



# Canadian Mental Health Association Multi-Year Accessibility Plan



2026 - 2031

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Please contact [AODA@CMHA-YRSS-yr.on.ca](mailto:AODA@CMHA-YRSS-yr.on.ca).

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## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

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The Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region Branch (CMHA-YR) is committed to providing, both individually and systemically, its programs and services in a manner that is accessible to all persons with disabilities. The CMHA-YR recognizes the core principles of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ("AODA")* – independence, dignity, integration, equality of opportunity for people with disabilities, all of which align with the core values of our organization.

CMHA-YR supports the goals of the AODA and will establish policies, practices and procedures that are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA, including accessible customer service, information and communication, employment, built environment and transportation.

The CMHA-YR is committed to achieving the overall goal of this Policy Statement of identifying, removing and preventing the establishment of barriers to persons with disabilities.



Rebecca Shields  
Chief Executive Officer

## INTRODUCTION

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Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region Branch (CMHA-YRSS) is committed to improving the mental health and wellbeing of those we serve in the community. We provide services to all in a manner centered on our principles of respect, inclusivity, diversity, independence and equal opportunities for all.

We believe diversity and inclusivity is our strength and everyone's individuality and identities should be embraced by valuing each person's unique strengths and contributions. We foster diversity and inclusion grounded in anti-racism and anti-oppression practices using a harm reduction and trauma informed lens.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) is a statute enacted in 2005 by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Canada with the purpose of removing barriers and improving accessibility standards for Ontarians with physical and mental disabilities for all public establishments by 2025. The AODA established standards under the following five key areas:

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

Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region Branch (CMHA-YRSS) is committed to achieving complete compliance with current standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy, Regulation 191/11, under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

The following Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines the policies, procedures and actions CMHA-YRSS has taken or are currently in progress to remove barriers and improve opportunities for people with disabilities. The purpose of this plan is to assist us in moving towards the goal of complete accessibility and full participation for persons with disabilities in regard to services, facilities and employment by identifying existing barriers and defining steps to remove barriers.

## OBJECTIVE

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CMHA-YRSS's goal is to implement our multi-year accessibility plan that:

1. Identifies and removes barriers to people with disabilities who are employed with or use CMHA-YRSS services;
2. Identifies steps to be taken to remove identified barriers;
3. Proactively identifies potential barriers to clients and staff;
4. Effectively responds to issues presented by clients and/or staff in a timely manner;
5. Maintains compliance with current provincial legislation;
6. Ensures the multi-year accessibility plan is accessible to the public; and
7. Reviews and revises the multi-year accessibility plan every five (5) years, or as required.

## INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATIONS

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The following section will outline current achievements and steps taken to remove barriers for both our employees and those we serve as target dates for completion.

### INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION STANDARD

#### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

CMHA-YRSS is committed to ensuring the information and communication systems are accessible for those with disabilities. In consultation with the individuals with disabilities, CMHA-YRSS will determine an accessible format suitable to communicate and share information.

When requested, CMHA-YRSS will arrange and provide publicly available information relevant to goods, services or facilities by taking the following steps:

- Determine the appropriate accessible format or communication required in consultation with the person making the request;
- Provide the accessible format or communication support in a timely manner, taking into account the persons' disability at no additional cost to the person; and
- Notify the public through our public website about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

#### Feedback

CMHA-YRSS has taken the necessary steps to ensure the feedback process for those with disabilities is accessible by providing various methods for feedback including: telephone, email, fax, writing or in person.

#### Emergency Procedures, Plans & Public Safety Information

CMHA-YRSS will provide emergency procedures and plans to clients in an accessible format upon request. Employees with disabilities are provided with individualized emergency response information and plan based on their known accommodation needs as required. This form is distributed at Onboarding.

When a request is received, CMHA-YRSS will put a plan in place to meet the needs within a reasonable timeframe.

#### Accessible Website & Website Content

CMHA-YRSS will take the necessary steps to ensure all its internet website and content posted since January 1, 2012 are aligned with the WCAG 2.0, Level AA. CMHA-YRSS will review all website content regularly for Level AA compliance and will implement necessary changes and web content that follow all applicable Level AA standards.

## EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

### Recruitment, Assessment, and Selection

CMHA-YRSS is an equal opportunity employer committed to ensuring employment is fair and accessible for all. All interested applicants are aware of the accommodation process by including information of the accommodation request availability on all job postings. On request, accommodation is available for people with disabilities during the recruitment, application, interview and assessment phase, both externally and within internal applicants. CMHA-YRSS will work with applicants and candidates to identify suitable accommodations to support people with disabilities throughout the recruitment and selection process.

