



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ottawa
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ottawa
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous

Multi-year Accessibility Plan

January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2027

for

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)

Ottawa Branch

This publication is available on the following web sites

<https://ottawa.cmha.ca/>



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ottawa
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous

Table of Contents

Summary	3
Current Status	3
CMHA Ottawa Accessibility Committee	3
Key Deliverables	4
Communication of the Plan	5
Feedback and Barriers Identification Approach	5
Review and Monitoring of Plan	6
Commitment to Accessibility	6
Accessibility Achievements 2017- 2022	6
Work Plan for January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2027	7
Implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Reg (Ont. Reg. 191-11)	7
Review and Monitoring Process	7
Preventative & Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements	8
Appendix A	9
Appendix B	11
Appendix C	11
Appendix D	12
Appendix E	12
Appendix F	12
Appendix G	13
Appendix H	14



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ottawa
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous

Summary

CMHA Ottawa is committed to providing people with visible or non-visible disabilities full access to the same services, in the same place and in similar ways as all others receive. And we will ensure we meet CMHA Ottawa's vision and mission of providing our employees, clients and community with dignity, evidence-informed services for individuals experiencing serious mental illness, promote positive mental health to the community and integrated system of mental health services in collaboration with various stakeholders.

Accessibility for people with disabilities is understood as relating to attitudes, knowledge, and skills of service providers; policies and practices, buildings and design, information and communication, and as such relate to many departments at CMHA Ottawa. The collective actions of these departments determine our level of accessibility, integration, and efficacy regarding disability issues from a client, family member, staff or community perspective. This Plan is designed to describe the processes used to identify, remove, and prevent barriers; the progress made towards enhancing accessibility at CMHA Ottawa; how the agency will ensure compliance and inform the public.

This plan will serve as a bridge to the 2025 compliance date set in the Accessibility of Ontario Disability Act (AODA) to make sure we do everything possible to meet the needs of the clients, staff, volunteers, and community we serve.

It is essential that our services and facilities be accessible. Using the AODA as our main tool, CMHA Ottawa is fully committed to providing the resources to eliminate barriers that may exist, as well as ensuring that our plans for the future do not create new barriers.

This plan is available in alternate format, or with communication support, upon request.

Current Status

CMHA Ottawa purchased a building in 2019 where we had to review the accessibility from building design, services, etc. Mental health is the cornerstone affecting so many in today's population. The ability to access our services is essential. We are committed to the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and are continually enhancing accessibility at CMHA Ottawa. We do this by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers for those we serve in our operational practices, policies, procedures, and communications. To help guide our actions, CMHA Ottawa has ensured that accessibility remains a top priority and a key discussion point. This is achieved by creating and supporting forums where issues around accessibility can be discussed and input, advice, and recommendations can be received.

CMHA Ottawa Accessibility Committee

CMHA Ottawa Accessibility Committee is made up of a broad representation of the agency's community. The committee will include leaders such as Board of Directors representatives, Executive Director, Human Resources, employees, employees who self-identify as a person with a disability, students, volunteers, clients and member(s) of the public with a disability. The Accessibility Committee is responsible for guiding, advising, and making recommendations to advance accessibility at the CMHA Ottawa. This Committee will also support and stimulate awareness of accessibility issues. As well, it will encourage the prevention and removal of

barriers for people with disabilities. It will also ensure direct consultation with persons with disabilities on a continuing basis and monitor AODA compliance.

CMHA Ottawa Accessibility Committee and AODA Compliance endeavors to ensure the voices of persons with disabilities are brought to CMHA Ottawa committees such as Sexuality and Gender Diversity Committee and PEAC discussions. This committee also helps ensure that all accessibility planning considers the realities and experiences of persons with disabilities from a diverse range of backgrounds, including but not limited to economic status, gender identity, literacy and language, and race.

Accessibility Training

Training and awareness across the organization remains the foundation of the work of the Accessibility Services and AODA Compliance team. Currently, all new staff, volunteers, and students receive training as a key part of their onboarding. As well, CMHA Ottawa will provide additional training upon request through team meetings, staff, or volunteers, departmental in-services and more.

