

# Contact North | Contact Nord

Ontario's Distance Education & Training Network  
Le réseau ontarien d'éducation et de formation à distance

## Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2015-2025

### 1. Introduction and Statement of Commitment

The integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requires Contact North | Contact Nord to develop a multi-year plan every five years to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities.

Every five years, Contact North | Contact Nord sets a course to prevent, identify and remove barriers for persons with disabilities. Through its multi-year accessibility plan, Contact North | Contact Nord aims to become barrier-free by 2025.

This course includes complying with the following five accessibility standards in:

- Customer Service
- Information & Communications
- Employment
- Transportation
- The Built Environment

The 2015-2020 accessibility plans will help to inform planning requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Integrated Regulation) enacted July 1, 2011 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). The AODA requires Contact North | Contact Nord to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards so that goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises are accessible to persons with disabilities.

The multi-year accessibility plan outlines the specific steps Contact North | Contact Nord is taking to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities and comply with the phased-in requirements of the Regulation.

Contact North | Contact Nord remains committed to improving accessibility through the identification, removal and prevention of barriers in our organization. Working with our employees and with our clients ensures that accessibility is given significant consideration.

This plan has been developed by our Accessibility Coordinator in accordance with the Integrated Regulation. It outlines a strategy to prevent and remove barriers and address the current and future requirements of the AODA.

In accordance with the requirements, Contact North | Contact Nord will:

- Provide all information relating to the plan in alternative formats upon request
- Review and update the plan at least once every five years.

The Accessibility Coordinator will follow up on the progress of the plan and, if necessary, remind the responsible parties of their roles in implementing the plan.

## **Section One: Report on measures already implemented to identify, remove and prevent barriers in 2015-2020**

From 2015-2020, Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to comply with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation and continue to implement initiatives to enhance accessibility in other areas under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Standards for Employment and Information and Communications. When the Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment becomes law, the same will apply.

This section includes a summary of the initiatives Contact North | Contact Nord has implemented and will continue to implement from 2015-2020.

### **2. Standards for Customer Service**

Contact North | Contact Nord met compliance with the requirements set out in the Accessible Customer Service Standard Regulation by:

- Establishing policies, procedures, and practices for providing services to persons with disabilities, and posting these on the corporate website.
- Providing accessibility awareness, AODA and customer service standard training to all staff who interact, or may interact, with persons with disabilities on behalf of the company or are involved in the creation and implementation of policies, practices and procedures for the company.
- Working with the building manager and landlord to develop a notification service disruption protocol, and communicated the customer service policy to staff so that support persons and service animals are permitted onto Contact North | Contact Nord premises.
- Added an “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” button to the footer of the website to communicate the customer service policy and provide instructions for enhanced accessibility offerings.
- Creating a customer service policy that highlights information about accessibility requirements under the AODA including policies, guidelines and mandatory and recommended training requirements for staff and management.
- Tracking completion of accessibility training courses and sending regular reminders to those who have not completed it in a timely manner.

### **3. Emergency Response and Evacuation Plans Under the IASR Standards for Information and Communications and Employment**

Contact North | Contact Nord incorporated accessibility considerations into its emergency response and evacuation plan and procedures. The following measures were taken:

- Instructions were provided to staff regarding evacuation in times of emergency to gather at locations that are accessible.

- Fire and disaster wardens were instructed to identify persons in need of assistance in advance of an emergency to discuss the location of the designated waiting areas and how identified persons will be escorted out.
- The emergency response plan and public safety information was posted in both French and English on the intranet site which is compliant with accessibility standards for employees.
- The emergency response plan and public safety information is available to the public in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports upon request.
- Emergency procedures have been updated to ensure they can be followed by customers or employees with disabilities.
- The company has instituted a “buddy system” in which a designated individual provides assistance to a specific disabled employee (with the disabled employee’s prior consent) to help him or her evacuate the workplace in case of an emergency or disaster.
- The company is willing and dedicated to designing individualized workplace emergency response information for any employee who discloses a disability, and such employees will be accommodated according to their disability when and if an emergency or disaster occurs. These individualized plans would be communicated to their managers and recorded in their personnel files.
- Individualized emergency response information is reviewed when:
  - a) An employee moves to a different location in the organization
  - b) An employee’s overall needs or plans are reviewed; and
  - c) When reviewing general emergency response policies

No employees with disabilities at present. Will be addressed on an individual basis as need arises.

