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Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

2013 to 2017

THIS DOCUMENT IS AVAILABLE IN ALTERNATE FORMATS UPON REQUEST

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# A Message from our Director & CEO

According to the Ministry of Community and Social Services, currently 1 in 7 people in Ontario have a disability and by 2036 that number will rise to 1 in 5 as the population ages. Creating an organization where every person — our employees, the artists and arts organizations who apply for Ontario Arts Council grants and access our services, our jurors, advisors, board members and suppliers— can participate as fully as possible just makes good sense.

We are pleased to share with you the OAC’s Multi-year Accessibility Plan to meet the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation of the province’s [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-accessibility-laws).

This plan sets out OAC’s vision for accessibility, the changes we must make, and the results we intend to achieve. In order to be successful, we must continue to advance our own understanding of accessibility issues and apply this knowledge to improving how we provide services, make decisions and interact with our stakeholders.

To get to where we are today, we benefitted from the knowledge of a diverse group of arts community members who are Deaf and/or disabled, and/or work closely with these communities. They were generous with their time and insight and I would like to acknowledge their strong contribution to the creation of this living plan.

Improving accessibility for the benefit of all Ontarians is the right thing to do and OAC is pleased and proud to take on this challenge.

Sincerely,

Peter Caldwell

# **Our Organization’s Accessibility Commitment**

Ontario Arts Council (OAC) celebrates the creativity, innovation and excellence of Ontario’s artists and art organizations in all their diversity. In fall 2011, the OAC Board of Directors passed the following Equity Vision for the organization:

“We are inspired by and value Ontario’s artists, who help shape our thriving and diverse society and express the richness of our stories, histories and cultures. Therefore, as a public agency, funder and employer, OAC will lead and be responsive and inclusive in supporting diverse artists, artistic practices, arts communities and our own organization.”

As part of our commitment to equity we are deeply committed to access for all Ontarians and it is OAC’s goal to achieve accessibility according to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation and any other regulation that is implemented under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

## Accessibility Goals

The OAC strives at all times to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following accessibility goals:

* Our programs and services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of Deaf persons and persons with disabilities;
* Deaf persons and persons with disabilities must be given the same opportunity provided to other members of the public to access our programs and services;
* Our organization will create and provide information and communications in ways that are accessible for Deaf people and people with disabilities;
* As an employer, the OAC will integrate accessibility into all our regular workplace processes and will provide for accessibility across all stages of the employment life cycle.

*Please note that for the purpose of this document OAC is using the definition of disability as described within the AODA, which broadly includes visible and invisible disabilities and deafness. See Appendix I where the complete definition of disability as found in the AODA is included in the Accessibility Policy.*

# Celebrating our Accessibility Successes to Date

Over its 50 year history the OAC has demonstrated its interest and belief that accessibility is a worthwhile achievement by working with the arts community to promote and support artists who are Deaf, or have visible or invisible disabilities. One highlight is the support OAC provided in the form of development funding to a ground-breaking film, "Clown White". It was the first Closed Captioned film ever to be aired on Canadian television. Six Deaf child actors were featured in the film which was broadcast on CBC in 1981.

We have also actively encouraged and supported a variety of arts organizations whose mandates are to serve Deaf artists and artists with visible or invisible disabilities, such as Toronto Deaf Film Festival, Abilities Arts Festival, Workman Arts and Picasso Pro. In addition to arts organizations, we have also provided grants to individual Deaf artists and artists with disabilities who are welcome and encouraged to apply to any of OAC’s programs.

In 2010, employees committed to championing accessibility voluntarily established an Accessibility Committee to internally raise the profile of disability arts and accessibility for Deaf artists and artists with disabilities, and to undertake specific activities to increase awareness. Activities accomplished include: a staff survey to determine relevant projects, individuals, and organizations funded through discipline programs and granting offices; production of *Front and Centre*, a Deaf and disability arts event created in collaboration with the Art Gallery of Ontario and Canada Council for the Arts in 2011; delivery of grant information sessions at the Abilities Arts Festival and Toronto International Deaf Film and Arts Festival; a series of lunch and learn sessions which have included film screenings and guest speakers; and staff attendance at Deaf and disability arts events and performances.

## OAC’s compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation:

Since 2010, OAC has been in compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation. We have continued to ensure that in our day to day activities, the OAC is fulfilling all the requirements of this regulation in keeping with the principles of dignity, independence, equality and integration.

* OAC ensures that all staff who join the OAC receive training on this standard and how to communicate with people who are Deaf or have disabilities, within the first two weeks of joining our organization.
* OAC has a [public feedback form](http://webdev.arts.on.ca/about-us/public-feedback-form), which asks about experiences with accessibility and how OAC can provide more accessible service. We welcome feedback to ensure that our employees are providing appropriate service to people with accommodation needs.
* OAC welcomes people who are Deaf or with disabilities who use assistive devices, support people or service animals and trains our staff on assistive devices available in our facilities.
* When support persons are required for OAC sponsored meetings, consultations, events or information sessions, the OAC pays for these support persons directly for their time and travel expenses upon request, in accordance with government travel and hospitality guidelines.
* If there is a disruption to the facilities or services usually accessed by people with disabilities, OAC posts a notice at all public entrances to our premises. Depending on the nature of the disruption, notice is also provided on outgoing telephone messages and on our website.

