

GERSTEIN CRISIS CENTRE MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN: MARCH 29, 2019

Statement of Commitment

Gerstein Crisis Centre is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

This accessibility plan is designed to ensure that we meet legal requirements set out by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)¹, as well as increase inclusive and equitable treatment for people with disabilities. This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will serve as a live document to be reviewed and updated every year, outlining the Gerstein Crisis Centre's commitment to establish, maintain and document its accessibility priorities and plans.

Policy

Gerstein Crisis Centre is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination. Gerstein Crisis Centre understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law. We are committed to complying with both the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA* and to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. Our approach to accessible customer service are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. This policy has been developed in conjunction with our existing Workplace Anti-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Anti-Violence Policy (Policy 7.5) and Accommodation (Policy 7.6) policies.

- 1. Training:** We will train employees and volunteers in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. We will also train our employees and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.
- 2. Procurement/Customer Service:**

¹ The IASR indicates how standards set by the AODA must be applied within organizations.

- a. We will incorporate accessibility criteria when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation of why that is the case upon request.
 - b. Service Animals and Support: If a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal (e.g., guide dog), we will ensure that the person is permitted to enter a Gerstein Crisis Centre facility with the animal and to keep the animal with them.
 - c. Use of Assistive Devices: People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services or facilities.
 - d. Support Persons: A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.
3. **Information and Communications:** When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including relevant health and safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports whenever possible. We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws
 4. **Employment:** We will notify potential hires that accommodations can be made during staff recruitment and hiring. We will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities. We will put in place a policy regarding individual accommodation plans for employees. Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. Our performance management and professional development will take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.
 5. **Design of Public Spaces:** We will put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions whenever possible to the accessible parts of our public spaces.
 6. **Changes to existing policies:** We will modify or remove an existing policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED			
<i>These are the actions that the Gerstein Crisis Centre have taken and complete to date.</i>			
Accessibility Standards (AODA) ²	AODA Requirements	Actions Taken	Completion Date
Section 3 (1): Establishment of Accessibility Policies	AODA policy	Organizational AODA policy developed	March 2019
Section 4 (1): Accessibility Plans	Development and maintenance of Multi-year accessibility plan	Multi-year plan created	March 2019
Section 7 (1): Training	AODA training	GCC provides annual training on AODA and accessibility requirements to employees, volunteers, persons developing organization policies, persons providing services on behalf of organization	2014

² Cross-referenced with the IASR.

SECTION 1: GENERAL REQUIREMENTS³

General requirements mandated by the AODA and IASR for large⁴ non-profit organizations

Compliance Category	AODA Requirements	Actions to fulfill requirement	Lead	Completion Date
Section 4 (1): Accessibility Plans	Development and maintenance of Multi-year accessibility policy and plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post on website • Review and update once every five years 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Policy and Plan finalized by management team 2. Policy and Plan loaded on to website 3. Review built into management team workplan 		
Section 7 (1): Training	Provision of both general and role-specific training to all employees and volunteers as it relates to Ontario’s accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code and persons with disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training will be incorporated into new employee and volunteer orientation 2. Any existing staff who have not been trained will be trained 3. Plans will be developed to include AODA training as part of ongoing refresh 		

SECTION 2: CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

Compliance Category	AODA Requirements	Actions to fulfill requirement	Lead	Completion Date
Section 5 (1)(2): Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities	Accessibility criteria incorporated into procurement process	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Examples of accessibility criteria researched 2. Accessibility criteria drafted 3. Relevant staff trained on criteria 		
Section 5 (1)(2): Procuring or acquiring goods,	Process to provide an explanation if accessibility design deemed not practical outlined	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Process documented 2. Public notice developed 3. All relevant staff trained on explanation 		

³ These are requirements set by the AODA and IASR

⁴ “Large” is in reference to organizations with 50+ workers, as defined in the AODA.

services or facilities				
Section 80.47: Use of service animals and support persons	Use of services animals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public notice developed 2. Staff informed 3. Public notice posted 		
Section 80.47: Use of service animals and support persons	Accompaniment by support persons	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public notice developed 2. Staff informed 3. Public notice posted 		

SECTION 3: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STANDARD

Rules for organizations to create, provide, and receive information and communications that people with disabilities can access. The standard gives all people an equal chance to learn and be active in their communities.⁵

