in mind.
Virtual Communication	To ensure that consumers have virtual access to the Access and Awareness programming and staff	Completed 2020
Virtual Communication	Ensure that consumers can continue to have access to the Access and Awareness programming and staff regardless of their technology, i.e. implement the Zoom toll-free number	Completed 2020
Policy Review	Review ILWR's AODA Policy and update it accordingly	2023 To be reviewed by Quality Assurance Coordinator

Employment Standard

Project Title	Description	Time Frame and Notes
Policy Review	Review ILWR's Employment Policies to ensure continued AODA compliance	Completed 2020
Barrier free employment	Evaluate ILWR's Employment Policies and look for opportunities to provide employees with the maximum opportunity to succeed, free from systemic and physical barriers	Completed 2020
Implement LMS AODA training for staff * NEW	Ensure that all new staff receive Customer Service training through HR Downloads as a part of orientation and onboarding	Completed 2022

Design of Public Spaces

Project Title	Description	Time Frame and Notes
Head Office Accessibility	Ensure our continued commitment to providing an accessible environment	<p>2023 Leadership team received a list of items to help achieve continued accessibility of office spaces. These items are identified in our “ILWR Accessibility Audits of Office Spaces Priorities” which resulted from a physical space audit performed by an outside expert in accessibility.</p> <p>Items received from the audit were prioritized and distributed to appropriate Administrative staff.</p> <p>Some items identified are out of the scope of ILWR and are in direct control of the property owner.</p>
Head Office Accessibility	Perform an accessibility audit in conjunction with community partners to identify barriers to accessibility at Head Office	<p>2023 Site audits were performed by Melissa Moogk-Soulis on the Victoria Street (Head) office as well as the Assisted Living sites. Audit results are detailed in the “ILWR Accessibility Audits of Office Spaces Priorities” document.</p> <p>Items received from the audit were prioritized and distributed to appropriate Administrative staff.</p> <p>Some items identified are out of the scope of ILWR and are in direct control of the property owner.</p>
Assisted-Living Site Accessibility	Perform an internal audit to ensure Assisted Living site office environments are accessible to employees with disabilities	<p>2023 Site audits were performed by Melissa Moogk-Soulis on the Victoria Street office as well as the Assisted Living sites. Audit results are detailed in the “ILWR</p>

		<p>Accessibility Audits of Office Spaces Priorities” document.</p> <p>Items received from the audit were prioritized and distributed to appropriate Administrative staff.</p> <p>Some items identified are out of the scope of ILWR and are in direct control of the property owner.</p>
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Customer Service Standard

Project Title	Description	Time Frame and Notes
Accessible Customer Service Training	Continue to provide Accessible Customer Service Training for new staff, volunteers and 3rd party agencies	Completed 2023
Accessible Customer Service Training	Develop or ascertain a curriculum of Accessible Customer Service updates for staff and implement a schedule to deliver this training on a regular basis	Completed 2021
Customer feedback process * NEW	Develop and formalize a customer feedback process to be used for issues of accessibility.	Completed 2023

Contact Us

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