



## **ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and specifically Regulation 191/11 “Integrated Accessibility Standards” (“Regulation”), the Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly, designated public sector organizations and large organizations, including the Office of the Ombudsman, are required to develop multi-year accessibility plans outlining their strategy to prevent and remove barriers, and to meet requirements under the Regulation. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.4)

The Office of the Ombudsman’s Plan sets out time frames for action, where appropriate, and in accordance with the Regulation.

This Plan will be posted on the Office of the Ombudsman’s website.

The Office of the Ombudsman has always endeavored to provide accessible service, striven to remove barriers, and accommodated those requiring assistance. This Plan will assist the Office going forward in coordinating these efforts in meeting the needs of persons with disabilities.

### **I. Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services and Facilities**

The Office of the Ombudsman shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities except where it is impracticable. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.5)

#### **Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will review current policies, practices and procedures relating to procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities and incorporate accessibility criteria and features, where they do not already exist and where practicable.

If it is impracticable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features with respect to a specific procurement or acquisition, an explanation will be recorded and provided on request.

#### **Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Corporate Services Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

January 2012 and ongoing.

**II. Training**

The Office of the Ombudsman will train:

employees and volunteers;

all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and

all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization,

on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the Regulation and on the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities as well as any changes to the Office's accessibility policies. The training shall include information on the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in the Office of the Ombudsman's recruitment processes.

The training shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons. (O. Reg. 191/11, s. 7)

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman has provided training to staff on the *Human Rights Code* and accessibility and removing barriers in accessing our Office. In order to ensure the office is in full compliance with the Regulation, the Office of the Ombudsman will provide additional training to employees, volunteers and other persons as required by the Regulation and will keep a training record including training dates and the number of individuals training was provided to.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

By January 1, 2013 and ongoing.

**III. Information and Communications****i. Feedback**

The Office of the Ombudsman will ensure that its process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible to persons with disabilities. (O. Reg. 191/11, s.11)

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will review its feedback process set out in its Accessibility Standards for Customer Service policy to ensure that it is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Communications Team supported by the Operations Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

By January 1, 2013 and ongoing.

**ii. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Upon request, the Office of the Ombudsman will provide or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that take into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability.

The Office of the Ombudsman will consult with the person making the request.

The Office of the Ombudsman will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.12)

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will develop a procedure relating to accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities and notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Communications Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

By June 1, 2012. (the Regulation requires compliance by January 1, 2014),

**iii. Accessible Websites and Web Content**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Internet and Intranet websites, including web content, will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA except where impracticable. (O.Reg. 191/11, s. 14)

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will ensure that its Internet and Intranet websites are developed in accordance with the WCAG as required by the Regulation.

The Office of the Ombudsman will ensure all new material posted to its websites conforms to WCAG as required by the Regulation.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Communications Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

- \* By January 1, 2012 any new internet and intranet websites, other than success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live), and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded) must conform to WCAG 2.0 at level AA unless this is impracticable.
- \* By January 1, 2016, all internet websites and web content, other than, success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live), and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded) must conform to WCAG 2.0 at level AA unless this is impracticable.
- \* By January 1, 2020, all internet and intranet websites and web content must conform to WCAG 2.0 at level AA unless this is impracticable.

**IV. Employment****i. Recruitment Process**

The Office of the Ombudsman will notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.22)

The Office of the Ombudsman will notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.23(1))

The Office of the Ombudsman will consult with applicants requesting accommodation, and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.23(2))

When making offers of employment, the Office of the Ombudsman shall notify the successful applicant about its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.24)

**Planned Action:**

Notice about available accommodations will be set out in internal and external communications relating to recruitment.

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to advise job applicants when they are selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, about the availability of accommodations.

Applicants requesting accommodation will continue to be consulted about their needs and appropriate accommodation will be provided.

All offers of employment shall include reference to the Office of the Ombudsman's accommodation policies.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

January 1, 2012. (the Regulation requires compliance by January 1, 2013).

**ii. Informing Employees of Supports**

The Office of the Ombudsman will inform its employees of its policies, or changes to its policies, used to support its employees with disabilities, including job accommodation policies. (O.Reg. 191/11, s. 25(1))

The Office of the Ombudsman will provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable. (O.Reg. 191/11, s. 25(2))

The Office of the Ombudsman will provide updated information to its employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability. (O.Reg. 191/11, s. 25(3))

In consultation with an employee requesting accommodation, the Office of the Ombudsman will provide accommodation supports, including accessible formats and communication supports, needed for the employee to perform their job and that is generally available to employees in the workplace. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.26)

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will review its existing accommodation policies and make any necessary changes to ensure full compliance with the Regulation.

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to inform employees of relevant policies and policy changes.