#### **4. Standards for Integrated Accessibility General Requirements**

Contact North | Contact Nord incorporated accessibility considerations into its accessibility policy and statement of commitment to IASR Commitment. The following measures were taken:

- A policy was created that addresses how Contact North | Contact Nord will achieve accessibility through meeting the IASR’s requirements
- Contact North | Contact Nord’s Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation policy and statement of commitment was made available to the public on the premises and on the corporate website.
- Contact North | Contact Nord’s Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation policy and statement of commitment is available in an accessible format upon request. We will consult with the person with a disability when identifying the appropriate format.
- Established, implemented and will maintain a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements.

- Posted the multi-year accessibility plan on the organization's website and are able to provide the plan in accessible formats upon request.

## **5. Standards for Information and Communications**

Contact North | Contact Nord incorporated accessibility considerations into making company information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The following measures were taken:

- Ensure new internet websites and web content on those sites confirm to WCAG 2.0 Level A.
- Provide, upon request, accessible formats and communication supports for receiving and responding to feedback from persons with disabilities.
- Hired a website specialist to audit the Contact North | Contact Nord website and advise on changes that can be made to improve the accessibility throughout.

## **6. Standards for Employment**

To meet compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Employment under the Integrated Regulation requirements and to remove barriers to persons with disabilities in recruitment, the following measures were taken:

- Candidates are informed of the availability of accommodations when called for an interview, during the selection process and at the time of job offer.
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, consultation is done with the applicant and arrangements for the provision of a suitable accommodation are arranged in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs.

## **7. Standards for Training**

To meet compliance with the Accessibility Standards for training under the Integrated Regulation requirements and to remove barriers to persons with disabilities in training, the following measures were taken by Contact North | Contact Nord:

- Ensured meetings and training sessions are accessible for employees with learning and other disabilities.
- Provide training on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities to all employees, volunteers, contractors, other third parties who interact persons with disabilities on behalf of the company and persons involved in the creation of policies.
- Keep and maintain a record of the dates when training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.
- Ensure training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards.
- Provide training in respect to any changes to policies on an ongoing basis.

## Section Two: Report on planned measures to identify, remove and prevent barriers in 2015-2020

Contact North | Contact Nord is committed to the ongoing improvement of our accessibility plan. Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to improve in areas of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

### 1. Standards for Customer Service

Contact North | Contact Nord is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities continue to receive accessible goods and services. This means they will receive goods and services with the same high quality and timelines as others as per the customer service policy issued January 1, 2012.

#### Commitment

Contact North | Contact Nord has adopted the accessible customer service policy and procedures.

#### Identification of Barriers

People with disabilities face a range of physical and attitudinal barriers including stereotyping and prejudice. Inadequate resources and the lack of common objectives with regards to accessibility and equity seriously curb efforts to remove barriers

Contact North | Contact Nord has identified that some of the employees have not completed the training that has been provided and will work diligently to have the remaining few individuals complete the training.

Contact North | Contact Nord has identified that the Board of Directors was not provided the customer service training. The Board of Directors will be provided the training and asked to complete it as soon as possible.

#### Planned Action(s)

- Review the company's existing feedback process and incorporate more efficient tracking and response mechanisms for accessibility-related feedback.
- Assess premises and other areas where barriers may exist that prevent customer access to our goods and services.
- Review effectiveness of policy, procedures and practices and make necessary adjustments.
- Continue to track and report on training compliance.
- Encourage staff to consider accessibility when planning meetings and events with customers, including vendors and suppliers.