## OAC’s Compliance With the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR):

The IASR is a four part regulation including General Requirements, the Accessible Information and Communications Standards, the Accessible Employment Standards and the Accessible Transportation Standards. Throughout this Plan we will report on our annual strategies around requirements in this regulation that apply to our organization and indicate in which part of the IASR the requirement is found.

OAC was required to comply with one section by January 1, 2012 and because of our concern with ensuring the safety of our public and employees we have chosen to comply with an additional section that is not mandatory.

### Accessible Information and Communications Standard

Section 13 of the Accessible Information and Communications Standard in the IASR requires organizations that make public safety information available to the public to provide emergency procedures, and plans of public safety information in accessible formats, on request, by January 1, 2012.

Although OAC does not create public safety documents for the public, and therefore is not required to comply with Section 13, finding ways to ensure that the public visiting OAC has accessible public safety information is very important to OAC. Guests who are at the OAC are informed of the emergency and evacuation procedures and emergency personnel are notified and made aware of what support may be required.

### Accessible Employment Standards

Section 27 of this standard demands that by January 1, 2012, every employer shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability. If the employee requires assistance in case of an emergency, and consents to have information about his or her accommodation needs shared, the employer will provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the employer to provide assistance to the employee. These individual plans will be reviewed and revised if needed, particularly when the employee moves to a different location and when OAC reviews its emergency policies and procedures.

OAC employees have been communicated via OAC’s intranet to inform Human Resources of any accommodation requirements they may need in case of a workplace emergency. Once identified, OAC works with employees and emergency personnel to create individual workplace emergency response information. OAC will distribute these intranet messages twice a year to ensure that all employees who need accommodations are aware and will also include it as a part of the enrolment process during orientation.

Also as of January 1, 2012 OAC came into compliance with Section 22 and Section 23 of the Accessible Employment Standards by notifying employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for job applicants with disabilities and by notifying job applicants who have been invited to participate in a recruitment, assessment or selection process that, where needed, accommodations for disabilities will be provided upon request.

# **Meeting our Accessibility Commitment Going Forward**

## Introduction to our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Organizations in the broader public sector, including the OAC, are required to meet a number of deadlines in the IASR. We have already reported in the previous section on the IASR requirements that had to be met in 2012. From 2013 to 2017, the requirements that need to be met fall mainly in 2013 and 2014, with one additional requirement in 2015. Otherwise we are required to simply continue to monitor and comply with requirements that came into effect in previous years. Therefore, the Plan seems fuller in the first two years as much of our work in 2015, 2016 and 2017 will be to ensure that our accessibility practices are maintained and we will fine-tune them as necessary to align with any feedback and public consultation received.

The driver for the creation of this Multi-year Accessibility Plan was Section 4 of the IASR that requires broader public sector organizations to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan by January 1, 2013.

OAC’s Multi-year Accessibility Plan builds on our past planning, accessibility successes and consultation. It is a living document that outlines our goals and milestones for the five years from 2013 to 2017. It will be reviewed and possibly revised each year as we create an annual progress report. In 2018 we will release a new Multi-year Accessibility Plan. All these documents will be available to the public. We will post them on our website as they are completed and we will make them available in alternate formats on request.

In addition, OAC’s Board of Directors approved an Equity Vision and Goals in the fall of 2011 from where a draft Equity Plan was created that clearly identifies accessibility objectives and activities. The draft Equity Plan is being brought forward for public consultation in 2013, which will further inform OAC on accessibility initiatives it should consider that could be separate and distinct from what is required within this Accessibility Plan. Having an Accessibility Plan already in place will complement and support the success of the accessibility objectives and activities identified in the Equity Plan.

We will be learning in all the years of this Accessibility Plan how to become more accessible and our future plans will reflect our growing knowledge.

## How we Arrived at this Plan: our process

### Reviewing Legislative Requirements

The OAC identified an opportunity to collaborate with the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the Ontario Media Development Corporation to develop a project to be lead by consultants with expertise in accessibility to help all three Ontario agencies analyze the legislative requirements of the IASR and develop separate multi-year plans.

Our aim in this collaboration was to achieve these goals as cost-effectively and efficiently as possible and to share good practices, templates and insights across agencies that could contribute to our shared success in meeting our accessibility requirements under the IASR.

We jointly hired a consulting company through a competitive bidding process that clarified our requirements under the regulation and helped us build a plan that would bring us into compliance with the IASR and build on our uniqueness. This work took place in the summer and fall of 2012.

### Identifying the Gaps we Need to Fill

In completing our legislative review, we discovered that we had already accomplished some of the requirements. We then carefully detailed all the requirements we still need to address to be in compliance and developed strategies to meet each requirement.

