



2013-2018

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Multi-Year Plan

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Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) is an Act that will help to eliminate barriers for people with disabilities by 2025. The Act is intended to help employers and employees become more knowledgeable about people with disabilities and wherever possible, help prevent and remove any barriers a person with a disability might face.

The AODA requires that employers create policies and procedures, file annual reports and provide training for employees and volunteers. Most importantly, the Act ensures that all individuals, regardless of their disability, are treated with dignity and respect. The Integrated Accessibility Standards under the framework of AODA, requires that Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area (“HFHGTA” or “Habitat for Humanity GTA”), formerly Habitat for Humanity Toronto (HFHT) establish and maintain a multi-year plan that outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove, where possible, any barriers for people with disabilities in the following areas (where applicable):

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- Built Environment

Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area’s AODA Strategy

Under the AODA, Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area has developed a publicly available statement of commitment to accessibility; written accessibility policies and this multi-year accessibility plan, which will be updated at least once every five years and posted on our website at www.habitatgta.ca. Our statement of commitment establishes our organization’s vision and goals for accessibility. To help realize our commitment to creating a barrier-free, accessible organizational culture and environment, we have created a formalized accessibility policy and plan, which are both available upon request.

Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

Habitat for Humanity GTA understands that we have a responsibility to ensure a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone. As an organization, we are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity, and will achieve these goals by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility by meeting accessibility requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), and its associated standards and regulations.

We will look to ensure the organization's compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training, and best practices. We will also review these policies and practices annually, as organizational 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 organization, we are committed to working with the necessary parties to make accessibility for all a reality by 2025 by committing to the following:

Customer Service

Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area is committed to providing our goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way, as other customers or partner families.

Employment Standards

We are committed to assisting potential and existing employees who may need additional support during the selection process, during performance assessments and for career development. It is our goal that each and every potential or existing employee shall have the same opportunities or benefits.

Emergency Procedures

We are committed to the safety of our customers, clients, guests, volunteers and employees. Upon request, we will provide emergency evacuation information in an accessible format and will work with employees and volunteers with a disability to develop an individualized emergency evacuation plan should they require one.

Information & Communication

We are committed to ensuring our customers, clients, guests, volunteers and employees can obtain the information they need about our organization. We will continue to communicate in accessible formats either on our website or in printed material, upon request.

Transportation

The Transportation requirement is not applicable to Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area.

Built Environment

HFHGTA is committed to ensuring that all our stores and offices are wheelchair accessible, and that accessible parking is available at all our locations, with the exception of our build sites, where access is restricted for safety reasons and parking is often not under our control.

Review of Organizational Policies & Practices

As part of the commitment to meet the accessibility needs of our customers, clients, volunteers, employees and guests, HFHT reviewed our policies and practices in 2012 and 2013. During that review we identified additional areas where we could improve to ensure that we removed any barriers our customers may face in accessing our goods and services or that our staff or volunteers may face in our working environment. Since that time, additional requirements of the Act have been identified and compliance dates have been noted. Also, on April 1, 2014, Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area was created through the amalgamation of three Habitat for Humanity affiliates: Habitat for Humanity Brampton-Caledon, Habitat for Humanity Toronto and Habitat for Humanity York Region. As a result, work to implement any new requirement or obligation due to an increase in organizational size has been completed or is in progress. Completion dates are based on each individual requirement's compliance date.

Objectives 2013–2014

General Program Development

Requirement	Compliance Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Assess activities and develop a plan that outlines the guidelines for the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.	At the time, HFHT was considered a small organization for this requirement so there was no official compliance date.	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Mar. 2013	Annually	Complete – policy has been created relating to the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.

HFHGTA Accomplishments:

- Research began in 2011 and the organization was assessed for ease of accessibility for customers with disabilities. Draft policies were prepared, reviewed and approved by the Governance & Nominating Committee and the Board.
- In 2011, training on customer service requirements was undertaken.
- In 2013, we developed a multi-year plan (2013 to 2018).
- In 2016, we reviewed our original multi-year plan to adapt to compliance regulations and organizational changes.

Policies & Practices

Requirement	Compliance Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Establish and prepare policies and procedures for the provision of goods and services.	Jan. 1, 2014	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Mar. 2013	Annually	Complete – contained in Habitat for Humanity GTA Accessibility Policies
Implement the updated policies and procedures.	Jan. 1, 2014	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013	Annually	Complete – posted on website and revisions communicated to employees

HFHGTA Accomplishments:

- Developed and implemented an AODA policy in 2012.
- In 2013 updated the policy to include a program, customer service policy and training policy.
- Implemented and communicated new documents to employees in March 2013.
- In 2016, we revised and updated our original policies and procedures to respond to current requirements.

