



## YMCA of Greater Toronto Accessibility Plan (updated 2021)

December 13, 2013

Message from the President and CEO

I am pleased to present the Multi- year Accessibility Plan reflecting the YMCA of Greater Toronto's commitment to providing accessible programs and services to our volunteers, member's, participants and employees.

The principles embedded in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* align with everything we do every day in our YMCA. We work according to an asset-based approach and root our work in the assets and strengths in people and communities we serve. We strive to help all people grow from their own positive foundations and access the gifts that exist within them. Reducing barriers to people with disabilities is extremely important to the YMCA.

We know that underneath our evidence-based methods, reflected in our programs, is the awareness that everyone needs to feel strong and capable and to feel connected to others and included. We know that poverty, unemployment, social inclusion and inactivity- affect the health of our communities.

We know that barriers to opportunities can put the physical, mental and emotional health of individuals at risk. That is why, it is so important that we continue our work in reducing barriers within our YMCA.

Thank you for joining me in this important commitment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Medhat Mahdy', is written over a white background.

Medhat Mahdy  
President and  
CEO  
YMCA of Greater Toronto

## Introduction and Statement of Commitment

For the YMCA of Greater Toronto, our commitment to individuals with disabilities goes beyond legislative compliance. The YMCA values a diverse and socially inclusive environment, which is reflected in our Program and Services Guiding principles (1. G.6) as follows:

*“The YMCA recognizes and values diversity and social inclusion as underpinnings of what we stand for and what we do. We regard the diversity of people and communities as assets, and recognize their contribution to the social and cultural enrichment of the Greater Toronto area and in this Association. As a socially inclusive YMCA, we ensure that diverse individuals and communities share in power, give voice effectively to their issues, are involved in decision making processes, and have fair access to information and services.”*

The YMCA of Greater Toronto is committed to fulfilling all requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) requires the YMCA of Greater Toronto to develop a multi-year plan. This accessibility plan outlines the steps we have taken to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

Our plan demonstrates how we are fulfilling our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians. It serves to provide a framework within which accessibility plans and initiatives are in place in order to move the YMCA of Greater Toronto towards the goal of improved accessibility for people with disabilities by 2025. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years. We will train every person as soon as practicable once individuals begin at the Y, and provide training in respect of any updates/changes to the policies. We maintain records of all training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

## Customer Service

The YMCA of Greater Toronto meets compliance requirements set out in the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation by:

- Establishing policies, procedures and practices for providing goods and services to persons with disabilities and posting these in reception areas and the Association website
- Providing accessibility awareness, AODA and customer service standard training to all staff and volunteers who interact, or may interact, with persons with disabilities on behalf of the YMCA or are involved in the creation and implementation of policies, practices, and procedures for the YMCA
- Tracking attendance for all accessibility training courses

- Reviewing feedback forms and providing alternate formats in large print and text formats.
- Working with Centre managers to develop notification for service disruption protocol, and communicate the customer service policy to staff so that staff are aware and understand, support persons and service animals permitted onto YMCA premise.
- Posting a notice on our website about feedback mechanisms; and a dedicated email address for accessibility enquiries.
- Creating an Accessibility Customer Service Policy that highlights information about accessibility requirements under AODA including procedures and mandatory training requirements.  
Available on our website
- Reporting compliance every 3 years, on the Accessibility Compliance Reporting page.

**Completed January 1, 2012**

- The YMCA of Greater Toronto incorporates accessibility considerations into its employee emergency response and evacuation plan.
- The emergency response plan and public safety information and instructions were reviewed and modified to take the needs of persons with disabilities into consideration.
- The emergency procedures updated.
- Managers and fire wardens are responsible for identifying persons in need of assistance in advance of an emergency. Managers will discuss the location of the designated waiting area and how identified persons who will be escorted out of their locations.
- The emergency response plan and public safety information is maintained by each supervisor
- The emergency response plan and public safety information is available to the public in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports as requested
- Individualized Emergency Response Plans have been developed for employees who have disclosed a disability that would pose challenges in the event of an emergency
- These individualized plans have been developed and communicated with their managers. The plan will also be kept in their personnel file
- Employees have been trained on the emergency response plans and/or public safety information and instructions to ensure that they know how to interact with persons with disabilities (employees and customers) in the event of an emergency, incident or dangerous situation
- Individualized Emergency Response Plans reviewed when: an employee moves to a different location; the employee's overall needs or plans reviewed, when reviewing general emergency policies.
- The YMCA policy that outlines the YMCA's commitment to working towards being compliant with the integrated standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- The YMCA endeavors to provide accessibility and accommodation as prescribed in the AODA.
- The YMCA developed multi-year plan outlining a strategy to prevent and remove barriers and address the current and future requirements of AODA.
- The YMCA through this plan documents our progress in meeting the requirements of the regulations of the AODA.

**Completed December 15, 2013**

- Providing training to all employees, volunteers, persons who deal with the public on its behalf on the requirements of the AODA and the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.
- The type and scope of the training varies depending on the duties of the employee's position.
- Some of this information is currently covered in the Human Rights Training for Supervisors on

#### Harassment and Discrimination

- Training is provided to supervisors using an on line training developed by the Ontario Human Rights Commission along with a Guide for Supervisors on Accommodation.
- All staff and volunteers receive educational material on AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code when they start.

