

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS

Statement of Organizational Commitment

Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca (HANDS) is committed to working towards being compliant with all the standards under the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act** (AODA) as they are introduced and become law.

HANDS recognizes the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario and the fundamental importance of developing, implementing and enforcing standards in a timely manner in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities.

HANDS is committed to:

- The principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity described in the AODA and to meeting the needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, through the implementation of this statement.
- Establishing, maintaining and implementing policies as well as associated practices and procedures in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, (The Regulation) specifically in the areas of information and communications, and employment and, and to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner.
- Excellence in serving all of our clients, including people with disabilities. When providing information to, or communicating with, a person with a disability, we will provide the information and communication in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
- On-going improvements to accessibility in its premises and facilities as required by law, as well as to the services offered to customers, employees, volunteers and members of the general public.
- Promoting values that support relationships between people with disabilities and the organization.
- Securing the involvement of people with disabilities in the development and review of its annual accessibility plan.
- The establishment, implementation, maintenance, and documentation of a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under The Regulation.

- The incorporation of accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities.
- The training of all employees, volunteers, persons who deal with customers and the public on HANDS behalf, and persons participating in the development and approval of HANDS policies, practices and procedures on the requirements under The Regulation and the **Human Rights Code** as it pertains to persons with disabilities.
- Implementing specific requirements, policies, practices and procedures, and a multi-year plan under the Standards for Information and Communication, and Employment.

PURPOSE

The purpose is to create a statement of commitment that provides a framework within which accessibility plans and initiatives are to be created in order to move the organization towards the goal of improved accessibility for people with disabilities. HANDS endeavours to provide accessibility and accommodation as prescribed in the AODA.

The commitments in this statement are intended to ensure that accessibility remains a priority in HANDS decision-making process and will serve to assist in ensuring that decisions improve accessibility and do not inadvertently create barriers.

SCOPE

This statement applies to HANDS:

- Customers
- Employees
- Volunteers
- Applicants for employment with HANDS who may require employment accommodation through the recruitment, assessment, selection, and hiring process
- Visitors
- Contractors and sub-contractors engaged by HANDS
- Any other third party providing goods, services or facilities on HANDS's behalf

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RESPONSIBILITY

The accessibility advisory committee established by HANDS is the administrative entity responsible for the administration of this statement. It is the responsibility of this committee to ensure the application of this statement and that the organization achieves compliance with the law and creates an environment that provides the widest feasible scope of access, which is the right or opportunity to reach, use or participate in the organization's systems, facilities and services.

Managers, immediate supervisors and directors are responsible for ensuring that all employees follow the guidelines set out in this statement.

Each manager, immediate supervisor and director is responsible to ensure all employees are trained under the Accessibility Regulations and Standards under the AODA, the **Human Rights Code** and all related policies, practices and procedures.

All employees, volunteers, contractors and sub-contractors, any other person acting on behalf of HANDS and persons involved in the creation of HANDS's policies are responsible for adhering to and following the commitments set out in this statement.

DEFINITIONS

“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.

“Accommodation” means the special arrangements made or assistance provided so that persons with disabilities can participate in the experiences available to persons without disabilities. Accommodation will vary depending on the person's unique needs.

“Communication supports” may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

“Communications” means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent, or received.

“Dignity” means service is provided in a way that allows the individual to maintain self-respect and the respect of other persons.

“Equal opportunity” means service is provided to individuals in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods or services equal to that given to others.

“Independence” means when a person is able to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

“Information” includes data, facts and knowledge that exist in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that convey meaning.

“Integration” means service is provided in a way that allows the individual to benefit from equivalent services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way, as other individuals, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable the individual to access goods or services.

“Reasonable efforts” means taking approaches that meet the required needs of the individual.

PROCEDURES

HANDS through its accessibility advisory committee will monitor and evaluate accessibility initiatives and changes to applicable legislation and/or regulations. Changes to policies, plans and initiatives will be incorporated as required. HANDS will also report on performance in relation to established accessibility goals and targets.

If you have questions on this statement, want to provide feedback or have a complaint, contact us at 1-800-668-8555, info@handstfhn.ca, TTY 1-800-855-0511.