Training

Requirement	Compliance Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Establish a training program and train staff who interact with clients and/or members of the general public with disabilities.	Jan. 1, 2015	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Mar. 2013	Annually	Completed. ReStore volunteers are also trained.

HFHGTA Accomplishments:

- In 2012, provided online training to all employees who provide goods and services to members of the public.
- In 2013, engaged an external consultant to develop and implement a training program that provides more concrete information on dealing with various types of disabilities.
- In 2013, trained all employees and ReStore volunteers using the new training material.
- In 2015, we centralized training through an online provider so that training remains current and comprehensive.
- In 2016, we responded to changes in requirements and began to provide training to all staff and volunteers.

Program Implementation

Requirement	Compliance Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Provide notice to customers that there is a policy on accessible customer service and that documents are available for review.	Jan. 1, 2016	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Mar. 2013	Annually	Completed
Establish a feedback process for receiving feedback and responding to people with disabilities or members of the public who have comments on the customer service they received at HFHGTA.	Jan. 1, 2015	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013	Annually	Established
Establish the steps to be taken during a temporary disruption in service.	Jan. 1, 2015	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013	Annually	Established

HFHGTA Accomplishments:

- Developed steps to be taken during temporary disruption – outlined in Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area Accessibility Policies.
- Developed a notice that alerted customers that policy documents are available for their inspection and that their feedback is welcome. Posted the notice in conspicuous places in all HFHGTA premises.
- Developed a feedback form to record any customer comments and a second document to track the feedback and HFHGTA’s response.
- Developed steps to be taken during a disruption in service. Produced a form for use when alerting customers of a disruption.

Emergency Procedures

Requirement	Compliance Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Emergency procedures, plans or public safety information in accessible format if posted in public.	Jan. 1, 2012	Before 2011 - updates October 2013	Dec. 2013	Dec. 2014	Available as requested.

HFHGTA Accomplishments:

- Evacuation procedures are posted.
- Accessible formats will be available upon request.

Multi-Year Plan

Requirement	Compliance Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan outlining the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers.	Jan. 1, 2014	Oct. 2013	Dec. 2013	Oct. 2018	Completed
Post the accessibility plan on HFHGTA's website & provide the plan if requested.	Jan. 1, 2014	Oct. 2013	Jan. 1, 2014	Oct. 2018	Complete
Review and update the plan at least every 5 years.	Jan. 1, 2019	Oct. 2018	Dec. 2018	Oct. 2024	Future related goal.

HFHGTA Accomplishments:

- Established a multi-year plan (2013 – 2018) to outline HFHGTA's strategy for ensuring that barriers are removed and prevented.
- Posted the plan on the organization's website in PDF format.
- Revised multi-year plan in 2016.

AODA Program Maintenance

Requirement	Compliance Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Review policies, practices, procedures & any new information.	Jan. 1, 2012	Mar. 2012 – updates Mar. 2013	Apr. 2013	Annually	Future related goal.

HFHGTA Accomplishments:

- All AODA policies were reviewed and updated in March 2013 and will be reviewed annually.

Objectives 2014-2018

General Program Maintenance & Customer Service

Requirement	Target Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Strategy	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Maintaining the AODA existing program – policies & documents, customer feedback.	N/A	Mar. 2014	Apr. 2014	Maintain the AODA program annually along the same schedule as other similar programs i.e. the Health and Safety Program and Violence and Harassment in the Workplace Program. Conduct research during the maintenance to determine if there have been any changes to the legislation. Consider any customer feedback (if applicable) when updating documents. Document, date, approve and communicate any updates to employees, volunteers and where applicable the general public.	Annually	Ongoing

Training of Staff & Volunteers

Requirement	Target Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Strategy	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Continue training existing employees on an annual basis on AODA, human rights & continue to train new employees.	Jan. 1, 2015	June 2014	Sept. 2014	Train employees and volunteers who provide service to the public on an annual basis and ongoing for new hires on the requirements of AODA, human rights and how to accommodate people with disabilities. Record the number of employees who have received training. Provide refresher training where needed.	Annually for existing employees. Ongoing as new employees are hired.	Ongoing
Begin training all volunteers who provide goods and services on behalf of the organization.	Jan. 1, 2015	Jul. 2014	Dec. 2014	Build on the existing practice of training ReStore volunteers to ensure that all long term volunteers who provide goods and services for HFHGTA are included in the annual training	Jul. 2015 for existing volunteers and ongoing for new volunteers.	Complete and ongoing

