

Niagara Support Services and Niagara Training & Employment Agency's Accessibility Plan 2014-2021

This 2014-21 Accessibility Plan outlines the policies and actions that Niagara Support Services (NSS) and Niagara Training & Employment Agency (NTEC) will put in place to improve opportunities and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Statement of Commitment

NSS and NTEC are committed to treating people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA). We will identify barriers individually with the people we support using the Barriers to Accessibility Chart and we will then work in a committee to remove those barriers.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA) consists of the following regulations:

- **Customer Service Standard – Ontario Regulation 429/10**
- **Integrated Accessibility Standard – Ontario Regulations 191/11 (which consists of Employment, Information and Communication, and Transportation)**
- **Built Environment Standard (not yet released)**

Customer Service Standard (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

Accessible Customer Service

Due January 2012

- Policy 3.1 Accessible Customer Service was created to meet Reg. 429/07
- Staff, volunteers, the NSS Board of Directors and the NTEC Board of Trustees were trained on this policy. Training included:
 - Purposes of the ACT and the requirements of the customer service standard;
 - How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
 - How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
 - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing NSS's or NTEC's supports and services.

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- The above was outlined in an Accessible Customer Service Plan and is posted on our website.
- New hires and volunteers are trained using the online accessibility training module through Dunk and Associates.
- Staff review all policies annually and provide sign-off, which is maintained in their personnel file.
- The NSS Board of Directors and NTEC Board of Trustees review the policies annually.
- NSS and NTEC submitted the AODA Self Certified Accessibility Report through Service Ontario stating that they had completed all requirements of the regulation. A copy of the report was put on the website.

Integrated Accessibility Standard (Ontario Regulations 191/11) (Which consists of Employment, Information and Communication, and Transportation?) General Requirements

Accessibility policies (191/11 Section 3)

Due January 1, 2014

NSS and NTEC will take the following steps to ensure that accessibility policies are developed, implemented and maintained by **January 1, 2014**.

- The AODA (Accessibility) policy addresses the AODA in its entirety.
- These policies, and all others, are reviewed annually by the agencies' Steering Committee.
- All staff read and acknowledge these policies annually.
- The NSS Board of Directors and the NTEC Board of Trustees review these policies annually.
- All new hires and volunteers read and sign off during the orientation period

Accessibility plan (191/11 Section 4)

Due January 1, 2014

NSS and NTEC will take the following steps to ensure an accessibility plan is developed, implemented and reviewed annually.

- The multi-year accessibility plan will be reviewed by the NSS Board of Directors and NTEC Board of Trustees annually.
- The approved plan will be posted on the website by December 31, 2013.
- Accessible formats will be available if requested.

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Training (191/11 Section 7)

Due January 1, 2015

NSS and NTEC will provide training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members.

NSS and NTEC will take the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessible laws by **January 1, 2015**.

- All staff will be trained on the AODA using the web-based training created by Dunk and Associates.
- The Human Resources Coordinator will support people to be trained in alternate ways if requested or required, and will keep a record of the training dates and outcomes.

Employment

NSS and NTEC are committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Accommodation during an emergency (191/11 Section 27)

Due January 1, 2012

NSS and NTEC will continue to ensure that any employee who may have a disability and who would require an accommodation during an emergency is offered the option to have an accommodation plan developed. The AIMS® database management system will send out annual reminders to staff indicating that if they require an accommodation they can contact Human Resources and a form will be filled out outlining the request and accommodation made.

Accommodation during recruitment and assessment (191/11 Section 22, 23, 24, 25 & 26)

Due January 1, 2016

NSS and NTEC are committed to fair and accessible employment practices. We will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, NSS and NTEC will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired.

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- Internal job postings will state that “NSS and NTEC will provide, upon request, accommodation to the materials and processes used in the recruitment process in accordance with AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standards.”
- External job postings will state that “NSS and NTEC will provide upon request, accommodation to the materials and processes used in the recruitment process in accordance with AODA, Integrated Accessibility Standards.”
- Recruitment policy will be reviewed and updated if necessary during the annual review, and policies will be re-circulated if necessary.

Individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies (191/11 Section 28 & 29)

Due January 1, 2016

NSS and NTEC will take the following steps to develop and put in place a process for developing individual accommodation plans and return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability.

- Return-to-Work, Disability Management and related forms will be updated to reflect requirements.
- Annual review of the process will be done in 2014 and if changes are required the process will be updated and re-circulated to staff.

Performance management, career development and redeployment Due January 1, 2016

NSS and NTEC will take the following steps to ensure the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account when we are using performance management, career development and redeployment processes:

- Develop process to address accessibility needs during performance discussions, career development and/or redeployment.
- In June of 2014, NSS and NTEC's appraisal system will be reviewed, and if necessary, we will add the wording “In accordance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), NSS and NTEC are committed to assisting employees who may have a disability.”

Information and communications

NSS and NTEC are committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.

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Feedback processes (191/11 section 11)

Due January 1, 2015

NSS and NTEC will take the following steps to ensure that feedback processes are available and meet the individual communication preferences when requested.

Currently NSS and NTEC have the feedback process available in alternative formats including:

- plain language satisfaction surveys for our service users;
- feedback forms that can be filled out or someone can support them to fill one in at our feedback box at our front desk;
- phone number;
- in-person with our Manager, Organizational Development and Quality Assurance;
- on-line through our website;
- via email through mythoughts@ntec-nss.com;
- and starting January 2, 2014 using the AIMS® database system

Accessible documents (191/11 section 12)

Due January 1, 2016

NSS and NTEC will ensure that publicly available documents are offered in accessible formats upon request.

- Currently NSS and NTEC have a link on their website notifying users that all documents that are public are available in an accessible format upon request.
- Since 2012, NSS has ensured that the Annual Report and the Quality Assurance Committee's Report on Quality have been done in a plain language.
- We will continue to make documents at a minimum of 12-point font.

Accessible Website (191/11 section 14)

NSS and NTEC will take the following step to make all new websites and content on those sites conform to WCAG 2.0, Level A.

- Contact web designer to ensure that NSS's and NTEC's websites have been updated to WCAG 2.0 Level A.

NSS and NTEC will take the following step to make all new websites and content on those sites conform to WCAG 2.0, Level AA by **January 1, 2021**.

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- Contact web designer to ensure that NSS and NTEC's websites have been updated to WCAG 2.0 Level AA.

Removal of barriers (Non-legislative)

NSS and NTEC will take the following steps to prevent and remove other identified accessibility barriers.

- Each person supported will fill out or have someone support them to fill out a Barriers to Accessibility chart annually to assess barriers that they face.
- These documents will be reviewed, addressed and the results will be summarized by the Chair of the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and/or a designate.
- This summary will then be reviewed by the QAC and then submitted to the NSS Board of Directors and NTEC Board of Trustees annually.

For more information on this Accessibility Plan, please contact:

Nancy Mills, Manager Organizational Development and Quality Assurance
Niagara Support Services, Niagara Training & Employment Agency (NTEC)
120 Canby Street, P.O. Box 190
Port Robinson, ON L0S 1K0
T: 905-384-3127

This plan and our policies are also available on our website and are available in an accessible format upon request.