### Documented Individualized Accommodation Plans

CMHA-YRSS will work with the employee in developing accommodation plans. In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy, Regulation 191/11, all accommodation plans will be documented and the process will include:

1. the way the employee can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan;
2. that the employee will be assessed on an individual basis;
3. that CMHA-YRSS can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at no expense to the employee, to assist in determining if accommodation can be achieved and how accommodation can be achieved;
4. the steps CMHA-YRSS will take to ensure the employee's personal information is private and confidential;
5. the frequency of which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated;
6. Reasons for which an accommodation is denied, if applicable;
7. the means of providing the accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability; and
8. Individual accommodation plans will include the following, as required:
  - Information on the accessible formats and communication supports provided; □ Workplace emergency response information
  - Any other accommodation that will be provided.

### Workplace Emergency Response Information

Upon learning of an employee's accessibility requirements, CMHA-YRSS will work with the employee to develop an individualized emergency response plan. With the employee's consent, the emergency response plan will be shared with all relevant parties to ensure the plan may be carried in the event of an emergency. Individualized emergency response plans will be reviewed when the:

- employee moves to a different location within the organization;
- employee's accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and CMHA-YRSS review's our emergency response policy.

## Return to Work Process

CMHA-YRSS has a return-to-work process in place to facilitate a safe return for employees who have been absent from work as a result of a disability and who require an accommodation in order to return to work.

The return-to-work process outlines steps to be taken in order to facilitate the employees return to work.

This process includes the completion of a Non-Occupational Functional Abilities Form by the employee's attending physician to understand the employee's abilities and limitations in developing the employee's accommodation plan. As required, CMHA-YRSS may also work with a third-party disability management provider to assist in the return-to-work process.

## Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement

CMHA-YRSS will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as any accommodation plans in place during the performance management process, career development opportunities and advancement. This includes development of goals and employee evaluation to ensure the performance management process is fair and focused on employee success.

Individual accessibility needs will also be considered when providing employees with disabilities opportunities for career development and advancement.

## Redeployment

In the event of employee redeployment because of job transfer, job elimination or re-organization, CMHA-YRSS will take into account the accessibility requirements of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans.

## DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES STANDARD

CMHA-YRSS is committed to meeting all Accessibility Standards as they apply to the Design of Public Spaces. CMHA-YRSS will ensure any redesigned aspects to buildings or major modifications meet the necessary accessibility requirements within its leased space.

CMHA-YRSS will take all necessary measures to prevent service disruptions to accessible areas of its public spaces. CMHA-YRSS will inspect accessible areas periodically to ensure spaces are accessible and to reduce the risk of service disruptions. In the event areas are not accessible or any deficits are found to impact accessibility, CMHA-YRSS will take all necessary steps to remedy the deficit within a reasonable time frame and notify the public of the service disruption.

## CUSTOMER SERVICE

CMHA-YRSS is committed to providing customer service that meets or exceeds the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

### Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for clients with disabilities, CMHA-YRSS will take reasonable steps to advise clients with disabilities who may be impacted by the disruption regarding the disruption cause and duration. Formats for informing clients of service disruptions may include

website notifications, on-site postings, phone calls to clients etc. Additionally, CMHA-YRSS will attempt to identify alternative methods for service delivery.

## **Training**

All employees, students and volunteers receive mandatory online training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) which includes information on the Integrated Accessibility Standards. Training is to be completed within two weeks from the start date. Training will be provided in an accessible format based on the needs of the individual.

## **Feedback Process**

CMHA-YRSS welcomes feedback regarding services provided to people with disabilities. All feedback provided will be directed to the appropriate personnel. CMHA-YRSS will respond to feedback received within 3-5 business days. Any complaints regarding services provided to people with disabilities will be addressed through our standard complaint management procedures. Feedback regarding services is confidential and may be provided by:

Phone:	905-830-4334
Fax:	1-888-252-7057
Email:	<a href="mailto:AODA@CMHA-YRSS.on.ca">AODA@CMHA-YRSS.on.ca</a>
Regular Mail:	<b>Canadian Mental Health Association York and South Simcoe</b> 1101 Nicholson Road, Unit 5, Newmarket, ON, L3Y 9C3

## **Availability of Customer Services Documents**

Policies and procedures, including our accessibility policy as well as all related customer service documents are available upon request.