## **2. Standards for Integrated Accessibility general requirements**

### **2.1 Accessibility Policy and Statement of Commitment to IASR Commitment**

Contact North | Contact Nord has created an implemented an Integrated Accessibility Standards policy.

#### **Identification of Barriers**

Contact North | Contact Nord hires new employees on a regular basis and believes in continuous learning and development. Therefore, Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to assess physical, attitudinal and communication barriers across the company to ensure we remove and prevent barriers to access for persons with disabilities in our organization.

#### **Planned Action(s)**

- Educate the Health and Safety Committee on possible physical barriers to individuals with disabilities and implement a section on the workplace inspections that has identifying physical barriers to individuals with disabilities in mind.
- Find a training resource on attitudinal barriers online and circulate the training resource throughout the organization to raise awareness on the issue.

### **2.2 Accessibility Plan Maintenance**

Contact North | Contact Nord will review and update the accessibility plan at least once every five years.

### **2.3 Procurement or Acquisition of Goods, Services, or Facilities Commitment**

Contact North | Contact Nord will create a Procurement of Goods policy that adheres to the Integrated Regulation's requirements and shows commitment to the standard.

### **2.4 Self-service Kiosks**

Contact North | Contact Nord does not have any self-service kiosks at this time.

### **2.5 Training**

Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to ensure that all employees, persons who deal with customers and the public on the company's behalf, and persons participating in the development and approval of the company's policies, practices and procedures receive the appropriate training that meets the requirements under the Integrated Regulation.

## **3 Standards for Information and Communications**

Contact North | Contact Nord is committed to making company information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. The information we provide and the ways we communicate are key to delivering our services to the public.

## **Focus**

Access to information involves matters relating to format and availability of content, including the means of access and technologies associated with it. While access to publications and information is usually the responsibility of the Marketing, Information Technology and Web Services departments, there are also related responsibilities in all departments and units that produce publications and websites, such as promotions, marketing and communications.

## **Commitment**

Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to uphold the accessibility requirements under the information and communications standard to ensure that its information and communications systems and platforms are accessible and provided in accessible formats that meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Contact North | Contact Nord will endeavor to provide necessary communication supports in a timely manner.

## **Identification of Barriers**

Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to assess its communication methods and attitude to identify and remove barriers to information and communications with people with disabilities.

Potential barriers include:

- Lack of awareness among the organization's webmasters regarding website accessibility barriers
- Information overload and conflicting recommendations for website accessibility standards
- Inaccessible HTML forms

## **Planned Action(s)**

To improve our compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Information and Communications under the IASR requirements and remove barriers to persons with disabilities, Contact North | Contact Nord will:

- Hire a website specialist to audit the Contact North | Contact Nord website and advise on changes that can be made to improve the accessibility throughout
- With the Accessibility Committee, establish an online survey for users with a disability to provide feedback on web accessibility
- Ensure that those who create documents for the website are educated and possibly receive professional training on how to make such documents accessible
- Look into organizing professional training sessions for the webmasters

- Ensure all websites and web content confirm to WCAG 2.0 Level AA other than success criteria 1.2.4 Captions (Live) and success criteria 1.2.5 Audio Descriptions (Pre-recorded) by January 1, 2021

### **Feedback**

- Ensure that processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request
- Consult the person making the request to determine suitability of format
- Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports

## **4 Standards for Employment**

Contact North | Contact Nord is committed to fair and accessible employment practices that attract and retain talented employees with disabilities.

### **4.1 Recruitment**

#### **Commitment**

Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to ensure accessibility requirements under the employment standard are met to ensure that barriers in recruitment are eliminated and corporate policies are followed where applicable.

#### **Identification of Barriers**

Contact North | Contact Nord will continue to assess recruitment policies, practices and procedures, methods and attitudes to identify and remove barriers to employment of people with disabilities.

