

OCIC ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Approved by the Board of Directors July 2021

Preamble

OCIC's work, both internally and as a collective of members, is grounded in our shared vision of global social justice, human dignity and participation for all. Our policies are designed to meet OCIC's internal needs as an organization, however they are guided by ideals about anti--oppression, human rights, international cooperation, and the appropriate meeting of human needs articulated in a multitude of places by multilateral bodies, states, and civil society groups.

All OCIC policies and activities are informed by our Vision, Mission, Mandate and Strategic Directions. Mindfulness of the spirit and letter of these documents is central to the integrity of the Council, as is compliance with the Cooperation Canada Code of Ethics, the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, OCIC's Anti-Oppression Policy, and OCIC's Women's Rights and Gender Equality Policy.

1. Statement of Philosophy and Purpose

OCIC is committed to challenging and eliminating the specific and intersectional forms of systemic and individual oppression that people with disabilities face, as expressed in the principles of our Anti-Oppression Policy.

We are committed to building an inclusive workforce and providing an accessible environment in which all individuals have access to OCIC's services, activities and programs in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

This Policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other policies, standards, procedures, practices, by-laws and guidelines to comply with the standards developed under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005](#) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations, Ont. Reg. 191/11 (IASR).

2. Definitions

Disability - Disability is a part of being human. Almost everyone will temporarily or permanently experience disability at some point in their life. Over one billion people - about 15% of the global population - live with some form of disability, and this number is increasing. According to a 2017 Statistics Canada study, 22% of Canadians have one or more disabilities.

The *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)* recognizes that, "disability is an evolving concept."

"Persons with disabilities" includes, but is not limited to, "those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Article 1).

Disabilities may be visible or invisible and may vary from person to person. Onset can be at birth or during childhood, working age years, or old age. Different models of disability inform how disability is understood and acted upon. These include charity, medical, social, human rights, interactional and the disability inclusion models. To practice inclusivity it is important to embrace the social model of disability which recognizes that what contributes to the marginalizing and the disabling of people of different abilities is not their disability, but rather, barriers to equal access and opportunities.

3. Application and Scope

3.1 This policy applies to all OCIC staff, Board, volunteers, interns, members and to any individual or organization (third party) that provides goods, contracted parties and representatives engaged or working with or for OCIC to provide services, programs and facilities on behalf of the Council.

3.2 The IASR defines four general requirements and five accessibility standards: Customer Service, Employment, Communications and Information, Transportation, and Design of Public Spaces that all Ontario employers must attain to meet the goal of an accessible Ontario by 2025. This policy refers to the standards that apply directly to the nature and work of OCIC.

4. Review

4.1 As per OCIC's three-year review policy, this Policy is to be reviewed and/or updated by the Board Governance Committee by June 2024. Any changes must be approved by the OCIC Board of Directors.

5. Principles

5.1 OCIC will develop, implement and maintain policies governing the provision of goods, services, programs and facilities to people with disabilities in a manner that:

- is free from discrimination;
- is available in accessible formats and with communication supports;
- seeks to provide integrated services;
- provides an opportunity equitable to others to obtain use and benefit from the goods or services;
- takes into consideration a person's disability.

6. General IASR Requirements

6.1 Accessibility Policy & Plans: This policy is available in an accessible format on OCIC's website. OCIC will also develop operational plans that will be regularly reviewed to ensure compliance with the IASR and AODA.

6.2 Training: OCIC will provide all staff, Board, volunteers and interns general training on Ontario's accessibility laws and on accessibility aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that apply to persons

with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of staff, Board, volunteers and interns and will include, but not be limited to a general review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation IASR (Ontario Regulation 191/11)* and instruction on:

- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of guide dogs or other service animals or the assistance of support persons;
- how to use equipment or devices available on OCIC's premises or otherwise provided by OCIC that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability; and
- what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services

6.3 Procurement of Goods, Services, and Facilities: OCIC will develop accessibility criteria for procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities in line with OCIC's Finance, Financial Controls and Procurement Policy.

7. Accessible Employment Standard

7.1 Recruitment: OCIC makes every reasonable effort to ensure that qualified people with disabilities are aware of employment and career development opportunities through our recruitment processes, member networks and opportunities postings. OCIC will also work with qualified candidates to provide appropriate accommodations during the interview and assessment processes, if needed.

