


Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2026–2031)

Document Owner:
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Next review date:
Every five years or more frequently as needed (2031)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is to outline YWCA Hamilton’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities and to ensure ongoing compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR). This plan sets out actions, responsibilities, and timelines to enhance accessibility for employees, clients, and community members.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

YWCA Hamilton is committed to creating an inclusive, accessible, and barrier-free environment for employees, clients, and community members. Accessibility is recognized as a fundamental right and is embedded in our programs, services, employment practices, and organizational culture. This plan demonstrates our ongoing commitment to preventing and removing barriers and ensuring compliance with AODA and IASR.

UNDERSTANDING ACCESSIBILITY BARRIERS

YWCA Hamilton recognizes that barriers to accessibility can exist in many forms and may prevent individuals with disabilities from fully accessing programs, services, employment, and facilities.

Barriers may include:

- **Physical barriers** – e.g., entrances, washrooms, signage, wayfinding
- **Information & Communication barriers** – e.g., websites, documents, emergency procedures, communication supports
- **Attitudinal barriers** – e.g., staff awareness, understanding, and behaviour
- **Systemic barriers** – e.g., policies, procedures, organizational processes
- **Technological barriers** – e.g., software, digital platforms, and online tools

CONSULTATION

Under the AODA and IASR General Requirements, YWCA Hamilton is committed to strengthening consultation with persons with disabilities. During the period of 2026–2031, we will implement structured, accessible, and documented consultation processes, including surveys, focus groups, and direct engagement with employees, clients, and community members with disabilities. Feedback gathered through these processes will be used to identify barriers and inform ongoing accessibility improvements and updates to this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

Area	Barrier Type	Identified Barriers	Specific Actions	Timeline	Responsibility	Notes / Status
General Requirements (IASR s.11 – Multi-Year Accessibility Plan & Consultation)	Systemic	Strengthen consultation with persons with disabilities in the development and review of this Multi-Year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and document a formal consultation process for the review of this Multi-Year Plan • Engage employees, clients, and community members with disabilities in consultation • Ensure consultation materials are available in accessible formats upon request • Review and update consultation process at least once every five years 	2026–2031 (Plan lifecycle)	Quality Assurance & Executive Leaders	Ongoing review/monitoring

Area	Barrier Type	Identified Barriers	• Specific Actions	Timeline	Responsibility	Notes / Status
Training & Awareness	Attitudinal	Strengthen awareness of staff and leaders on how accessibility applies to daily work, program delivery, crisis response, and document creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to provide mandatory accessibility and human rights training for new hires and managers • Offer additional training during this plan cycle for managers on creating accessible documents 	2026–2031	Human Resources & Quality Assurance	Ongoing review/monitoring
Feedback & Communication	Information & Communication	Strengthen feedback processes to be more integrated and accessible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement a modern, integrated, accessible feedback system 	2026–2027	Quality Assurance, Communications & Operations	Ongoing review/monitoring
Information & Communication	Information & Communication	Strengthen the accessibility of organizational documents, PDFs, and emergency procedures to enhance plain language and for screen-reader friendly formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement plain language standards • Remediate older PDFs and emergency materials to meet WCAG 2.0 Level A • Train staff and managers on accessible document creation 	2026–2028	Quality Assurance & Communications	Ongoing review/monitoring

Area	Barrier Type	Identified Barriers	• Specific Actions	Timeline	Responsibility	Notes / Status
Employment	Systemic	Strengthen accommodation, hiring, onboarding, and performance management processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standardize and continuously improve accommodation procedures • Train managers on accommodation procedures • Ensure accessibility is embedded in all employment stages 	2026–2027	Human Resources, Quality & Compliance & Leadership Team	Ongoing review/monitoring
Physical Environments & Public Spaces	Physical	Strengthen emergency signage & wayfinding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a signage accessibility audit • Enhance emergency signage and wayfinding (e.g., in stairwells) • Ensure accessibility is considered in renovations and repairs 	2026–2029	Facilities & Operations	Ongoing review/monitoring
Procurement & Technology	Technological	Strengthen existing software, digital platforms, online forms, and internal systems to be more accessible for users requiring screen readers, keyboard navigation, or other assistive technologies. Strengthen accessibility of documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current digital tools and platforms for accessibility • Ensure all new systems support WCAG 2.0 Level AA and assistive technology compatibility • Provide staff training on plain language and creating accessible documents 	2026–2031	Quality Assurance & IT	Ongoing review/monitoring



REVIEW CYCLE & AVAILABILITY

- This Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated every five years, next in 2031 in accordance with IASR requirements.
- The plan is publicly available on the YWCA Hamilton website and is available in accessible formats upon request.