### Consulting with the Public

OAC consulted on the first draft of our Multi-year Accessibility Plan with a diverse group of stakeholders (15 total), some of whom have accommodation needs; as well as, some people who have extensive experience working with people who are Deaf or who have disabilities. These stakeholders overwhelmingly supported the direction of the plan, while also providing valuable suggestions about how to make it more detailed and measureable. They also affirmed our intention to keep this plan open as a ‘living document’ that can be responsive to changing needs, understandings and technologies. With their feedback we feel confident that this plan will provide the appropriate framework and guidance to address the requirements of the IASR. We will also continue to consult with the community as we develop an Equity Plan and new Strategic Plan over the next two years.

### Auditing our Website and Web Tools for Accessibility

We have had our external facing website audited and have discovered that while the OAC website is partly compliant to the WCAG 2.0 Level A, there are upgrades to make, which will be done over 2013 in time for the deadline of January 1, 2014. Any new or refreshed internal and external website will reflect the accessibility requirements as described in the IASR.

## Measuring Results/Staying Accountable

### Annual Accessibility Report

At the end of each year, OAC will prepare an annual accessibility report on how we have met our goals, commitments and the legislative requirements for that year, as laid out in this Plan. The report will be available on our website, and will be provided in alternate formats on request.We will also report on annual accessibility achievements in OAC’s Annual Report.

### Reviewing Feedback

We will also monitor and evaluate any feedback we have received throughout the year related to accessibility and integrate this information into our annual accessibility report. Any comments on our accomplishments and plans will be welcome and will be used in our ongoing accessibility planning.

### Revisions to the Multi-year Accessibility Plan

If, through public consultation, feedback and our own accessibility action and planning processes, we feel that the Multi-year Accessibility Plan needs revision, we will update it to reflect these insights. We will ensure that we comply with the timelines and requirements of the IASR and will explain why we have made changes.Any revisions will be available on our website, and will be provided in alternate formats on request.

# Our Detailed Plan: Strategies and Milestones

The details below document OAC’s annual plans for achieving the legislated accessibility requirements as applicable under AODA’s Accessibility Standards, which are the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation, and the IASR’s Accessible Information and Communications Standards and Accessible Employment Standards.

Only those requirements in the IASR that apply to our organization have been included in this plan. So, for example, the transportation requirements in the IASR do not apply because we do not provide public transportation. Similarly, we have not reported on accessible public kiosks because we do not own or operate any kiosks. In addition, at the time that this report was published the Accessible Built Environment Standard also was not yet legislated. When it becomes law OAC will include our strategies around any requirements that apply to or organization in our updated Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.

If at any time from 2013 to 2017, the period of time covered by this plan, we do take on business practices that expand the requirements that apply to us under the IASR, we will revise our plan accordingly.

## 2013

### Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation

In this and every other year of the plan and beyond, OAC will continue to ensure that it is in compliance with the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation. More specifically:

* OAC continues to provide new employees and volunteers with accessible customer service training. Refresh training is available for existing employees and volunteers.
* OAC informs applicants and other stakeholders of their options to receive information and services in alternate formats.
* OAC ensures that agents, contracted services and consultants we hire to provide support to the public have received the required accessible customer service training from their employer.
* OAC welcomes people with disabilities who use assistive devices, support people or service animals and trains our staff on assistive devices in our facilities.
* OAC continues to gather feedback on the goods and services it provides and acts on that feedback to improve services to people with disabilities.
* OAC will strive to ensure that all services are provided in accessible locations.
* OAC continues to post appropriate notices regarding service disruptions.
* OAC reviews and amends the Accessible Customer Service Policy as required.
* Any new policies that are created regarding customer service are created with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity in mind.

### Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

#### General Requirements:

OAC will create and publish an annual accessibility report on progress of our accessibility initiatives, which will be made public on our website.

Section 3 of the IASR requires broader public sector organizations to develop, implement and maintain policies governing how our organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting its requirements under the IASR by January 1, 2013. This section also requires public sector organizations to have a statement of commitment and to use reasonable efforts to make their policies consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Section 4 of the IASR requires broader public sector organizations to create a multi-year accessibility plan by January 1, 2013.

OAC has met these requirements before the deadline.

* Our Policy for the IASR is included in Appendix 1 of this plan. It is available on our website and is also available in alternate formats on request.
* OAC’s commitment to accessibility is part of this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and our IASR Policy. Our commitment includes goals, which encompass the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.
* We have completed this Multi-Year Accessibility Plan before the due date of January 1, 2013.
* This plan and related policies referred to in this document are posted on our website. Print copies and alternate formats are available on request.

#### Procurement

Section 5 of the IASR requires our organization to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, whenever it is practical to do so, and if it is not, to provide an explanation.

To ensure we comply with this requirement, we reviewed our procurement practices, procedures and documents and have created a procurement policy that incorporates accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. We included in the procurement policy, the requirement to explain our decision, in any case where we did not feel it was practicable to incorporate accessibility into a procurement action.