Compliance Category	AODA Priority	Actions to fulfill priority	Lead	Completion Date
Section 11 (1)(2): Feedback	Feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existing processes for service users to provide feedback to GCC are made available in plain language 2. Existing processes for service users to provide feedback to GCC are made available through an ASL interpreter upon request 		
Section 12 (1): Accessible formats and communications supports	Information and communication materials are made into accessible formats	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As new information and communication materials are developed, making them available in plain language will be considered 2. As new information and communication materials are developed, making them available through an ASL interpreter will be considered 		

⁵ <https://aoda.ca/what-is-the-information-and-communications-standards/>

Section 14 (1): Accessible website and web content	Accessibility improved on website (refresh)	1. Get website assessed for visual accessibility and make changes as determined (and as resources allow)		
SECTION 4: EMPLOYMENT STANDARD				
<i>Employers must make their workplace and employment practices accessible to potential or current employees with disabilities.⁶</i>				
Compliance Category	AODA Priority	Actions to fulfill priority	Lead	Completion Date
Section 22: Recruitment, general	Potential employees notified about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in the recruitment and hiring processes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All job postings revised accordingly All interviewers trained on potential accommodations 		
Section 23 (1): Recruitment, assessment or selection process	Accommodations that are available during interviews indicated	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Potential accommodations that can be made during interviews (i.e., planned and potentially on the spot) determined Statement developed to be used at start of interviews about possible accommodations All interviewers trained on potential accommodations 		
Section 31 (1): Career development and advancement	Needs of employees with disabilities taken into account when providing professional development and advancement opportunities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All job postings revised accordingly Process for supervisors to learn about needs of employees with disabilities determined Supervisors trained accordingly Process implemented during performance appraisal and during professional development opportunities being made to all staff at GCC 		
SECTION 5: TRANSPORTATION STANDARD				

⁶ <https://www.aoda.ca/what-is-the-employment-standard/>

Transportation service providers to make the features and equipment on routes and vehicles accessible to passengers with disabilities.⁷

Compliance Category	AODA Priority	Actions to fulfill priority	Lead	Completion Date
Section 34	<i>Applies to Conventional and Specialized Public Transportation Service Providers only</i>	<i>Not applicable; no action required</i>		

SECTION 6: DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACE STANDARD/BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Ways to make communal spaces (mostly outdoor) more accessible. Applicable to new spaces and buildings, as well as major renovations. Recreational trails and beach access routes, accessible parking, service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines, and waiting areas, and maintenance and restoration of public spaces.⁸

Compliance Category	AODA Priority	Actions to fulfill priority	Lead	Completion Date
Section 80	Accessible pathways: need for clear list and signage for accessible parking, entrances, meeting rooms and washrooms	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess top 2 or 3 areas where signage would be of benefit (i.e., most heavily trafficked,) 2. Address those areas those appropriate signage 3. Clear signage developed to indicate accessibility of areas/facilities 4. Clear signage posted and reviewed annually 		
Section 80.42 and Section 80.43: Use of assistive devices	Use of assistive devices	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Public notice developed 2. Staff informed 3. Public notice posted 		
Built Environment	Ensure that short-term stay services are available to people with assistive devices or for those that stairs prevent a barrier	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exploring options to have an elevator or another comparable solution (physically and financially) for both sites 		

⁷ <https://aoda.ca/what-is-the-transportation-standard/>

⁸ <https://aoda.ca/what-is-the-design-of-public-spaces-standard/>

SECTION 7: REPORTING COMPLIANCE

Compliance Category	AODA Priority	Actions to fulfill priority	Lead	Completion date
Section 86.1 (3)	Report on compliance every three years from December 2014 ⁹	<i>Compliance Report filed with the Government of ON, (date) Certification ID: (ID number)</i>		Dec 2014
Section 86.1 (3)	Report on compliance every three years from December 2014 ¹⁰	<i>Compliance Report filed with the Government of ON, (date) Certification ID: (ID number)</i>		Dec 2017
Section 86.1 (3)	Report on compliance every three years from December 2014 ¹¹	<i>Compliance Report filed with the Government of ON, (date) Certification ID: (ID number)</i>		<i>Dec 2020 (extended to June 30, 2021)</i>

⁹ These are the deadlines required by the AODA

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