Key Deliverables

This plan is intended to continue to move toward the vision of accessibility and inclusion for all who come to work or use the facility and services.

This plan:

- Summarizes the actions taken during 2017-2022 to identify, remove and prevent barriers to persons with disabilities;
- Outlines the measures to be taken during the next five years to meet the mandatory requirements of IASR (AODA);
- Outlines measures taken to ensure ongoing compliance with the Customer Service Standard (AODA);
- Review suggestions provided by Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program pertaining to accessible space and suggest actions on prioritized projects to improve accessibility throughout the new CMHA Ottawa building.
- Suggest ways to ensure all signage is easy to read/interpret, taking accessibility into consideration.
- Outlines ways to deepen the consultation with persons with disabilities and to encourage full integration of accessibility expertise into all parts of the design phase.

Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ottawa Branch

The plans and initiatives contained in this accessibility plan pertain primarily to the operations and services of CMHA and include the staff, volunteers, peers, and students.

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Ottawa Branch, is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting good mental health, developing, and implementing support systems and services and encouraging public action to strengthen community mental health services and related policies and legislation. To view our mission, vision, and values, please visit our website at <https://ottawa.cmha.ca/>.



Communication of the Plan

As required by law, this plan is available on both the internal and external websites. The plan is available in alternate format upon request. Updates on the status of this plan will be posted annually or as required on CMHA Ottawa websites.

Feedback and Barrier Identification Approach

The Accessibility Committee used the following barrier-identification approach to create the list of barriers to be addressed.

Approach	Description	Status
Employee Input	Staff participating in Accessibility training are invited to provide feedback on accessibility issues of which they are aware. Encourage and facilitate accessibility discussions and problem-solving during resource group, management and Board meetings.	Issues are brought to the Accessibility Committee's and Human Resources attention for follow-up.
Review of construction and/or renovation projects	Construction and renovation projects are reviewed by a member of the Accessibility Committee with knowledge in accessibility.	Concerns are identified and measures taken to remove and/or prevent barriers.
Accessibility Feedback process	The feedback process is posted on the organization website under the Accessibility tab. Feedback is reviewed by assigned individual who respond and follow up with appropriate team members.	Website monitored, emails acknowledged and forwarded to most appropriate team/person to follow-up.
AODA Legislation	Mandatory requirements of the legislation set targets for needed accessibility initiatives and/or change within the organization.	AODA requirement are a primary driver of change for the period of this plan (2023-2027).
Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program	Please see Appendices	Certification received along with further recommendations and improvements (please see Appendix section)

CMHA Ottawa has an accessibility feedback form on our main website under Accessibility. Feedback from clients, family members, students, and visitors is forwarded to and reviewed by our Human Resources Department. Any accessibility issues and concerns are shared with the Accessibility Committee for follow-up. In addition to the feedback form, there are many other ways to share feedback, including by phone, or email.

The Accessibility Committee meets on a quarterly basis and all accessibility concerns are raised in this way. There is time on the agenda for members to provide feedback to assist CMHA Ottawa meet the accessibility needs of the communities we serve. Employees and volunteers are also encouraged to provide feedback on accessibility issues by emailing aodafeedback@cmhaottawa.ca.

Regular accessibility audits are another way the CMHA Ottawa's efforts are measured. This feedback is then used for planning and prioritizing accessibility projects. Our goal is to achieve the vision of an accessible Ontario for all by 2025.

Review and Monitoring of Plan

To ensure that the Plan is closely monitored and measured against its deliverables, updates are provided at the regular meetings of the Accessibility Committee. The committee chair also provides updates to senior leadership as needed.

Commitment to Accessibility

CMHA Ottawa is fully committed to building a diverse, accessible, and inclusive organization that considers the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity to ensure that policies, procedures, practices, programs and services respect the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, and to doing so in close collaboration with persons with disabilities. We must ensure that accessibility is always an essential part of all efforts. Everyone at CMHA Ottawa is committed to improving access by regularly seeking ways to identify and remove any barriers that may exist but also committed to creating plans and designs to keep new barriers from appearing.