OAC has included the following clauses in its procurement policy and in every procurement contract and request for proposal:

“OAC incorporates accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services and facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so. Where OAC determines it is not practicable, it will record the explanation and provide the explanation in writing upon request.

OAC will expect any organization or individual who wishes to do business with our organization to identify applicable accessibility criteria and features for their specific goods, services and facilities and to confirm their compliance with the training requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation under the AODA. OAC will consider this information in our selection process.”

#### Training

Section 7 of the IASR requires our organization and other broader public sector organizations to provide training by January 1, 2014, on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code, to all 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 organizations. In order to meet this requirement by 2014 OAC will do the following in 2013:

* OAC will send 5 employees to a Train the Trainer session on the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code in January 2013. These individuals will then roll out training throughout 2013 for all employees and volunteers, for our management team and for our board members, in light of their influence on the development of our organization’s policies.
* OAC will maintain records of training including the dates and number of individuals.

### Accessible Information and Communications Standards

When hosting a meeting or event at a venue other than OAC’s offices, we will ensure that we learn what the venue’s emergency procedures are, as well as the accessibility features of the facility so that we can determine what accommodations OAC/the venue will have to put in place to meet our goal of accessibility. We will let the public know what accessibility limits exist, if any, in alternate formats, as required. It is our goal to establish a list of venues that meet a minimum standard of accessibility. We will work with participants with disabilities to meet their accommodation needs at the meeting and in an emergency situation.

### Accessible Employment Standards

There are no new requirements under this standard for 2013. OAC will continue to ensure we meet the requirements already met in 2012 as well as those requirements implemented in 2012 in advance of the required deadline as mentioned in our [*Celebrating our Accessibility Successes to Date*](#_Celebrating_our_Accessibility_1)section of this Plan.

## 2014

### Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation

OAC will continue to be in compliance with the requirements of the above noted standards as described under our *Celebrating our Accessibility Successes to Date* section and under the plan for 2013**.**

### Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

#### Training

Section 7 of the IASR requires our organization and other broader public sector organizations to provide training by January 1, 2014, on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code, to all 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 organizations.

* Throughout 2013 OAC will have trained all employees and volunteers, our management team and our board members on the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code and OAC will have maintained records of the training.
* New employees will receive training on the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation, on the IASR and on the Ontario Human Rights Code during their orientation period or as soon as reasonably possible.
* OAC will determine a succession plan to ensure that any trainers on staff who leave the organization can be replaced with fully trained colleagues prepared to take on their training roles around the Accessibility Regulations.
* OAC will also create a plan for refresh training on the Accessibility Regulations for employees, volunteers and board members.
* OAC will maintain records of training including the dates and number of individuals.

### Accessible Information and Communications Standards

#### Feedback

Section 11 of the Accessible Information and Communications Standards requires that our organization and other broader public sector organizations with 50 or more employees shall, by January 1, 2014, ensure that all feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports on request, and that we notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

OAC is compliant with this requirement and collects feedback in two ways:

* through our [website feedback survey](http://webdev.arts.on.ca/about-us/public-feedback-form) which encourages feedback on a range of issues including accessibility
* through complaints, compliments or comments relayed to individual staff members.

Employees, in keeping with the Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation, are trained to ensure that they communicate with anyone providing feedback in ways that take their accommodation needs into account.

* Our website will be accessible and we have plans to include on the website the statement that the feedback survey can be made available in alternate formats.
* Our feedback is collected by the Executive Office to report back to the Directors and the Board of Directors. This collection of feedback on accessibility will be used in our annual accessibility report and in revising our Multi-Year Accessibility Plan to meet the needs and observations of our public.
* OAC will create an improved process to collate feedback provided to individual employees to ensure that this information also informs our planning process around accessibility.

#### Accessible Websites and Web Content

* OAC will make our website accessible for people with disabilities by conforming to international standards for website accessibility known as WCAG 2.0 Level A including providing text alternatives and easy navigation, in accordance with Section 14 of the Accessible Information and Communications Standards.
* OAC is developing new technology for grant applications to be received on-line in 2013, which OAC will ensure is WCAG 2.0 Level AA compliant so that we will be ahead of the curve for both the 2014 and 2021 requirements under this standard.
* In the meantime, OAC will ensure that any of the documents it posts on line associated with grant applications will be made available in accessible formats as needed.

### Accessible Employment Standards

OAC will continue to comply with the 2012 requirements under the Accessible Employment Standards as identified previously, and by January 1, 2014 we will comply with these standards to ensure that accessibility is incorporated into the entire employment life cycle.