#### **Planned Action(s)**

To continue to meet compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Employment under the Integrated Regulation requirements and to remove barriers to persons with disabilities in recruitment, Contact North | Contact Nord will:

- On the Contact North | Contact Nord website and in job advertisements, it will be specified that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities
- Reach out to organizations who work with persons with disabilities to see if any job seekers would be potential candidates for positions we are hiring for throughout the organization.
- When making offers of employment, the successful applicant will be notified of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.



## 4.2 Support Information for Employees

### Commitment

Contact North | Contact Nord will incorporate new accessibility requirements under the Employment standard to ensure that barriers in information that supports employees are eliminated and corporate policies are followed where applicable.

### Identification of Barriers

Contact North | Contact Nord will assess its supporting documents, policies, practices and procedures, methods and attitudes to identify and remove barriers to employment of people with disabilities.

### Planned Action(s)

To meet compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Employment under the Integrated Regulation requirements and to remove barriers to persons with disabilities, Contact North | Contact Nord will:

- Inform current employees and new hires soon after they begin employment of Contact North | Contact Nord's policies supporting employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability
- Provide information under this section to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment
- Keep employees up to date on changes to policies
- Provide accessible formats and communication supports to any employees who request them. If requested, the employer will consult with the employee to provide or arrange for provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:
  - Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job
  - Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

## 4.3 Documented Individualized Plans (ie. Return to work plan, accommodation plan)

### Commitment

Contact North | Contact Nord will incorporate new accessibility requirements under the employment standard to ensure that barriers in accommodation and other plans that support employees are eliminated and corporate policies are followed where applicable.

### Identification of Barriers

Contact North | Contact Nord will create a return-to-work and accommodation plan and policy and assess the current return-to-work practices and procedures, methods and attitudes to identify and remove barriers to employment of people with disabilities.

### **Planned Action(s)**

To meet the compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Employment under the Integrated Regulation requirements and remove barriers to persons with disabilities, Contact North | Contact Nord will:

- Include in the process the manner in which the employee requesting accommodation can participate in the development of the plan
- Include in the process the means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis
- Provide an individualized accommodation plan in writing to any employee with a disability
- Include in the process 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 and how accommodation can be achieved
- Provide an individualized return-to-work plan in writing for an employee who has been absent from work due to a disability and requires disability-related accommodations to return to work
- Take steps to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information
- Outline the frequency in which individual accommodation plans will be reviewed and updated and the manner in which it will be done
- Provide the employee with the reasons for the denial if the individual accommodation plan is denied
- Include in the process the means of providing the individual accommodation plan in a format that takes into account the employee's accessibility needs
- Include any individualized workplace emergency response information
- Identify any other accommodation that is to be provided to the employee

#### **4.4 Performance Assessment, Career Development and Advancement, and Redeployment**

##### **Commitment**

Contact North | Contact Nord will incorporate new accessibility requirements under the employment standard to ensure that barriers in performance assessment, career development and advancement, and redeployment are eliminated and corporate policies are followed where applicable.

## **Identification of Barriers**

Contact North | Contact Nord will assess and create where applicable its performance reviews, career development and advancement, redeployment programs, policies, practices and procedures, methods and attitudes to identify and remove barriers to employment of people with disabilities.

## **Planned Action(s)**

To meet compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Employment under the Integrated Regulation requirements and to remove barriers to persons with disabilities, Contact North | Contact Nord will:

- Take the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and their individualized accommodation plans into account:
  - When assessing their performance
  - In managing their career development and advancement
  - When redeploying them
- Create a performance review policy which takes into account the standard
- Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities
- Take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when redeploying employees

## **5 Standards for Transportation**

This standard does not apply to Contact North | Contact Nord

## **6 Standards for the Built Environment**

This standard is not yet law; however Contact North | Contact Nord is committed to greater accessibility in, out of, and around the buildings we use. When the standard comes into force or when possible before that happens, Contact North | Contact Nord will ensure that facilities incorporate the standards for barrier-free design as existing spaces are renovated and/or new spaces are obtained when possible.