

THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF CANADA

MULTI-YEAR

ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN

PURSUANT TO THE

ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT, 2005

This Accessibility Plan for the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada (the “National Assembly”) outlines the policies, practices and actions that it will implement in its Ontario operations over a multi-year period (the “accessibility action plan”) to improve accessibility for individuals with disabilities. This accessibility action plan also incorporates and references the National Assembly’s existing accessibility policies and practices in an effort to streamline the National Assembly’s efforts in achieving its accessibility goals, and to comply with all applicable laws.

1. Statement of Commitment

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada is committed to excellence in serving all individuals including people with disabilities, fully recognizing their dignity as noble beings, their need to independently seek information and make decisions, to have an equal opportunity with others to participate in receiving services and acquiring goods in an accessible manner appropriate to their disabilities.

The National Assembly is committed to meeting its obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (the “AODA” or the “Act”) and the related Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations (the “IASR”). Building on the National Assembly’s Accessibility Policy, the National Assembly is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. Integration and equal opportunity is an important part of this commitment. The National Assembly is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility in its operations and services as and where it can.

2. Customer Service

The National Assembly has already established and maintains an accessibility policy that includes an undertaking to provide information and communication materials in accessible formats or with communication supports, when asked, to endeavour to meet the needs of people

with disabilities. This accessible customer service plan contains further particulars of specific consumer service components, including the welcoming of support persons and service animals to National Assembly premises, feedback processes, and availability of the accessibility plan to individuals on request. There is commitment to compliance with this policy and plan and each will be reviewed on an ongoing basis for any required changes in order to promote accessibility within customer service operations.

There are procedures in place to notify the public of service disruptions to the accessible portions of offices and other buildings and to prevent such disruptions to the extent reasonably possible.

3. Accessible Emergency Information

There is commitment to providing members of the Bahá'í community, visitors, guests, and other third parties with publicly available emergency information in an accessible manner, on request. Employees with disabilities will be provided with individualized emergency response information where necessary. In accordance with the AODA, steps will be taken to determine whether employees require individualized emergency response information as part of the orientation programme for new staff members and continuing occupational health and safety planning.

4. Training

Fundamental training required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the AODA has been provided to all present staff, and new staff will continue to receive this training. Training will be provided to employees, volunteers and other staff, including individuals who participate in the development of policies regarding the AODA and the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to individuals with disabilities as required by the AODA. The content and delivery of such training will be determined based on the job duties of employees, volunteers and other staff and in consultation with our internal training resources. This training will be offered through in-person seminar opportunities as well as an on-demand, online learning format, and completion of aspects of the training program by individuals will be tracked.

5. Kiosks

A review of operations has determined that the National Spiritual Assembly does not maintain kiosks. To the extent that kiosks are acquired or operated in the future, accessibility issues will be considered.

6. Information and Communications

There is commitment to meeting the communication needs of individuals with disabilities. The National Spiritual Assembly relies upon its staff, in consultation with individuals with disabilities, to provide information and communications within reason in an accessible format and in a timely manner. This information and communications will be provided at no cost or at a cost that is no more than any regular cost. Whenever a person with disabilities asks for public information to be made accessible, the requesting party is consulted to ascertain how to meet their needs in a reasonable and feasible manner as soon as possible, and information is so provided. This commitment to provide information in an accessible manner to meet the needs of the public is ongoing.

Feedback processes have been made available since as early as January 1, 2013 by way of feedback forms that are available on request.

The creation of any new Internet websites and content will be monitored, including those Internet websites undergoing a significant refresh, and as applicable those websites will be made to conform to WCAG 2.0 Level A. The obligation under the AODA to ensure the accessibility of Internet websites in accordance with WCAG 2.0 Level AA (with certain exceptions) by January 1, 2021 is recognized. On an ongoing basis, a process will be put in place to confirm these obligations as any new content or sites are created or existing content is significantly refreshed and to meet the 2021 obligations.

In June 2021, a comprehensive review was undertaken of nine internet websites related to the National Spiritual Assembly, and these were found to conform to WCAG 2.0 Level AA (with certain exceptions). In 2023, an additional review was completed, and one additional internet website related to the National Assembly was brought into conformity with WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards.

7. Employment

The National Assembly is committed to accessible employment practices and to removing any barriers that prevent or hinder the recruitment, retention and career development of employees with disabilities. The following steps will continue to be taken to ensure compliance with the AODA:

- Notifying potential candidates and the public in any recruitment initiative, as well as employees, that the National Assembly accommodates people with disabilities as required by law, at all times during the recruitment and selection process and during the course of employment, including making related information available in accessible formats;

- Appropriate and related staff will be trained with respect to accommodations for persons with disabilities to ensure that the needs of employees with disabilities are considered in performance management and career development processes and strategies;
- Employment-related documentation for Ontario employees will be reviewed to ensure that this documentation is compliant with the AODA and its regulations;
- Ensuring that any existing employee requiring accommodation for disabilities has all needed employment-related documentation in a format helpful to that employee provided that it is financial feasible to produce such documentation in that manner, in which case the documentation will be reviewed with that employee orally; and
- Ensuring its continuing commitment to developing individual accommodation and return-to-work plans whenever appropriate.

8. Design of Public and Guest Spaces

Every feasible effort will be made to meet the AODA accessibility obligations in respect of the design of public and guest spaces when building or making major modifications to these spaces, including meeting rooms, reception and waiting areas. In order to ensure that accessibility issues are taken into account in the context of new builds and major modifications, the relevant staff making such plans and arrangements will be made fully aware of the AODA requirements and will work with relevant designers, engineers, builders, and other experts and third parties involved in the builds or modifications to ensure that all necessary requirements are met.

9. Review of this Plan

This plan will be reviewed and updated at least every five years, and as required. At the time of revision, information regarding accessibility policies and practices adopted by the National Assembly in accordance with the plan or otherwise will be included in the revised plan.

Reviewed and adopted by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada effective the 1st day of October 2023.

per: 

Secretary-General

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada