

Wellington- Dufferin-Guelph Public Health Accessibility Plan



PublicHealth
WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN-GUELPH
Stay Well.

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Introduction and Statement of Commitment

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) is committed to meeting the needs of everyone in our community. We will deliver programs and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

WDGPH will make every reasonable effort to ensure that:

- Persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from our programs and services.
- Programs and services provided to persons with disabilities are the same, or similar, to those offered to others, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to benefit from them.
- Persons with disabilities may use a personal assistive device to access our programs and services. Personal assistive devices may include, but are not limited to: service animals, support person, communication, cognition, mobility and medical aids.
- Persons with disabilities will be offered alternative communication and information formats, where necessary.

This multi-year accessibility plan outlines our statement of commitment, our achievements to date and our next steps to fulfill our commitment and meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

Obligations

The ***Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*** is a complex and evolving multi-year piece of legislation ⁽¹⁾. The goal of the *Act* and the standards is to make the province accessible for all people with disabilities by 2025 ⁽²⁾.

The AODA sets out the roadmap for an accessible Ontario by 2025. It contains standards in the following areas that are relevant at WDGPH:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's Strategy

The Multi-year Accessibility Plan describes how we have become an accessible organization and how we will continue to do so through 2026. WDGPH is classified as a non-profit employer in the 50+ employee category. So far, we have focused on the following areas:

- Policies, processes and practices
- Communications and awareness
- Technology
- Infrastructure
- People
- Procurement

Key Outcomes

- People with disabilities have access to the services of WDGPH in a timely manner.
- People with disabilities have access to information and communications in alternate formats upon request.
- People with disabilities can participate fully in services and employment at WDGPH.
- People with disabilities experience greater accessibility in WDG Public-Health facilities.

Our Approach (2013-2015)

- WDGPH completed a comprehensive environmental scan of other public health agencies and public sector organizations to identify and implement AODA best practices. Wellington County was identified as a best practice organization ⁽³⁾.
- WDGPH developed purchasing and human resources policies and procedures that include accessibility requirements.
- WDGPH implemented the training of current and new staff.
- WDGPH identified and removed barriers to employment.
- WDGPH ensured access to information and communications.
- WDGPH continued to identify and remove and prevent barriers.

Our Approach (2015-2021)

- Review and revise as appropriate policies, procedures and processes to confirm they support accessibility considerations.
- Redevelop our website to comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility requirements.
- Continue to include accessibility training in New Hire Orientation and update training for existing staff when indicated.
- Encourage ongoing requests for public feedback through feedback mechanisms.
- Update our multi-year accessibility plan a minimum of once every 5 years and post said plan on the WDGPH website
- Continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers.

Our Approach (2021-2026)

- Review and revise as appropriate policies, procedures and processes to confirm they support accessibility considerations.
- Support and maintain our website and ensure it continues to comply with WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility requirements.
- Continue to include accessibility training in New Hire Orientation and update training for existing staff when indicated.
- Encourage ongoing requests for public feedback through feedback mechanisms.
- Update our multi-year accessibility plan a minimum of once every 5 years and post said plan on the WDGPH website.
- Continue to identify, remove and prevent barriers.

Regulatory Requirements and Proposed and Completed Actions

Accessible Customer Service

WDGPH is committed to providing programs and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Wherever possible, persons with disabilities will benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other clients. Programs and services provided to persons with disabilities and others shall be integrated, unless alternative measures are required to enable a person with a disability an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from WDGPH programs and services.

WDGPH shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Programs or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the program or services;
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of programs and services; and
- When communicating with a person with a disability, employees shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability in a respectful manner.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2012

Status: Completed

Planned Action: Review and revise policy as required.

1. Develop accessible customer service policies

Required compliance date: January 1, 2012

Status: Completed

Planned Action: Review and revise policy as required.

2. Provide accessible customer service training

Required compliance date: January 1, 2012

Status: Completed

Action: Training provided for all existing employees and new employees.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation

Part I – General Requirements

The Information and Communications, Employment, and Transportation Standards requirements under AODA, were combined under *O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards* ⁽⁴⁾. This regulation requires WDGPH to develop accessibility policies, incorporate accessibility into procurement, train staff, and create a multi-year accessibility plan.

1. Develop accessibility policies

- Develop accessibility policies, including a statement of organizational commitment and make the policies publicly available.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2014

Status: Completed

Action: Revised and simplified accessibility policies and our statement of commitment

2. Develop multi-year accessibility plans

- Develop multi-year accessibility plan that outlines what will be done to implement the requirements of the IASR.
- Post the plan on the Agency's website and provide it in an accessible format, upon request.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2014

Status: Completed

Planned Action: Review and revise multi-year accessibility plan as required

3. Incorporate accessibility in procuring goods, services or facilities

- Incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2014

Status: Completed

Action: Incorporated into existing RFP process as well as WDGPH procurement policy.