In the coming five years (2023-2027) the Accessibility Committee will monitor progress toward IASR requirements and other accessibility-related objectives contained in the present plan, and report to Executive Director and Board of Directors on this progress.

Accessibility Achievements – 2017-2022

- CMHA Ottawa completed and reached website compliance to include all internet and intranet websites and web content to conform with WCAG 2.0 Level AA (O. Reg. 191/11, s. 14 (3)).
- CMHA Ottawa purchased and moved to another building in 2019.
- A building evacuation identification, plan and process have been created, drafted, and implemented to the agency-wide population. This will support the identification of individuals who require assistance when evacuating the building in times of emergency. In support of this plan & process, CMHA developed an Employee Emergency Information Worksheet to support any individuals identified as requiring assistance during an emergency evacuation.



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ottawa
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous

- CMHA Ottawa reviewed and revised our Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Customer Service Policy (2020).
- An Accessibility for Customer Service – Support Person Guideline & Expectations was developed, drafted (2020) and is under review. To support this guideline a Consent for Presence of Support Person was also developed and implemented (2020).
- A specific Service Animal Guideline was created, drafted (2020) and is under review.
- A Transgender policy has been created and drafted. This policy needs to be reviewed by other stakeholders prior to the implementation process agency wide.

Work Plan for January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2027

In 2021, Canadian Mental Health Association, Ottawa located at 311 McArthur Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1M 8L3 achieved a certification level of RHF Accessibility Certified from the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program. The period for this certification is from September 15, 2021, to September 15, 2026. CMHA Ottawa Registration number is RHF-379-01705.

Although certified, there are some identified areas that CMHA Ottawa will review and work towards further improving accessibility. The potential areas of improvement are:

1. Wayfinding and Signage
2. Emergency Systems

Please refer to the following appendices (Appendix B to H) to identify potential barriers that CMHA Ottawa will address in the next five years.

Implementation of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ont. Reg. 191-11)

The following implementation plan has been derived by means of a planning process that aims to disperse accountability for IASR regulatory compliance throughout the organization and allow for information-sharing, monitoring, and reporting of the implementation process.

Review and Monitoring Process

Accessibility planning is an important means of improving both the safety and quality of service to the clients we serve, of attracting and retaining employees, and of increasing the efficiency of our operations.

The Accessibility Committee will meet quarterly (at a minimum), to review progress toward the goals and targets outlined in this multi-year accessibility plan.

As per the Term of Reference, the Accessibility Committee will provide guidance, support, facilitate implementation and foster a collaborative process that will ensure both regulatory compliance and as well as attention to other priority issues. Persons with disabilities and employees with disabilities will be included in the working group process.



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ottawa
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous

Accountability:

The IASR Multi-year work plan will be coordinated, monitored, and tracked by the Accessibility Committee and Human Resources who will work with stakeholders to ensure that reporting on accessibility measures is completed and that CMHA Ottawa is prepared to respond to compliance reporting requests and/or AODA audits as needed over time.

Preventative and Emergency Maintenance of Accessible Elements

CMHA Ottawa will conduct routine inspections on accessible elements in the workplace and respond to any reports of needed repairs. When any temporary disruption occurs to accessible elements employees, tenants, and the public will be notified via media posting, email, and signage on affected areas providing alternative options. If necessary, doorways will be monitored for access requirements.



Appendix A – Definitions

For the purposes of this plan, the following definitions apply.

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

IASR - Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Ont. Reg. 191-11)

A “**barrier**” is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or practice (organizational barrier)¹

Architectural and **Physical** barriers are features of building or spaces that cause problems for people with disabilities. For example:

- Washrooms that are not spacious enough for people using wheelchairs or scooters to access,
- Doorways and Hallways that are not wide enough for people using wheelchairs or scooters to access,
- Poor lighting for people with low vision,
- Telephones that are not equipped with telecommunications devices for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing.

Informational or **communications** barriers occur when a person can't easily understand information. For example:

- Print is too small to read,
- Loud speech is used when addressing someone who is hard of hearing,
- Signs are not clear or easily understandable,
- Websites cannot be accessed by someone unable to use a mouse.