Information & Communication

Requirement	Target Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Strategy	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Feedback - ensure customers know their feedback is welcome.	Jan. 1, 2015	May 1, 2014	June 2014	Continue to post notices alerting customers that their feedback is welcome.	Annually	Complete and ongoing
Availability of documents - update & replace documents where needed.	Jan. 1, 2016	May 1, 2014	June 2014	Continue to post notices in HFHGTA buildings alerting customers to the availability of documents in accessible formats. Update any documents where needed. Determine who will be responsible for responding to feedback and requests for documents in accessible formats. Post a notice on the website that informs the public that information is available in alternate formats. Post the multi-year plan on the website.	Annually	Completed and ongoing
Accessible website – New content where practical & updates to existing website to be WCAG 2.0 Level AA.	Jan. 2012 new content requirement WCAG Jan. 2021	Timeframe 2013-2020	TBD	Assess accessibility of existing website. Secure the services of a web designer to complete the work when the website is being updated. In 2021, begin full compliance.	Annually	Future goal date

Employment Standards

Requirement	Target Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Strategy	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Accommodation policy.	N/A	June 2015	Sept. 2015	Develop a policy outlining how employees will be accommodated for performance management, career development and the recruitment of potential employees.	Annually	Completed
Notification of accommodation for potential & existing employees.	Jan. 2016	June 2015	July 2015	Amend the recruitment policy to include a procedural guide for the steps to be taken for accommodation when hiring for a position. Unless there is a bone fide reason that a position cannot be accommodated, a standard information paragraph is to be developed for inclusion in position advertisements. Hiring managers will also offer accommodation where needed when arranging interviews with candidates.	Annually	Completed
Selection & job offer – potential employees.	Jan. 2016	June 2015	July 2015	Job offer templates will be amended to include an accommodation paragraph.	Annually	Completed
Disability supports for job performance, appraisals and career development.	Jan. 2016	June 2015	July 2015	All newly hired employees will be reminded by their manager that disability supports are available to assist them if needed.	Annually	Completed
Return to Work.	Jan. 2016	June 2015	July 2015	Continue to manage and offer a Return to Work program (RTW) to ensure that employees who are hurt at work or need accommodation in returning to work have this valuable assistance.	Annually	Completed

Individualized workplace emergency response information.	Jan. 2016	June 2015	July 2015	Outline the steps to be taken for developing an individualized emergency evacuation plan for an employee who identifies as needing accommodation to evacuate a HFHGTA premises.	Mar. 2015 and on a case by case basis.	Completed
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Build Environment*

Requirement	Target Date	Start Date	Completion Due Date	Strategy	Future Review Date	Comments & Status
Exterior Paths of Travel	January 1, 2017	January 1, 2017	N/A	To ensure the health and safety of all pedestrians, any newly constructed or redeveloped exterior paths of travel will meet, and where possible exceed, the technical requirements of the <i>Integrated Accessibility Standards</i> , section 80.23 , and where applicable, sections 80.24 – 80.28.	Annually	N/A
Off-Street Accessible Public Parking	January 1, 2017	January 1, 2017	N/A	<p><u>Types of Spaces and Access Aisles</u> Habitat for Humanity GTA will ensure that any newly constructed or redeveloped off-street parking facilities provide the following two (2) types of parking spaces available for persons with disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Type A – Parking space with a minimum width of 3.4 m; and • Type B – Standard parking space with a minimum width of 2.4 mm. <p>Access aisles will be provided for all accessible parking spaces and will meet the requirements of the <i>Integrated Accessibility Standards</i>, section 80.35.</p> <p><u>Minimums</u> Habitat for Humanity GTA will ensure that any newly constructed or redeveloped off-street parking facility meets, and where possible exceeds, the required number of accessible parking spaces based on the size of the lot. The number of accessible spaces will be aligned with the requirements specified in the <i>Integrated Accessibility Standards</i>, section 80.36.</p>	Annually	N/A

