

## Accessibility Policy

---

Approved By: Council  
Approved On: March 21, 2024

---

### Policy Statement

York Region is committed to meeting accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely and proactive manner and will use reasonable efforts to provide equitable access to Regional programs, goods, services and facilities in a way that respects a person's dignity and independence.

### Application

All York Region employees, students, volunteers and agents who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of York Region, or who help develop policies for York Region.

### Purpose

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) requires York Region, as a public sector organization, to establish accessibility policies. This policy governs how York Region achieves and maintains compliance with accessibility standards of the AODA and the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11* (IASR).

### Definitions

**Accessibility:** Degree of ease that goods, services and facilities can be used by a person with a disability.

**Accessibility Plan:** A document approved by Regional Council and made available to the public that includes:

- a) The Region's strategy to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities and meet its requirements under AODA regulations.

- b) All other information and actions required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001* (ODA) and AODA.

**Accessibility Policy:** Governs how York Region achieves and maintains accessibility requirements of the AODA and IASR.

**Accessibility Standard:** Minimum requirements set out in the AODA that persons and organizations must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

**Accessible Customer Service Guidelines:** Provide technical guidance on how to implement requirements of the IASR *Customer Service Standards*, consistent with the Accessibility Policy. Accessible Customer Service Guidelines provide guidance on how York Region offers goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities.

**Accessible Formats:** Refers to formats that are an alternative to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible formats may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by people with disabilities.

**Agent:** A third party individual or organization who deals directly with members of the public to provide a program, service or facility on behalf of York Region.

**AODA:** *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as may be amended.

**Assistive Devices:** Technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids that are used to increase, maintain or improve how a person with a disability can function. An assistive device may be as simple as a pen and paper. Other examples may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines and assistive listening devices.

**Barrier:** Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in society because of their disability, including physical, architectural, information and communications, attitudinal, technological, policy or practice barriers.

**Communication Supports:** Supports that individuals with disabilities may need to access information. Communication Supports may include, but are not limited to, captioning, augmentative sound devices, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

**Conventional Transportation Services:** Public passenger transportation services on transit buses, motor coaches or rail-based transportation that are provided by a designated public sector transportation organization.

**Designated Public Sector Transportation Organization (as defined in the IASR):** Every public transportation organization in Ontario, including any municipally operated transportation services for persons with disabilities, that provides services where a fare is charged for transporting the public by operated vehicles:

- a) By, for or on behalf of the Government of Ontario, a municipality, a local board of a municipality or a transit or transportation commission or authority
- b) Under an agreement between the Government of Ontario and a person, firm, corporation, or transit or transportation commission or authority, or
- c) Under an agreement between a municipality and a person, firm, corporation or transit or transportation commission or authority

**Disability (as defined in the Ontario *Human Rights Code*):**

- 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.
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

**IASR:** *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation*, Ontario Regulation 191/11 as may be amended.

**Regulated Health Professional:** Refers to a member of one of the following professional regulatory Colleges:

- Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- Chiropractors of Ontario
- Nurses of Ontario
- Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- Optometrists of Ontario
- Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- Physiotherapists of Ontario
- Psychologists of Ontario
- Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

**Service Animal:** A service animal is a guide, hearing, or signal dog or other animal trained to assist a person with a disability. Service animals can often be easily identified by visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal. Alternatively, a service animal can be identified as one if the person provides documentation from a

Regulated Health Professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the person's disability.

**Specialized Transportation Services:** Public passenger transportation services provided by a designated public sector transportation organization designed to transport persons with disabilities.

**Support Person:** A person who accompanies a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

**Temporary Disruption:** Short term planned or unplanned interruption that prevents people with disabilities from obtaining, using or benefiting from a provider's goods, services or facilities.

**York Region Employee:** Union and non-union employees, as well as employees of corporate entities established by Regional Council including York Region Transit Corporation, Housing York Inc. and York Telecom Network.

## Description

York Region is required to have a policy governing how the organization achieves and maintains accessibility through meeting its requirements of the accessibility standards of the IASR under the AODA.

York Region achieves compliance with the AODA and IASR through the following requirements and standards.

- General Requirements
- Information and Communications Standards
- Employment Standards
- Transportation Standards
- Design of Public Spaces Standards
- Customer Service Standards

### 1. General Requirements

#### a) Accessibility Planning

York Region will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan in accordance with the AODA. The multi-year accessibility plan will outline ways York Region will prevent and remove barriers and meet AODA standards.

The multi-year accessibility plan will be:

- Reviewed and updated at least every five years

- Established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities through the York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Approved by Regional Council

An annual status report on progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan will be prepared. The multi-year accessibility plan and accompanying status report will be posted to the Region's website and provided in an accessible format upon request.

### **b) Procurement**

Where possible, Regional Departments will incorporate accessibility design, criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, and facilities. If it is not practicable to do so, staff will provide an explanation, upon request.