Attitudinal barriers discriminate against people with disabilities. For example:

- Considering people with disabilities to be inferior,
- Assuming someone with a speech impediment can't understand you,
- A receptionist ignoring someone in a wheelchair.

Technological barriers occur when technology can't be modified to support assistive devices. For example:

- Web sites that don't support screen reading devices.

¹ A Guide to Annual Accessibility Planning, under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001, www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/English/accessibility_planning.pdf, p.8



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Ottawa
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
Ottawa
La santé mentale pour tous

Organizational barriers refer to an organization's **policies, practices or procedures** that discriminate against people with disabilities. For example:

- A hiring process that is not open to individuals with disabilities
- Making announcement over a Paging system only so that people with hearing impairments can't hear them²

Disability is:

- a. Any degree of disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness, and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis or amputation, lack of physical coordination, 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,
- b. A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability,
- c. A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more in the processed involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d. A mental disorder, or
- e. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.³

² Ministry of Community and Social Services website

www.mcscs.gov.on.ca/en/mcscs/programs/accessibility/understand_accessibility/what_barriers.aspx

³ Article 2 of the AODA, 2005, and Article 10 of the Human Rights Code, A Guide to Annual Accessibility Planning, under the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 www.gov.on.ca/citizenship/accessibility/english/accessibilityplanning.pdf, p.8



Appendix B – Customer Service & Accessibility Standards Work Plan

	Description	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
Education update	Update and refresh all Accessibility education and training offered at CMHA Ottawa.	Review all existing Accessibility training programs and update to align with the recommendations.	On-going / Continuing	Accessibility Committee Human Resources
Policy and standard operating procedures review	Review our existing policies and procedures.	Based on the proposed accessibility standards, do a full analysis of our existing policies and procedures potentially impacted by the standards and identify areas where improvement should be made. Provide support and guidance to those leaders to begin the process of improvement.	On-going / Continuing	Accessibility Committee Human Resources
Enhance community relationships	Deepen our collaboration with the community and with persons with disabilities to inform our decisions.	Seek new networking opportunities in the broader community to deepen the agency's ties with persons with disabilities within our community.	On-going / Continuing	Accessibility Committee Human Resources

Appendix C – Employment Standard – Recruitment Process Work Plan

	Description	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
Promote an inclusive workforce to attract and retain workers with disabilities through the recruitment process	Ensure all internal and external job postings contain statements of inclusivity.	Conduct a review to ensure the accommodation request process is outlined and statements of inclusivity are contained in all job descriptions	On-going / Continuing	Human Resources
	Educate recruiters and interview panelists by participating in appropriate training.	Ensure recruiters are prepared to educate leaders and interview panelists through the hiring process and promote the benefits of hiring an individual with disabilities	On-going / Continuing	Human Resources
	Track the number of requests for accommodations received through the recruitment process.	Track the number of requests for accommodations received through the recruitment process. Confirm that we are offering successful solutions to those that require an accommodation throughout any part of the recruitment process.	On-going / Continuing	Human Resources



Appendix D – Employment Standard – Return to Work Accommodation Work Plan

	Description	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
Develop a documented return-to-work process	Review current documented return-to-work process in collaboration with WSIB under the Excellence Program	Add as a topic in our next round of working topics in 2024-2025 with the Excellence Program team.	2024-2025	Human Resources Joint Health & Safety Committee Excellence Program Team

Appendix E – Employment Standard – Performance Management Work Plan

	Description	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Include accessibility considerations in performance management processes.</p> <p>The use of the performance management process takes into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, including existing accommodation plans.</p>	<p>Review our current performance management process.</p> <p>Develop and integrate question (s) that ensure accessibility needs are identified and addressed in the performance appraisal process.</p> <p>Educate managers and supervisors around rationale for including these questions and obligations of the employer.</p>	<p>Review all job descriptions within the agency.</p> <p>Review performance management format and questions.</p> <p>Implement new performance management system agency wide.</p> <p>Provide training to all employees and management of new processes and software application.</p>	2023-2026	Human Resources Learning & Development