#### Recruitment

* OAC has come into compliance ahead of time as of January 1, 2012 with Section 22 of the Accessible Employment Standards. OAC has notified employees as of January 1, 2012 and will continue to notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for job applicants with disabilities. OAC uses varied ways of posting job ads such as the OAC website, Facebook and Twitter, e-mail distribution, newspapers, and a variety of on-line and other job posting tools. All job ads have stated that if a candidate requires accommodations at any stage in the recruitment process they can contact us, and we will discuss how best to accommodate them.
* OAC has also come into compliance ahead of time as of January 1, 2012 with Section 23 of the Accessible Employment Standards. OAC has notified job applicants as of January 1, 2012 and will continue to notify job applicants who have been invited to participate in a recruitment, assessment or selection process that, where needed, accommodations for people with disabilities will be provided upon request. When an accommodation is requested, OAC will consult with the applicant and will provide or arrange to provide an accommodation that meets the applicant’s needs.
* In accordance with Section 24 of the Accessible Employment Standards, OAC will notify successful job applicants of their policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when offering employment. This notice will be included in OAC’s letter of employment to the successful applicant.

#### Informing Employees with Disabilities of Supports Available to Them:

* In compliance with Section 25 of the Accessible Employment Standards, OAC will inform new and existing employees of its policies for supporting employees with disabilities including providing employment-related accommodations for disabilities. Information will be provided through such means as newsletters, staff memos, e-mail and staff meetings.
* New employees will be provided with this information as part of their orientation process.
* All employees will be given updated information 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 a disability.
* Employees will be assured that their privacy will be respected and that any sharing of information about their accommodation needs will be discussed with them and plans for communication made with their consent.

#### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

* In compliance with Section 26 of the Accessible Employment Standards, OAC will consult with their employees who have disabilities in order to provide them with the accessible formats and communication supports they require to do their jobs effectively and to be able to receive information that is generally available to all employees.
* OAC will develop accessible templates for communications to employees to facilitate ongoing accessible formats and communications.

#### Individual Accommodation Plans

* OAC will develop written, individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities ensuring that the eight steps outlined in Section 28 of the Accessible Employment Standards are followed, namely:

1. The manner in which an employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the individual accommodation plan.

2. The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis.

3. The manner in which the employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the employer’s expense, to assist the employer in determining if accommodation can be achieved and, if so, how accommodation can be achieved.

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.

5. The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee’s personal information.

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.

* OAC’s current practice does comply with most of the steps outlined in Section 28 as described above. Currently, OAC invites employees to let their Manager and Human Resources know of any accommodation needs they have, and to provide a detailed description of these needs. OAC may ask for a note from a medical practitioner, which it will pay for, which should specify what symptoms or conditions the accommodation would support and the duration for which it may be required. The Manager and Human Resources then discusses the request and any accommodations that can be provided, communicate these to the employee and consult with them on an implementation and follow-up plan. This plan is then documented in writing and placed in the employee’s personnel file. The Manager follows up, according to a progress schedule and/or during the employee’s performance appraisal to ensure that the plan is revised appropriately as required.
* To bring OAC into full compliance with this requirement, OAC will develop before January 1, 2014, a written procedure that will clarify how OAC will involve the employee in the process, discuss how to protect the privacy of their personal information, how OAC can seek outside medical or other expert evaluation so that they can provide effective support and how individual accommodation plans will be updated and how often.
* In compliance with Section 28, subsection 3, these plans will include information on accessible formats and communication supports required, individual emergency response requirements and any other accommodations required. These plans will be recognized as private.

#### Return to Work

* OAC has a return to work process which follows the same basic steps as the process to develop an individual accommodation plan as described above. OAC makes a point of contacting and working with the employee before he/she returns to work to ensure that the accommodations will be in place in a timely way when the employee is ready to return to work.
* OAC will document this process in accordance with requirement 1(b) of Section 29 of the Accessible Employment Standards, outlining the steps OAC will take to facilitate the return to work of an employee who was absent because a temporary, short term, long term or permanent disability required them to be away from work.

#### Performance Management, Career Development and Advancement

OAC will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities with regard to Performance Management and Career Development and Advancement, as required by Sections 30 and 31 of the Accessible Employment Standard, in a variety of ways, that take their accessibility needs into account, including:

* Providing performance plans in accessible formats as well as coaching and feedback.
* OAC will update its performance appraisal forms to create a space to discuss and evaluate accessibility needs of individual employees with respect to accommodations, career and professional development.
  + OAC will update its supervisor’s guide to conducting performance reviews to include a section on accessibility needs and accommodation and supports.
  + Where OAC has identified a conference or course as a training or education option, and an employee is unable to attend this conference or course because it poses barriers and his/her accommodation needs cannot be met, OAC will look for an accessible option to provide the training or education.

#### Redeployment

OAC will comply with Section 32 of the Accessible Employment Standards on redeployment by ensuring that accessibility needs for its employees with disabilities as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account where reductions in workforce may mean job re-assignment, restructuring or alternate work arrangements.

## 2015

### Accessible Customer Service Standards Regulation & the General Requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

* OAC will continue to comply with the requirements of the above noted standards as identified in previous years and will modify this plan accordingly to reflect any changes implemented.

