

2024-2029 Accessibility Plan Q1 Progress Update

Accessibility Advisory Committee Meeting
April 29, 2025

Introduction

The 2024-2029 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP) is the result of collaborative efforts between Niagara Region and people of all abilities across Niagara.

A requirement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, the MYAP is the Region's roadmap to improve accessibility to Regional programs and services. The MYAP identifies 31 actions in 6 focus areas, including General Requirements, Customer Service, Employment, Design of Public Spaces and Transportation. These actions will guide staff in the prevention and removal of barriers over the next five years.

At the end of March 2025, our progress rate for the MYAP is on track at 26 percent. Of the 31 action items and related activities, 6 percent are complete, and 42 percent are on track and in progress. This report provides an overview of the MYAP progress to date.

Focus Area 1: General Requirements

1.1 Accessibility plan and policies.

Update the Region's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (MYAP).

The 2024-2029 MYAP was completed following community consultations in 2024. endorsed by the Accessibility Advisory Committee and approved by Regional Council in 2024.

Develop and adopt a digital accessibility policy to enhance the accessibility and usability of web-based services and information for all users.

Environmental scan of digital and web accessibility policies, across municipal and large organizations, conducted to inform corporate policy development.

1.2 Training Processes

Coordinate procedures for corporate training on AODA.

Training for staff in corporate learning management system has been updated with new provincial training modules on AODA. A new in-person quarterly training schedule, and related materials, for document accessibility has been developed and implemented for staff.

Centralize AODA training completion data for employees, volunteers and contractors.

Centralized location for staff AODA training data established. Training data available through human resource staff upon request.

Focus Area 2: Customer Service Barriers

2.2 Staff Training

Expand training for staff, volunteers and consultants on disability, assistive devices, accessibility barriers, accessibility supports and accessibility legislation.

New provincial training on the AODA and the Customer Service Standard available on corporate learning management system. Introduction to the AODA incorporated into staff document accessibility training materials. Accessibility and disability related training provided across departments.

Focus Area 3: Information and Communication Barriers

3.2 Accessible Information

Ensure all corporate and departmental websites, social media and applications meet or exceed Web Content Accessible Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 AA.

Web accessibility audits of all corporate websites started to identify existing digital information barriers.

Establish consistent web auditing and internal reporting processes across departments.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) Access Labs retained to conduct corporate web accessibility audits including automated, manual, and lived experience testing. Internal compliance reporting processes continue to be improved.

Continue to develop and coordinate web and document accessibility training for staff.

Document accessibility info sheet (table topper) and quarterly in-person training sessions developed for staff on word, powerpoint, excel and adobe.

Establish a digital accessibility sub-group of the staff accessibility working group.

Key staff engaged to inform digital accessibility efforts.

Focus Area 4: Employment Barriers

4.1 Recruitment, Hiring and Accommodations

Develop and implement corporate DEI resources and practices to ensure barrier free hiring and recruitment practices and an inclusive and welcoming workplace.

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) e-learning training modules for staff and people leaders developed and delivered. Interview question bank created to support inclusive hiring.

Strengthen communication processes with applicants and employees to ensure they are aware of available disability accommodations and related procedures.

Employee equity statement developed for Regional job postings.

Focus Area 5: Public Space Barriers

5.1 Accessible Facilities Project

Complete the necessary accessible design upgrades identified in phases one and two of the Accessible Facilities Project (AFP).

In phases one and two of the AFP, 56 percent of Regional facilities were audited for accessibility barriers. Accessible washroom upgrades at eight Regional locations have been planned.

Continue phases three and four of the AFP. Conduct accessibility assessments on all remaining Regional facilities.

Accessibility audits complete on 84 percent of Regional facilities, including 21 EMS locations.

Develop plans to remove identified access barriers.

Plans developed to remediate accessibility barriers, where possible, identified in the third phase of building accessibility audits.