### **c) Self-Service Kiosks**

Where possible, Regional Departments will incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks. If it is not practicable to do so, staff will provide an explanation, upon request.

### **d) Training**

All individuals to whom this policy applies will be trained in accordance with the AODA and its regulations. York Region will keep a record of training provided, including dates on which training is provided and number of individuals trained.

## **2. Information and Communication Standards**

### **a) Feedback**

York Region has processes for receiving and responding to feedback on how the Region provides goods, services and facilities to customers. Regional Departments will ensure these feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for provision of accessible formats or communication supports upon request, in accordance with the Information and Communications Standards.

### **b) Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

Regional Departments will provide or arrange for provision of accessible formats or communication supports for people with disabilities upon request, in accordance with the Information and Communications Standards. This will be done by consulting with the person making the request, in a timely manner that accounts for the person's accessibility needs and (if original product has a cost) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

### **c) Website and Web Content**

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by York Region or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product will conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level A and AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the Information and Communications Standards.

## **3. Employment Standards**

York Region will create an accessible work environment for all employees across the employment life cycle, according to requirements and timelines set out in the Employment Standards and existing requirements under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* to accommodate people with disabilities.

## **4. Transportation Standards**

York Region is committed to providing accessible public transportation services through both conventional and specialized transit services, in accordance with the Transportation Standards. Some specialized services have eligibility requirements.

## **5. Design of Public Spaces Standards**

York Region will incorporate accessibility features when building new, or making planned significant alterations to existing, Region-controlled public spaces, according to the Design of Public Spaces Standards.

## **6. Customer Service Standards**

York Region is committed to providing excellent customer service to people of all abilities in accordance with requirements set out in the Customer Service Standards. When serving customers with disabilities, reasonable efforts shall be made to provide the same level of service given to other customers. The provision of goods, services or facilities shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This includes:

- Accommodating use of assistive devices, support persons, and service animals where allowed by law
- Giving notice of temporary disruptions
- Training all members of our organization on accessible customer service
- Establishing a process for receiving and responding to feedback on how we provide accessible customer service

- Providing documents in an accessible format or with communications support upon request

The Accessible Customer Service Guidelines for employees offers tips, processes and templates to best serve our customers with disabilities and meet requirements of the Customer Service Standards under the IASR.

## Responsibilities

### Regional Council

- Adopt policies as required under the AODA

### York Region (including all Departments, Senior Management and Staff)

- Ensure all requirements of the IASR are met on an ongoing basis in accordance with the timelines set out in the regulation
- Ensure departmental policies, practices and procedures are aligned with all requirements of the IASR
- Ensure accessibility requirements related to implementation of this policy are part of the annual budget and planning processes

### AODA Departmental Leads

Act as corporate coordinators for designated AODA standards and are responsible for coordinating, implementing and monitoring AODA requirements as follows:

#### Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

- Customer Service Standards
- Employment Standards

#### Corporate Services Department

- Information and Communications Standards
- Design of Public Spaces Standards

#### Public Works Department

- Transportation Standards

### Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

- Act as corporate coordinator for the AODA
- Coordinate corporate development of policies and procedures, monitoring and reporting of compliance for all regulations under the AODA, including the General Standards under the IASR

**York Region Commissioners, General Managers, Directors, Managers, Supervisors and other leadership staff**

- Ensure requirements of this policy are being implemented within their departments, branches and units

**Internal Staff Committee comprised of senior staff representatives from each Department**

- Lead respective department in achieving compliance with the regulations under the AODA

**York Region Accessibility Advisory Committee**

- Advise Regional Council and York Regional Police on how to make it easier for people with disabilities to use the Region's programs and services
- Comprised of Committee members that come from different backgrounds and most members must be people with disabilities
- Review and advise Regional Council through the Committee of the Whole on accessibility (compliance) reports and the AODA and its regulations

**All Regional Employees, Students, Volunteers and Agents**

- Comply with this policy

## Compliance

Failure to comply with the AODA Regulations can result in administrative penalties as defined in Part V: Compliance of the IASR. Employees who fail to comply with this Accessibility Policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Agents and volunteers who fail to comply with the policy may be subject to service termination.

## Reference

**Legislative and other authorities**

- Clause 17 of Committee of the Whole Report No. 13, approved by Regional Council October 19, 2017
- Inclusion Charter for York Region
- *AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards*, Ontario Regulation 191/11
- *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*

## Accessibility Policy

---

- *Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001*
- *Building Code Act, 1992*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code*

## Contact

Title	Lead, Accessibility
Branch	People, Equity and Culture
Department	Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

## Approval

Council Date: <a href="#">March 21, 2024</a>	Committee Date: <a href="#">March 7, 2024</a>
Council Minute Item: H.1	Committee Minute Item: J.2.1

Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

#7953120