### Accessible Information and Communications Standards

#### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

* In accordance with Section 12 of the Accessible Information and Communications Standards, OAC will, upon request, provide or arrange to provide information in accessible formats and/or will provide communication supports for people with disabilities. OAC will ensure that the information will be provided in a timely way, at no extra cost, and will consult with the person making the request to determine the most appropriate format or support that can be supplied by OAC.
* Currently, OAC employees make arrangements through one primary internal contact person if they need a communication support, such as a sign language interpreter, for a meeting, workshop or event. The primary internal contact makes arrangements for the support at no cost to the participant requiring this accommodation.
* To ensure that OAC is able to provide a wide range of alternate formats and communication supports in a timely way, OAC plans to establish a Vendor of Record for suppliers of different alternate formats and communication supports so that there is a consistent, standardized and vetted resource list for all employees to access.
* To ensure quality control, OAC plans to implement an internal request tool and identify a role responsible for coordinating this function, and will develop a clear follow-up process to ensure that the alternate format was produced or the communication support was provided.
* To meet the requirements of Section 12(3), OAC will ensure that information about the availability of alternate formats and communication supports is shared with the public and with those people who apply for grants and/or use our services, through our website and grant-applications online tool.

## 2016

There are no new regulation requirements that need to be met in 2016, therefore OAC will continue to comply as indicated in previous years and will update this plan as applicable through our monitoring processes.

## 2017

* OAC will continue to comply with the regulation requirements identified in previous years and will update this plan as applicable through our monitoring processes.
* OAC will prepare a new Multi-year Accessibility Plan for 2018 through 2022.
* OAC will develop a plan to bring its internet and intranet site and content up to WCAG 2.0 Level AA by January 1, 2021.

# Conclusion

Creating a community that is accessible to people with different abilities is a living process. It is a process which depends on us learning from one another. We welcome individuals who are Deaf and individuals with disabilities to be part of the process as active participants over the next 5 years. We will be communicating about our progress once a year to ensure that the public knows how we have delivered on our commitments and any changes we have made to the Plan. The Multi-year Accessibility Plan and our annual updates will be posted on our website. Our goal is to create and maintain an integrated plan built on feedback, and to be accountable to those people who apply for grants from the OAC and use our services. We also recognize that the broader arts community also needs to do their part in examining how to improve accessibility. We will show leadership by messaging the importance of accessibility through communication avenues and by highlighting our commitment to accessibility through our actions, this plan, and the Equity Plan.

# We Welcome Feedback

We need input to ensure that OAC continually includes ways to reduce or eliminate barriers to OAC’s services, grant programs and events. Feedback can be provided on how this plan meets the needs of individuals who are Deaf or individuals with disabilities by:

Phone: Nina Small, Director of Human Resources

416-969-7426

1-800-387-0058 ext. 7426

E-mail: [nsmall@arts.on.ca](mailto:nsmall@arts.on.ca)

***Alternate formats of this document are available upon request***

# Appendix I



## Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy

### 1. Purpose

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and addresses how the Ontario Arts Council (OAC) achieves or will achieve accessibility by meeting the requirements of the Regulation. The requirements will be met within the timeframes set in the Regulation.

The requirements of the Regulation as they apply to the OAC include:

* the establishment, implementation, maintenance and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the OAC’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation;
* the incorporation of accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring good, service or facilities;
* training;
* the specific requirements under the Information and Communication Standards, and the Employment Standards.

This policy is supported by procedures/departmental policies which outline the detailed processes and accommodations pursuant to this policy.

### 2. Definitions

1. **Accessible formats** may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities;
2. **Accommodation** means the special arrangements made or assistance provided so that individuals with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to individuals without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the customer’s unique needs.
3. **Communication supports** may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmented communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.
4. **Communications** means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received;
5. **Conversion ready** means an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format;
6. **‘Disability’** is (as defined in the AODA):
7. 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;
8. A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
9. A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
10. A mental disorder;
11. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.
12. **Information** includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that coveys meaning.
13. **Volunteer** may include a person who voluntarily undertakes a task on behalf of the OAC**.**

## 3. Statement of Organizational Commitment

OAC celebrates the creativity, innovation and excellence of Ontario’s artists and art organizations in all their diversity. In fall 2011, the OAC Board of Directors passed the following Equity Vision for the organization:

“We are inspired by and value Ontario’s artists, who help shape our thriving and diverse society and express the richness of our stories, histories and cultures. Therefore, as a public agency, funder and employer, OAC will lead and be responsive and inclusive in supporting diverse artists, artistic practices, arts communities and our own organization.”

As part of our commitment to equity, and as an agency of the Ontario government, OAC is committed to meeting, and wherever possible exceeding, all legislative requirements.

We are committed to the principles outlined in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and to meeting the needs of people with visible and invisible disabilities and people who are Deaf, in a timely manner, through the implementation of the requirements of the Act.

Furthermore, we are deeply committed to access for all Ontarians and these are the OAC’s goals to achieve accessibility according to the Integrated Accessibility Regulations Standard.

### Accessibility Goals

The OAC strives at all times to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following accessibility goals:

* Our programs and services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of Deaf persons and persons with disabilities;
* Deaf persons and persons with disabilities must be given the same opportunity provided to other members of the public to access our programs and services;
* Our organization will create and provide information and communications in ways that are accessible for Deaf people and people with disabilities;
* As an employer, the OAC will integrate accessibility into all our regular workplace processes and will provide for accessibility across all stages of the employment life cycle.