Appendix F – Employment Standard – Career Development and Advancement Work Plan

	Description	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
<p>Include accessibility considerations and individual accommodation plans in career development and advancement, including additional responsibilities within the current position.</p> <p>The use of the performance appraisal will identify any barriers due to disability relative to career development and prompts discussion of accommodations or supports needs.</p>	<p>Review existing performance appraisal process and identify opportunities for integration of accessibility criteria within career development section.</p>	<p>Develop question(s) that ensure accessibility needs are identified relative to career development, including additional responsibilities/opportunities within current position.</p> <p>Integrate questions into performance appraisals.</p> <p>Provide training to managers and supervisors around rationales for including these questions and obligations of the employer.</p>	2023-2026	Human Resources Learning & Development



Appendix G – Information & Communication

	Description	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
Notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports	Insert a statement regarding availability of alternate format in all communications regarding feedback process.	On-going – review and update accessibility information as required.	2024	IT, Communication
Provide accessible formats and communication supports for information. Information in accessible formats and/or using communication supports provided.	Provide training to IT, Communication, and administrative staff for the following courses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible PDFs with WCAG 2.0 • Accessible PDF Forms with WCAG 2.0 Investigate accessibility options for non-print formats of communication ie. Video resources, online directories, website (text for hearing impaired, captioning, audio captioning etc).	Determine the top 5 forms to be converted and begin testing. Investigate accessibility options for non-print formats of communication ie. Video resources, online directories, website (text for hearing impaired, captioning, audio captioning etc).	2024	IT, Communication
Notify the public of availability of these alternatives. Post notices of the availability of alternate formats and communication support on internal and external website, signage, pamphlets.	Develop messaging and integrate appropriate wording/statement for website, signage, pamphlets, and other appropriate means of communication.	Update letter head to include AODA email address in a way to connect with Accessibility information.	On-going	IT, Communication
Ensure internet and intranet websites and web content conform to WCAG 2.0 guidelines (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines).	New websites and web content to Level A by December 31, 2023 (14.4) All websites and web content to Level AA by December 31, 2024 (other than live captions and audio description) (14.4)	Consult with the external web service provider regarding WCAG compliance. Consult with intranet service provider regarding WCAG compliance. Develop plan to ensure guidelines are met on the internal website. Determine necessary upgrades/changes to meet Level AA and create plan to implement them for both internal and external websites. Collaborate to ensure content to be posted is appropriately formatted relative to WCAG standards	Ongoing WCAG compliance Level A & AA 2025	IT, Communication



Appendix H – Recommendation from the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification (RHFAC) program

	Description	Strategy	Timeline	Responsibility
All communication is currently posted on 8 x11 sheet of paper in various locations	Review all communication & indication messages.	On going	Ongoing	Communication Department Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
Parking lines need to be re-painted. Parking is ok based on lot design.	Paint parking lines	Receive quote from contractor and ensure parking lines are re-painted.	Completed July 2023	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
Elevators – buttons are small in size (most likely due to age of current elevator) Current elevators meet minimum requirement. There is no permit required to add these features and no new construction permit is necessary.	Install a new control panel (which includes brail or 2x2 backlight). Recording music & braille are enhancements. Assess the option, however, may pose a security issue.	Under review with contractor	2026	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
Accessible door at front entrance of the building.		Completed	2021-2022	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
Parking: a) Accessible parking signage b) Expansion of disabled parking spots	Research on accessible parking signage	Current signage and parking spots meet requirement	2022	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
Accessibility Ramp: Painting of ramp to signal its usable for disabled public.	Paint ramp	All public access ramps are in compliance.	2022	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
Greenspace at side of building. If picnic tables, ensure they are accessible OR simple landscaping with flowers and plants.	Investigate & implement recommendations	Currently working with landscape architect to redesign outside space	2027	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
No wheelchair button at reception area.	Investigate & implement recommendations	Completed	2023	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology
Door dimensions at Client Services to be reviewed as current dimensions do not allow for scooter entrance.		Under review	2026	Director of Financial Services and Information Technology