OCIC will consult with any applicant who requests an accommodation in a manner that considers the applicant's disability. Successful applicants will be notified about OCIC's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as part of their offer of employment.

7.2 Board, Volunteer, Internship, Contractor and Employment Supports: OCIC will inform staff, Board, volunteers, interns and third-party contractors of the policies used to support persons with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodations that consider an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. OCIC will provide this information to all individuals as soon as practicable and will provide updated information to all individuals whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of accommodations.

7.3 Workplace Emergency Response Information: If an individual's disability is such that workplace emergency response information is necessary and OCIC is aware of the need for accommodation, this information will be provided to the staff, Board, volunteer, intern or third-party contractor. With the individual's consent, this information will be provided to the person designated to aid the individual with a disability. The information will be reviewed when:

- the individual moves to a different location;
- the individual's overall accommodation needs or plans are changed; and,

- OCIC reviews its general emergency response plan.

7.4 Documented Individual Accommodation Plans: OCIC will work with any employee, volunteer or intern who requires accommodations or supports due to a disability to develop individualized and mutually agreed and documented work plans, schedules and supports, aligned with OCIC's Personnel Policy. These plans will include information regarding accessible formats and communication supports for information that the employee needs to perform their duties, as well as information that is generally available to all OCIC employees. These plans will also include individualized workplace emergency response information and a process for returning to work following a temporary leave of absence due to a disability.

7.6 Performance Management, Career Development and Redeployment: OCIC considers the accessibility needs of staff, interns, volunteers and third-party contractors with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans when providing career development, conducting performance management, and considering redeployment.

8. Accessible Customer Service Standard

OCIC is committed to working with people with disabilities to ensure that our services, programs and public events are accessible. OCIC invites people with disabilities to discuss their accommodation needs directly with OCIC staff, or through pre-registration for OCIC-led or co-hosted public events or consultation meetings. These could include but are not limited to accommodating the use of personal assistive devices, service animals and support persons.

8.1 Assistive Devices: OCIC staff, Board, volunteers, interns and third-party contractors will make every reasonable effort to accommodate the use of personal assistive devices including, but not limited to, wheelchairs, canes, walkers, scooters, screen readers and Braille display boards.

8.2 Service animals: Whenever possible, OCIC will accommodate service animals as described by Section 80 of the IASR.

8.3 Support persons: OCIC will accommodate any person who accompanies a person with a disability expressly to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services. Where OCIC charges fees for service or admission, fees for support persons will be waived.

8.4 Notice of Service Disruption: Should a temporary service disruption occur to limit the availability or access to OCIC facilities, services, programs or goods, OCIC will notify the public of the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration, and alternative accommodations and supports, if any, that are available.

9. Accessible Communications and Information Standard

OCIC is committed to accessible digital and print communications as outlined in our Communications Policy. When communicating with a person with a disability, OCIC staff, Board, volunteers, interns and third-party contractors will do so in a manner that considers the person's disability.

Upon request, OCIC will work with individuals to provide information and communications materials in accessible formats or with communications supports in a timely manner, and at a cost that is no more than the regular price charged to others where a fee is involved.

9.1 Accessible formats: Whenever possible, OCIC makes every reasonable effort to offer accessible formats of its publicly shared information, communications, publications, documents and policies, upon request. Accessible formats may include, but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, and other formats.

This requirement does not apply to products and product labels, unconvertible information and communications, and information that OCIC does not control directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship. In such cases, OCIC will provide the person requesting the information or communication with: an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

9.2 Communications supports may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

9.3 Accessible Websites and Web Content: OCIC's website and web content currently meet *Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA*, in accordance with the schedule set out in the *AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards*.

10. Feedback Process

OCIC welcomes feedback on how we provide goods, services and programs to people with disabilities in a continuing effort to identify and remove barriers and to respond to concerns.

Feedback can be provided by emailing info@ocic.on.ca, by calling OCIC's office at 416.972.6303 or verbally in person to OCIC staff, Board, volunteers, interns or contracted parties and representatives engaged or working with or for OCIC to provide services on behalf of the Council.

All feedback, including complaints, will be directed to the Executive Director and a response, if required, can be expected within five business days of receiving the report. Feedback shall be accepted and responded to in accessible formats and with other communication supports, as required.