## **Use of Service Animals and Support Persons**

CMHA-YRSS permits people with a disability who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal to enter the premises and to keep the animal with the owner, unless the animal is excluded by law from the premises. In accordance with the Health Promotion and Protection Act (1990), guide dogs or service animals may be prohibited from entering areas when sterile procedures occur including but not limited to:

- food preparation and food storage areas;
- medication preparation or storage areas; and/ or
- clean or sterile supply storage areas;

In the event an animal is excluded by law, CMHA-YRSS will ensure alternate measures are available to ensure a person with a disability is able to obtain services. Similarly, in the event a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, CMHA-YRSS will ensure both the client and support persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is able to have access to the support persons at all times while on the premises.

# MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (2020-2025) Previous Plan

Standard: Area	Current Plan	Current Barrier	Action	Timeline	Status / Update
<b>Multi-Year Plan must be posted on organization's websites and made available in accessible format upon request.</b>	Plan is complete	Need to investigate ability to make plan available in other accessible formats. If requested to do so.	Put plan into accessible PDF format to add to website. Alternate format will be available and accessible. Available to provide upon request. Training for staff.	March 2021	Complete
<b>Employment Standard: Employees with disabilities are provided with personal workplace emergency response plan.</b>	Develop template and process for individualized emergency response plan.	Reluctance of employee to disclose need for accommodation.  Is participation mandatory or can employees opt out and is this a liability issue.  Worker Isolation	Developed Employee Emergency Information Worksheet & Individualized Emergency Response. Training is required. Annual Review of individual emergency plans. Send out an annual reminder to staff of the possibility of having an emergency plan.	December 2013	Complete
<b>Information &amp; Communication Standard: All internet websites &amp; web content must conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA. *Excluding live captioning &amp; audio description</b>	New Website build currently in progress and scheduled to go live Spring 2021.	Software from web developer.	Research and explore using the tool "BrowseAloud" (tool for webinar or tool bar to turn on volume, caption, etc.) Video – captions accessible website needed.	March 2021	Complete
<b>Incorporate accessibility criteria in procurement processes.</b>	Review policy to ensure accessibility criteria is included in processes when acquiring goods/services.		Revise procurement policy to include accessibility criteria.	June 2021	In Progress (moved to 2026-2031 plan)

## MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (2026-2031) Current Plan

Type of Barrier	Description	Strategy	Timeline
<b>Physical/ Architectural</b>	A new Mental Health Crisis Centre is being built which will require the development of client and public spaces.	The design and construction of The Centre will incorporate accessible features in the space, ensuring all legislated accessibility requirements are met.	To be completed by December 31, 2031
<b>Information &amp; Communication</b>	The current Website, which fully meets the WCAG 2.0 Level AA requirement, is being updated with new content and visuals.	Re-evaluate accessibility tools on the website and take necessary steps to ensure content is continuously compliant with meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards during and after the upgrades.	To be completed by December 31, 2031
<b>Organizational</b>	The procurement policy and procedure does not currently incorporate accessibility criteria.	Review and revise the procurement policy to ensure accessibility criteria is included in processes when acquiring goods/services.	To be completed by December 31, 2031
<b>Organizational</b>	The new Mental Health Crisis Centre will include providing care for admitted clients with diverse accessible equipment needs.	Develop emergency procedures for all clients, including those with diverse accessibility needs.	To be completed by December 31, 2031
<b>Organizational</b>	Individualized accommodation plans and return-to-work supports are in place and managed primarily by People and Culture.	The policy and procedure will be updated, and further education provided, to support the role of managers in accommodating employees with disabilities and returning to work.	To be completed by December 31, 2031

## DEFINITIONS

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<b>Accessibility:</b>	Refers to the design of products, devices, services, or environments for people who experience disabilities. Ontario has laws to improve accessibility for people with disabilities, including the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), the <b><u>Ontario Human Rights Code</u></b> , and the <b><u>Ontario Building Code</u></b> .
<b>Accessible Formats:</b>	Methods of presenting printed, written, or visual material to enable people who are unable to read are presented with an alternate format suitable to their needs. Alternate formats may include: large print, braille, text-to-speech, audio recording and is not limited to communication supports.
<b>Barrier:</b>	Anything preventing a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice; (“obstacle”)
<b>Communication Supports</b>	May include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications; “communications” means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received
<b>Disability:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,</li><li>(b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,</li><li>(c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,</li><li>(d) A mental disorder, or</li><li>(e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the <i>Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</i>; (“handicap”)</li></ul>
<b>Guide dog (service animal)</b>	Under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act, which states that: a guide dog is a dog that has been trained as a guide for a blind person at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act
<b>Support Person</b>	In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies the person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities
<b>Web Content Accessibility Guidelines</b>	The World Wide Web Consortium Recommendation, dated December 2008, entitled “Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0