**Completed December 2014**

## Employment

The YMCA of Greater Toronto meets compliance requirements set out in the Employment Standards Act and makes hiring and employee support practices more accessible by:

- All YMCA job postings notifying applicants that upon request they will receive a reasonable and appropriate accommodation during the recruitment process.
- This requirement is reflected in The YMCA Guide to Recruitment (for supervisors) and Recruitment and Selection Procedures in the Management Practices Manual

**Completed June 2013 - updated January 2016**

- Offers of employment include a statement about the YMCA's commitment to accommodating individuals with disabilities.
- Upon request any employee with a disability, will be provided accessible formats and communication supports for information in consultation with the employee making the request
- Individualized emergency response plans are developed for individuals who have disclosed their disabilities
- The Individualized Emergency Response Plan template and Emergency Response Worksheet along with guidelines has been included the Human Resources Policy for all staff in the Operating Policy Manual
- The YMCA's Return to Work process is contained in our Human Rights in the Workplace Policy.
- Performance Management taking accessibility needs into consideration when assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness with the goal of facilitating employee success
- Career Development and Advancement also takes into consideration accessibility needs of employees who have disabilities.
- Redeployment processes considering the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when they move to other positions within our YMCA.

***Information and templates are also included on the YMCA staff intranet and our Human Rights in the Workplace Policy***

**Completed January 2016**

## Information and Communications

The YMCA of Greater Toronto meets compliance and work to make information accessible to people with disabilities by:

- Making sure the Feedback process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible to persons with disabilities. Feedback is possible in a number of ways taking into account formats and communications supports. Information on our feedback options is available on our website.
- Feedback protocols and procedures are in place to allow feedback delivered in a minimum of four ways: In-person; by telephone; in writing by mail; or email.
- Accessible Formats and Communications Supports will be offered upon request for persons with disabilities
- Using [AbleDocs](#), an external provider. AbleDocs provides complete document accessibility services to ensure usability and all applicable compliance under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

**Completed December 2014**

- Emergency Procedures being available or made available to the public in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

**Completed January 2012**

- Websites conforming with WCAG 2.0, Level AA and all new content on those sites will conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA
- Evaluating, choosing, and implementing Accessibility testing tools and/or vendors for machine based web accessibility testing
- If needs are identified during assessment process, we evaluate assistive technologies for most needed websites/web content area.
- [AccessiBe](#) added for additional website safeguard for accessibility
- All internet websites and web content conforming to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

**Completed June 2021**

## Design of Public Spaces

The YMCA of Greater Toronto meets compliance and works to make buildings, both new construction and renovations reflect updated accessibility requirements as outlined by Ontario's Building Code for people with disabilities by:

- Public Spaces designed to meet accessibility requirements where there is new construction and major changes to existing features including:
- Accessible Parking - including the minimum of each of the following types of parking spaces.
  - ✓ Wider spaces for people who use mobility aids (e.g., wheelchairs)
  - ✓ Standard-width spaces for people who use mobility-assistive devices (e.g., canes, crutches and walkers)
  - ✓ Walkways and access routes from parking to the building entrance
  - ✓ Service counters - include the following when designing our service counters.
- Making at least one service counter accessible to people who use mobility aids. There should also be enough room under the counter for the knees of a person sitting in a wheelchair.
- Clearly identifying all of our accessible service counters with signs.
- Fixed waiting lines - requirements apply to fixed queuing guides or permanent fences or railings that require our customers to line up and follow a set path.
  - ✓ We will ensure the line is wide enough for people with disabilities to move through easily with their mobility aids.

- ✓ We will ensure there is enough room for people using mobility aids to navigate around corners where the line changes direction.
- ✓ We will ensure that people using canes can find the fixed waiting line (e.g., by tapping on posts or railings set close to the ground).
- Waiting areas with fixed seating - when we have waiting areas with fixed seating, we ensure that at least one seat is accessible.
- Outdoor play spaces – when designing new outdoor play spaces in our Child Care Centre’s,
  - ✓ We consult with the public to learn about the needs of children and caregivers with various disabilities in the community.
  - ✓ We incorporate accessibility features, such as sensory and active play components.
  - ✓ We make the surface of the play space firm and stable so people using mobility aids can move around easily and prevent injuries.
  - ✓ We ensure there is enough space around the play features to provide children and caregivers with various disabilities the ability to move through, in and around the outdoor play space.
- Outdoor paths - when building new paths of travel or making major changes to existing outdoor paths of travel we will meet the requirements for width and head clearance
  - ✓ We keep slopes of sidewalks, walkways, ramps and depressed curbs within the set limits.
  - ✓ We make sure the surfaces of ramps and stairs are firm, stable and slip-resistant (provide handrails and guards to help prevent people from slipping).
  - ✓ We consult with the public and people with disabilities about including rest areas along paths
  - ✓ We make sure we have clear contrast markings and tactile walking surface indicators on stairs, curb ramps and depressed curbs
- Trails and beach routes - when constructing new or making major changes to existing recreational trails and beach access routes
  - ✓ We consult with the public and people with disabilities about the trail’s slope, the need and location of ramps on the trail and the need for rest areas on the trail.
- Maintaining areas - we maintain the accessible parts of our public spaces as follows,
  - ✓ If accessible parts of our outdoor paths of travel are not working or available, we work to offer alternative accessible routes immediately to minimize the impact to all.
  - ✓ We maintain all accessible parts of our public spaces with regular maintenance. Prior to starting repair and maintenance to our public spaces, we post signs two weeks prior and identify the alternative routes and locations.
  - ✓ Emergency maintenance, we work to accommodate alternative accessible routes and spaces immediately to minimize the impact to all people, including persons with disabilities.

**Completed January 2017**