## 4. Mandatory Requirements

### 4.1 General

### 4.1.1 Accessibility Plans

1. OAC’s Multi-year Accessibility Plan (“the plan”) outlines the strategy to prevent and remove barriers over the five years between 2013 and 2017, and to meet its requirements under the Regulation;
2. The plan is posted on the website, and will be provided in alternate formats upon request;
3. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years;
4. The plan has been created in consultation with OAC staff and with public input;

An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy will be posted on the website and in alternate formats upon request.

### 4.1.2 Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities

1. Accessibility criteria and features are incorporated in the procurement process and contract when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so;
2. Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, OAC will document and provide, upon request, an explanation.

### 4.1.3 Training

1. OAC ensures that training is provided on the requirements of accessibility standards referred to within the Regulation and on the *Ontario* *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities for,
   1. All employees and volunteers;
   2. All persons who participate in developing OAC’s policies; and
   3. All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities to the public on behalf of the OAC.
2. The training provided is appropriate to the duties of employees, volunteers and other persons.
3. Training is provided as practicable to employees, volunteers and other persons.
4. Where there are changes to the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy, training will be provided with regard to those changes.
5. OAC will maintain a record of the dates of when training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

### 4.2 Information and Communication Standards

### 4.2.1 Feedback

1. OAC’s public feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities and does provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports upon request.
2. The public is notified regarding the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

### 4.2.2 Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

1. OAC will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities,
   * 1. in a timely manner that takes into account the person’s accessibility needs due to disability, and;
     2. at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
2. OAC will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of alternative formats or communication supports.
3. OAC notifies the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

### 4.2.3 Accessible websites and web content

1. OAC’s new internet, intranet websites and web content on those sites conforms to the WCAG 2.0, in accordance with the Regulation.
2. All new internet websites and web content on those sites will comply to the WCAG 2.0 Level A by January 1, 2014;
3. As of January 1, 2021 all internet, intranet and web content will conform with the WCAG 2.0 Level AA, other than: success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded);
4. Websites and web content, including web-based applications, that OAC controls directly or through a contractual relationship that allows for modification of the product, are included in this timeline, where practicable;
5. In determining practicability, consideration will be given to the availability of commercial software, or tools or both, and whether planned or initiated implementation timelines (before January 20) will be significantly impacted.

### 4.3 Employment Standards

### 4.3.1 Recruitment

1. OAC notifies its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes;
2. During a recruitment process, applicants who are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, are notified that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes used;
3. If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, OAC consults with the applicant, having regard for the applicant’s accessibility needs, on the provision of a suitable accommodation;
4. When making an offer of employment, OAC will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

### 4.3.2 Informing employees of supports

1. OAC informs its employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on job accommodation that take into account the employee’s accessibility needs due to a disability.
   * 1. New employees will be informed as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.
     2. Where there are changes to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation, all employees will be provided updated information.

### 4.3.3 Accessible formats and communication supports for employees

1. Where an employee requests it, the OAC will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:
   1. Information that is needed in order for the employee to perform the employee’s job; and
   2. Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.
2. OAC will consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

### 4.3.4 Workplace emergency response information

1. OAC provides individual workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability;
   1. Where the disability is such that individual information is necessary, and
   2. Where OAC is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee’s disability.
2. If an employee with individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance and provides consent, OAC will provide the individualized information to the person designated by OAC to provide assistance to the employee.
3. Individualized information is provided as soon as practicable after OAC becomes aware of the need for accommodation due to an employee’s disability.
4. OAC will review the individualized workplace emergency response information
   1. When the employee moves to a different location;
   2. When the employee’s overall accommodation needs or plan are reviewed;
   3. When the OAC reviews its general emergency response policies.

### 4.3.5 Documented individual accommodation plans

The OAC process for the development of Individual Accommodation Plans for employees with disabilities is as follows:

a) Employee identifies to their Manager and Human Resources as soon as reasonably possible that accommodation is required in order to return to work, with a description of the disability and what types of accommodation should be considered.

1. Depending on the request a medical note may be required that would specify such things as what symptoms and/or conditions the accommodation would address and if applicable, the duration that the accommodation may be required.
2. The Manager and Human Resources shall discuss the request and assess all options and possibilities with respect to the employee, their position and what OAC can do within reason to provide accommodation that would suitably address the symptoms and/or conditions.
3. The Manager and Human Resources will communicate back to the employee on options available and consult on an implementation plan, and follow up plan if required.
4. The decision on accommodation will then be documented in writing to the employee and placed in the employee’s personnel file.
5. The Manager is to follow up with the employee according to a progress schedule, if required, and/or during the annual performance appraisal.