4. Training as required under the ISAR for employees

- All current and new employees will additionally be required to take additional training on Accommodation in Employment (ISAR) as required by the standard.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2015

Status: Completed

Action: Training provided for all existing employees and new employees.

IASR Part II – Information and Communications

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. When asked, we will provide information and communications materials in accessible formats or with communication supports. This includes publicly available information about our goods, services and facilities, as well as publicly available emergency and safety information.

1. Feedback processes

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health will provide opportunities for people with disabilities to provide feedback in order to address concerns and improve the level of service that we provide to people with disabilities.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2015

Status: Completed

Action: Information on feedback options is available on website and upon request. Individuals can provide feedback through paper forms, e-mail, mail and phone.

2. Accessible formats and communication supports

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2016

Status: Completed

Action: Information on different communication medium options is available on our website and upon request. Individuals can request accessible formats and communication support through paper forms, e-mail, mail and phone.

The Agency will review and refine our public forms into our website redevelopment project.

3. Emergency procedures plans or public safety information

Provide emergency procedures, plans or public safety information that is publicly available in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2012

Status: Completed

4. Accessible websites and web content (January 1, 2021)

WDGPH is committed to ensuring that our website and online content conforms with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 in order to make content accessible for the public.

Required compliance date:

January 1, 2014 – WCAG 2.0 Level A for new Internet websites and web content

Status: Completed

January 1, 2021 – WCAG 2.0 Level AA for all Internet websites and web content

Status: In Progress

Planned Action: WDGPH's website (wdgpublichealth.ca) reached WCAG Level AA compliance in 2016 and maintained compliance until the Agency entered IMS in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. During this time, due to the fast pace of information sharing and changing, WDGPH's web content (PDFs specifically) did not always meet compliance. As of December 2023, a plan is in motion to bring the website and PDFs back into compliance, including a full website audit and PDF remediation. This process will be complete by mid-2024.

IASR Part III – Employment

WDGPH is committed to making sure the process of finding, obtaining and keeping a job is as inclusive as possible to build an effective workforce.

1. Recruitment – general, selection process, notification to successful applicants

WDGPH will notify employees and the public of the availability of accommodation

for applicants with disabilities in the recruitment process.

Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

When job applicants are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, they will be notified that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used in the assessment/selection process.

Notice to Successful Applicants

When making offers of employment, we will notify the successful applicant of our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2016

Status: Completed

1. Informing employees of supports

- Inform employees of policies to support employees with disabilities.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2016

Status: Completed

Planned Action: Develop and implement revised new hire orientation program in 2016 to reinforce available employee supports that are available at WDGPH.

2. Accessible formats and communication support for employees

- Provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports when it is requested by an employee with a disability and the information is needed to perform the employee's job and is generally available to employees in the workplace.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2016

Status: Completed

Planned Action: Develop and implement revised new hire orientation program in 2016 to reinforce available employee supports that are available at WDGPH.

3. Workplace emergency response information

- Provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, as required.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2012

Status: Completed

Planned Action: During the review of the 2016 Emergency Preparedness Response Plan, ensure ongoing compliance.

4. Documented individual accommodation plans

- Develop and have in place a written process for development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2016

Status: Completed

5. Return to work process

- Develop a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations to return to work.

Required compliance date: January 1, 2016

Status: Completed

6. Performance management, career development and advancement, redeployment

WDGPH will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans:

- When using its performance management process in respect of employees with disabilities;
- When providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities;
- When reassigning employees with disabilities.

WDGPH will:

- Review, assess and as necessary, modify existing policies, procedures, practices and templates to ensure compliance with the AODA;
- Take the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and, as applicable, their individualized accommodation plans, into account when:
 - Assessing performance
 - Managing career development and advancement
 - Reassigning as required

Required compliance date: January 1, 2016

Status: Completed

Conclusion

WDGPH recognizes that further steps need to be taken to become barrier-free. Therefore, the Multi-year Plan presented above reflects a commitment to engage in initiatives that will help WDGPH free of physical, attitudinal and social barriers by the year 2026 in accordance with AODA legislation.

Contact Information

This plan exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the plan, please contact us at:

Email: info@wdgpublichealth.ca
Website: www.wdgpublichealth.ca
Fax: 519-846-3306

For service accommodations please contact:

Email: access@wdgpublichealth.ca
Website: www.wdgpublichealth.ca
Fax: 519-846-3306

REFERENCES:

1. E-Laws Ontario. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11. [Online]. [cited 2016 04 28]. Available from: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11?search=Accessibility>.
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