				<p><u>Signage</u> Habitat for Humanity GTA will ensure that the proper signage is provided for each accessible parking space. Type A parking spaces will have signage indicating van accessibility.</p>		
Obtaining Services	January 1, 2017	January 1, 2017	N/A	<p><u>Service Counters</u> When constructing or replacing any service counters, Habitat For Humanity GTA will ensure that at least one (1) counter is made accessible in accordance with the <i>Integrated Accessibility Standards</i>, section 80.41.</p> <p><u>Fixed Queuing Guides</u> When constructing new fixed queuing guides, Habitat For Humanity GTA will ensure that they are made accessible to people with various disabilities in accordance with the <i>Integrated Accessibility Standards</i>, section 80.42.</p> <p><u>Waiting Areas</u> When constructing or redeveloping an existing waiting area, Habitat for Humanity GTA will ensure that a minimum of 3% of the seating is made accessible. Habitat for Humanity GTA will ensure that there will be at least one (1) accessible seat.</p>	Annually	N/A

* There may be times where it is not possible for Habitat for Humanity GTA to meet all technical requirements as outlined within legislation. In these instances, Habitat for Humanity GTA will strive to meet the requirements to the fullest extent to allow for accessible use with particular constraints as addressed in legislation.

Annual Review

HFHGTA is committed to reviewing the AODA program at least on an annual basis and more frequently if a situation warrants a review. The annual review will include research and the updating of all AODA related documents.

Annual Training

HFHGTA is also committed to ensuring that its employees and volunteers are provided with the knowledge and skills they need to ensure that they are able to identify and remove any barriers that a customer might face during interactions. As a result, they will be capable of providing accessible customer service when they interact with clients and/or members of the general public who are disabled. In addition, employees who are responsible for writing policies and procedures for HFHGTA and managers of staff will also receive annual training. Our training policy is included in our accessibility policies and is available upon request in accessible formats.

Feedback

HFHGTA is committed to providing its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. With this in mind, and to convey our commitment to accessible customer service and employment, we welcome feedback (comments, questions and/or suggestions) about the provision of our goods and services to people with disabilities and our management of employees with disabilities. Our feedback process and form is posted on our website.

Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (hand written, delivered, or email), can be directed to the attention of Human Resources at accessibility@habitatgta.ca or to:

Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area
ATTN: Human Resources
155 Bermondsey Road Toronto, ON M4A 1X9
416-755-7353

We will endeavor to respond within three to five business days to customers who provide formal feedback. Customers will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted, and as requested, in a format that best suits a person's disability.

Service Disruptions

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Habitat for Humanity GTA. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use Habitat for Humanity GTA's goods or

services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

In the event that a notification needs to be posted, the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- Goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable;
- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration; and,
- A description of alternative services or options.

When disruptions occur Habitat for Humanity GTA will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the Habitat for Humanity GTA website; and,
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Procedures for Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Spaces

- Managers who are responsible for maintaining accessible elements in Habitat GTA's public spaces will regularly conduct inspections to prevent service disruptions and/or accessibility barriers, and to ensure that all accessible elements are in working condition.
- Any elements that are found to need maintenance, or which require reassessment, will be identified to the appropriate individuals who will then be responsible for addressing the issue and/or performing the necessary maintenance or reassessment.
- When possible, notice regarding any disruption to accessible elements due to planned maintenance or repairs will be posted in advance, in accordance with our Service Disruption protocols.
- When an inaccessible space or issue is reported, Habitat GTA will take all necessary steps to respond and correct the problem.
- In the case where an emergency maintenance of an accessible space is required, the element will be taken out of service following our Service Disruption protocols, and the necessary repairs will be assessed and addressed as a priority.
- Where possible, Habitat GTA will ensure steps are taken to divert individuals away from accessible elements that are not in working order or pose a danger to their safety. We will provide information regarding any alternate useable elements that exist and put in place barriers and temporary signage and/or posting notices.
- Notice of a disruption to an accessible element due to unplanned maintenance or repairs will be provided as soon as practically possible and, to the extent possible, will include information about the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative accessible elements that may be available. This notice may be provided by posting information notices in a conspicuous place on Habitat GTA premises, Habitat GTA's website and/or such other method as is reasonable under the circumstances.

Additional Information

To request a copy of our Accessibility Plan or policies, please contact us either via email at accessibility@habitatgta.ca, or in person, by mail or telephone at:

Habitat for Humanity Greater Toronto Area
ATTN: Human Resources
155 Bermondsey Road Toronto, ON M4A 1X9
416-755-7353

All of these documents are available upon request in large print.