### 4.3.6 Return to work

OAC has a return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work. The process is the same as the process for providing accommodations and the creation of an Individual Accommodation Plan, as follows:

1. Employee identifies to their Manager and Human Resources as soon as reasonably possible that accommodation is required in order to return to work, with a description of the disability and what types of accommodation should be considered.
2. Depending on the request a medical note may be required that would specify such things as what symptoms and/or conditions the accommodation would address and if applicable, the duration that the accommodation may be required.
3. The Manager and Human Resources shall discuss the request and assess all options and possibilities with respect to the employee, their position and what OAC can do within reason to provide accommodation that would suitably address the symptoms and/or conditions.
4. The Manager and Human Resources will communicate back to the employee on options available and consult on an implementation plan, and follow up plan if required.
5. The decision on accommodation will then be documented in writing to the employee and placed in the employee’s personnel file.
6. The Manager is to follow up with the employee according to a progress schedule, if required, and/or during the annual performance appraisal.

### 4.3.7 Performance Management

Where the OAC uses performance management in respect of its employees, the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, and individual accommodation plans are taken into account.

### 4.3.8 Career Development and Advancement

Where the OAC uses career development and advancement in respect of its employees, the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, and individual accommodation plans are taken into account.

### 4.3.9 Redeployment

Where the OAC uses redeployment in respect of its employees, the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, and individual accommodation plans are taken into account.

# Appendix II



## Accessibility Standards for Service to the Public Policy

### Accessibility Standards for Service to the Public Policy Statement:

The following policy, practices and procedures have been established by the Ontario Arts Council to govern the provision of its services in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and Regulation 429/07 “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service”.

### **1. Our mission**

The mission of the Ontario Arts Council is to foster the creation and production of art for the benefit of all Ontarians.

### **2. Our commitment**

In fulfilling our mission, the Ontario Arts Council strives at all times to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles outlined in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, specifically:

* Our programs and services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
* Persons with disabilities must be given the same opportunity provided to other members of the public to access our programs and services

Persons with disabilities are encouraged to contact us to identify and discuss whether the provision of our programs and services could be provided in ways that would better take into account their disability. Please see section nine of this policy for more details on the feedback process.

### **3. Communication**

We will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will communicate with members of the public in person, in writing, by electronic mail, telephone, and through relay services.

We will train staff who communicate with the public on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

### **4. Assistive devices**

We are committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to access our programs and services.

Our staff will be trained on any assistive devices available on our premises.

### **5. Use of service animals**

We recognize that some individuals with disabilities may require the use of service animals in order to access our programs and services. We welcome persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal to all parts of our premises and to keep the animal with them.

### 6. Use of support persons

We recognize that some individuals with disabilities rely on support persons for assistance while accessing our programs and services. A person with a disability and their support person will be allowed to enter our premises. They will not be prevented from having access to each other while on the premises.

Support persons accompanying or assisting individuals with disabilities may be required to abide by our conflict of interest and confidentiality policies.

When support persons are required (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners, attendants) for Ontario Arts Council sponsored meetings, consultations, events or information sessions, the Ontario Arts Council will pay support persons directly for their time and travel expenses upon request, in accordance with government travel and hospitality guidelines.

### **7. Notice of temporary disruption**

The Ontario Arts Council will provide the public with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to the facilities or services usually accessed by persons with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice of the disruption will normally be posted at all public entrances to our premises. Depending on the nature of the disruption, notice will also be provided on outgoing telephone messages and on our web-site.

### **8. Training for staff**

The Ontario Arts Council will provide training to its staff who deal with the public, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of public service policies, practices and procedures, about the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

Staff will be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. New staff will be trained as part of their orientation upon employment.

Training will include the following:

* A review of this policy and any other practices and procedures relating to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
* The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
* How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, service animals or support persons
* How to use any equipment or devices available on our premises, or otherwise, that may assist with the provision of programs or services to persons with disabilities
* What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Ontario Arts Council’s programs and services

The Ontario Arts Council will keep a record of the training it provides.

### **9. Feedback process**

The ultimate goal of this policy is to meet program and service expectations while serving persons with disabilities. Comments on our programs and services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

The Ontario Arts Council will let the public know that methods are available for giving feedback. If a method is not suitable, individuals may request another method. Privacy will be respected and all feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be taken to improve access to our programs and services.

Feedback received will be directed to the Ontario Arts Council’s Director of Human Resources and will be addressed in accordance with our normal complaints administration procedures and timelines. Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints may require more time to address, and must be reviewed for action, possibly at a higher level.

Feedback responses will endeavour to be in a format that is accessible to the complainant.

### **10. Modifications to this or other policies**

We are committed to ensuring that our public service policies, practices and procedures respect and promote the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.

Any policy of the Ontario Arts Council affecting service to the public that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence, integration and equal opportunity of persons with disabilities will be modified or removed.

### **11. Questions about this policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to persons with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of this policy is not understood, please contact:

Nina Small, Director of Human Resources

121 Bloor St East, 7th Floor

Toronto, ON M4W 3M5

Telephone: 1-800-387-0058 ext. 7426 or 416-969-7426

[nsmall@arts.on.ca](mailto:nsmall@arts.on.ca)