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to respond to individual accommodation requests.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

January 1, 2012. (the Regulation requires compliance by January 1, 2013)

**iii. Workplace Emergency Response Information**

If the Office of the Ombudsman is aware that an employee needs accommodation with respect to workplace emergencies, individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to the employee as soon as practicable. (O. Reg. 191/11, s.27(1))

If the employee requires assistance in an emergency, with the employee's consent the Office of the Ombudsman will provide the workplace emergency response information to a person designated to provide assistance to the employee. (O. Reg. 191/11, s.27(2))

Individualized workplace emergency response information will be updated when the employee moves to a different location, and when overall accommodations needs or plans or general emergency response policies are reviewed. (O. Reg. 191/11, s.27(3))

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman has workplace emergency plans for employees with disabilities requiring assistance during emergencies.

The Office of the Ombudsman will review its existing workplace emergency procedures and update them, if necessary, to ensure compliance with this Accessibility Plan and the Regulation.

The Office of the Ombudsman will advise employees to provide notice of any accommodation needs with respect to workplace emergencies.

If appropriate and in consultation with employees needing accommodation, the Office of the Ombudsman will continue to prepare and provide employees with individualized workplace emergency response information.

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to keep a confidential record of individualized workplace emergency response information requests and responses.

The Office of the Ombudsman will designate individuals to assist employees needing accommodation during workplace emergencies and, with the consent of the affected

employee, may provide the individualized workplace emergency response information to the designated individual.

### **Responsibility**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

### **Implementation Timeframe:**

January 1, 2012 and ongoing.

### **iv. Individual Accommodation Plans**

The Office of the Ombudsman will establish a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. (O.Reg 191/11, s.28(1))

### **Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will review its current Reasonable Accommodation Policy for Disabilities, which provides for accommodation plans for employees with disabilities, to ensure full compliance with the Regulation. The elements of the Policy relating to individual accommodation plans shall include:

1. The manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan, which is currently provided for.
2. The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis, which is currently provided for.
3. The manner in which the Office of the Ombudsman can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the Office of the Ombudsman's expense, to assist the employer in determining if accommodation can be achieved and, if so, how accommodation can be achieved, which is currently provided for in respect of employees returning to work.
4. The manner in which the employee can request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent, where the employee is represented by a bargaining agent, or other representative from the workplace, where the employee is not represented by a bargaining agent, in the development of the accommodation plan, which is currently permitted but not explicitly referred to in the existing plan.
5. The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information, consistent with the current requirement for confidentiality with respect to accommodation.
6. The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done.

7. If an individual accommodation plan is denied, the manner in which the reasons for the denial will be provided to the employee.
8. The means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

Individual accommodation plans will,

- if requested, include relevant information regarding accessible formats and communications supports to be provided;
- if required, include individualized workplace emergency response information; and
- identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

By June 1, 2012. (the Regulation requires compliance by January 1, 2013).

**v. Return to Work**

The Office of the Ombudsman will develop, implement and document a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work. (O. Reg. 191/11, s.29(1))

The Return to Work process will outline the steps the Office will take to facilitate the return to work, and will include documented individual accommodation plans as part of the process. (O. Reg. 191/11, s. 29(2))

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability and who required disability-related accommodations to return to work is currently set out in its Reasonable Accommodation Policy for Disabilities.

The Office of the Ombudsman will review and amend its existing policy relating to employees with disabilities returning to work to ensure full compliance with this Accessibility Plan and the Regulation.



**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

By June 1, 2012. (the Regulation requires compliance by January 1, 2013)

**vi. Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement, and Redeployment**

The Office of the Ombudsman will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when conducting performance management, providing career development and advancement to employees, or when engaging in employee redeployment. (O. Reg. 191/11, s.30)

**Proposed Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to ensure that managers are aware of their responsibility to take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when conducting performance management, providing career development and advancement to employees, or when engaging in employee redeployment.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

January 1, 2012. (the Regulation requires compliance by January 1, 2013)

**V. Annual Status Reports**

The Office of the Ombudsman will prepare annual status reports on the progress of measures taken to implement the actions set out in the Accessibility Plan. (O. Reg. 191/11, s. 4(3)(a))

Annual Status reports will be posted to the Office of the Ombudsman's website and will be made available in an accessible format upon request. (O.Reg. 191/11, s.4(3)(b))

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will prepare and post Annual Status reports, and make them available in an accessible format upon request.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ontario Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

Ongoing.

**VI. Accessibility Reports**

The Office of the Ombudsman will continue to complete and file Accessibility Reports annually or as otherwise required under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. (Act, s. 14(1))

The Office of the Ombudsman will make all Accessibility Reports public. (Act, s. 14(2))

**Planned Action:**

Accessibility Reports will continue to be completed as provided for under the Act, and will include a signed statement by a director certifying that all the information required to be provided in the report has been provided and that the information is accurate.

Accessibility Reports will be posted to the Office of the Ombudsman's website.

**Responsibility:**

The Office of the Ombudsman's Human Resources Team will take the lead in implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

Ongoing.

**VII. Review of Accessibility Plan**

The Office of the Ombudsman will review and update its Accessibility Plan by January 1, 2017, in consultation with persons who have disabilities.

**Planned Action:**

The Office of the Ombudsman will develop and implement a consultation strategy and take consultation into account when updating its Accessibility Plan.

**Responsibility:**

Communications and Corporate Services will be jointly responsible for implementing this action.

**Implementation Timeframe:**

January 1, 2017.