



AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Date Issued: July 2017

Reviewed: July 2020

Revised: May 2023

Introduction

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. is a non-profit agency. We believe in a community where all are offered respect, dignity, and hope for recovery. Our mission is to enable individuals to achieve greater independence through innovative client-centred housing and support services.

Gateway is committed to establishing full compliance with the current standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy, Regulation 191/11, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Gateway affirms its commitment to providing quality services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

Statement of Commitment

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders including our clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. As an agency, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (2005), and its associated standards and regulations.

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. understands that we have a responsibility for ensuring a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone. We are committed to ensuring our agency's compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training, and best practices. We will review these policies and practices annually, as agency changes occur, or in anticipation of compliance deadlines. In addition, we will strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Providing an accessible and barrier-free environment is a shared effort, and as an agency, Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. is committed to working with the necessary parties to make accessibility for all a reality.

Legislative Background

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)

This Act was enacted in 2001 and was the first step towards an accessible province. It recognizes and builds on the Ontario Human Rights Code. It requires municipalities to develop an annual plan with the purpose of identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility.

The Ontario Human Rights Code

When concerning people with disabilities, it is important in understanding and applying accessibility legislation. Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, everyone has the right to equal treatment without discrimination. There is a duty to accommodate to the point of undue hardship. The Ontario Human Rights Code has primacy over the AODA legislation.

Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

The Accessibilities for Ontarians with Disabilities Act was enacted in 2005. The purpose of this Act is to develop, execute and enforce accessibility standards in order to remove barriers for Ontarians with disabilities when accessing goods, services, facilities, accommodations, employment, structures and premises. There are five main areas and one general area, these are referred to as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O. Reg. 191/11)

The IASR sets out accessibility standards and requirements for the following areas:

- Accessible Customer Service Standard
- Information and Communication Standard
- Employment Standard
- Transportation Standard
- Design of Public Spaces Standard

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

General Requirements

Accessible Emergency Information

Gateway is committed to providing clients with publicly available emergency information, plans or public safety information in an accessible way when requested.

- A process had been established in 2012 to provide clients with this information.
- An emergency response plan policy had been developed in 2012.

Accessibility Policies and Plans

Gateway had developed, implemented, and maintained a multi-year plan that outlines the strategies and actions this agency will take to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. This was developed in 2017.

- Policies concerning the IASR, Customer Service Standards, Employment Standards, and the Information and Communication Standards had been developed since 2012.

Training

Training on the Human Rights Code and the AODA will be provided to all employees and volunteers at Gateway. This training will be provided on an ongoing basis to comply with the current legislation, and this is conducted during orientation.

- The training requirements had been created in 2012. This policy can be found under the employment policy.

Information and Communication

All information and communications materials and services provided by Gateway will follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

- A policy for information and communication had been developed in 2013.
- *AODA – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Disruption Form*, was created in 2013 and revised in 2021.
- Gateway established feedback processes in 2015 which are made accessible to people with disabilities.

Customer Service

All goods and services provided by Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. A customer service policy had been created in 2014.

- A policy had been developed and covers the following areas:
 - The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities.
 - The Use of Assistive Devices.
 - The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
 - The Use of Support Persons.
 - Notice of Service Disruptions.



- Customer Feedback.
- Training.
- An alternative format request form had been created in 2014.

Employment

Gateway is an equal-opportunity employer. We are committed to the principles of employment equity and inclusion. All employment services provided by Gateway will follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

- Gateway had developed policies and procedures to accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and selection process in 2012.

Transportation Standard

All transportation services provided by Gateway will follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

- A transportation policy had been developed in 2020.

Design and Structure

Gateway is committed to ensuring all newly constructed or redeveloped public spaces are accessible for people with disabilities. These areas for our agency include buildings and public spaces.

- A design of public spaces policy had been developed in 2015.

Strategies and Actions

General Requirements

Accessible Emergency Information

Gateway is committed to providing clients with publicly available emergency information, plans or public safety information in an accessible way when requested. Gateway will provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary and in a timely manner. For an individual who receives individualized workplace emergency response requires assistance, with the employee's consent the workplace emergency response information will be given to the designated employee.



Accessibility Policies and Plans

Gateway had developed, implemented, and maintained a multi-year plan that outlines the strategies and actions this agency will take to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. This agency had policies which establish the procedures and processes Gateway takes to incorporate the IASR standards into its practices and operations.

Training

Training is provided to best suit the duties and needs of its management, employees, clients, and other stakeholders. Gateway will ensure management, employees, and volunteers are provided with the necessary training required to meet current standards and legislation:

- Provide educational or training resources in accessible formats which consider the needs of a person with a disability.
- Ensure new employees complete training within 30 days of employment or placement.
- Keep and maintain data on training participants' names and dates of completion.

Training will be provided to the groups mentioned above during the orientation process.

Information and Communication

Gateway is committed to meeting the communications needs of people with disabilities by ensuring that:

- People with disabilities are consulted to determine their information and communication needs.
- Any website and content developed by or on behalf of Gateway will conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA (except for live captions and pre-recorded audio descriptions).
- Feedback processes are made accessible to people with disabilities upon request.
- Public information is made available in other formats upon request.

Customer Service

Gateway will work to ensure its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- People with disabilities are given equal opportunities equal to that given to others to obtain the services.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in accessing services.
- People with disabilities and their service animals are accommodated in all aspects of service unless otherwise excluded by law.



- Employees of Gateway will communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that considers the person's disability in a respectful way.

Employment

Gateway is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain individuals with disabilities. Gateway will accommodate people with disabilities throughout the recruitment and onboarding process. Gateway will ensure that its practices and policies are fair, considerate, and comply with the legislation in the following operations:

- Recruitment and selection.
- Documented and individualized accommodation plans.
- Return to work.
- Redeployment
- Performance management.

Transportation Standard

This agency maintains policies and plans for accessibility and training staff to comply with the accessibility standards related to the Transportation Standards outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Design and Structure

Gateway will establish plans to meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or modifying public spaces. Gateway will take appropriate measures to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of its public spaces, and these measures will also ensure emergency maintenance will be executed to the accessible parts of its public spaces. In the event of a disruption, a notification to the public will be made of the service disruption and the alternatives available will be included in the notification where applicable.

Contact Information

You may contact us in person, by mail, website, phone, TTY, or contact the Human Resources Director.

Visit or Mail

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services
178 King Street
Welland, ON L3B 3J5

Phone Number

Phone: (905)-735-4445. The receptionist will direct you to the appropriate manager or director.



Email

info@gatewayofniagara.ca

Website

<https://www.gatewayofniagara.ca/site/contact>

Primary Contact

Laurie Ryan-Hill

Human Resources Director

(905) 932-0855

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Standard and accessible formats of this document are available upon request.