

Legal Aid Ontario

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Multiyear Plan Progress Report 2022

Summary of progress

This summary report highlights examples of progress towards the goals outlined in Legal Aid Ontario's (LAO) [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\) Multiyear Plan](#). The report describes relevant projects and initiatives that have occurred and are underway at LAO from December 2021 up to, and including, January 2023.

In undertaking this pivotal work, LAO engaged with the accessibility committee, the equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) office and committee, and many departments and individuals across LAO to work on these accessibility initiatives and actions, and to continue its efforts in developing an accessible workplace.

LAO is reporting on the pieces of work highlighted in the AODA Multiyear Plan. This document represents key aspects of the work that LAO has undertaken, and it is not an exhaustive list.

Policies

LAO has committed to the creation and yearly review of LAO's Accessibility Policy and LAO's HR Accessibility Policy.

In 2022, LAO reviewed and updated LAO's Accessibility Policy and LAO's HR Accessibility Policy and posted them on both our internal and external webpages. The policies were reviewed by the accessibility committee, equity, diversity and inclusion office, as well as other stakeholders across the organization.

Learning and development opportunities

AODA training and customer service training

LAO provides training to employees and volunteers on accessibility standards and on the *Human Rights Code*, including as it relates to people with disabilities. Training of all staff and volunteers is completed within 30 days, or as soon as is practicable, from the date of onboarding and recorded in LAO's HR database.

LAO roster lawyers must certify that they have completed the AODA accessibility standards training before they can become a member or renew their membership with LAO.

LAO is committed to providing additional training for staff and volunteers. In 2022, LAO conducted three educational lunch and learn opportunities, including:

- Mental health lunch and learn
- Guest speaker David Lepofski on creating an accessible environment
- Ted Talks table talk lunch and learn

LAO has created an Accessibility Policy Training session for all staff to be released in 2023.

LAO has provided resources and tools to educate and aid in accessible customer service.

Accessible formats and communication supports

LAO is dedicated to ensuring accessible communication. LAO has updated its internal accessibility webpage with tips and resources on creating accessible documents and ensuring accessible, inclusive communications practices.

LAO continues to review and add new accessible methods of communication services for our clients. LAO has added a text chat option as well as an online service location finder function to advance service for all clients and to ensure there are many accessible methods for services.

Diversity demographic and inclusion survey

LAO is committed to procuring an outside organization to host our second diversity demographic and inclusion survey for LAO. This will aid in identifying opportunities for improvement, including obtaining an understanding of any issues that staff with disabilities may be facing. This will enable LAO to further build in solutions; create a more inclusive and accessible environment with input from staff; and ensure staff members feel that their feedback is important, valued and is being incorporated. LAO conducted its first survey in 2021, and the new survey will be conducted in 2024. The process of procurement is in its early stages.

Design of physical space

LAO is committed to ensuring that the physical work environments are accessible and safe for all. LAO is further committed to conducting bi-annual assessments of the physical workspaces. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LAO's physical spaces were temporarily closed, and assessments were therefore not completed at that time. LAO staff have resumed in-person work and service delivery in a hybrid context, and LAO is working on procuring an outside organization for a 2023 accessibility assessment of its physical spaces.

LAO's provincial office, located in Toronto, is moving floors within the Atrium on Bay (i.e. "Move Project") to support LAO's new hybrid model of work and service delivery, and to ensure a more effective, efficient and inclusive design and use of space. During the Move Project, LAO has ensured that the building has followed the requirements under the Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment). We have used universal design to inspire the furnishing and fixtures of the environment, including but not limited to: multiple heights for service counters, adjustable sit-stand desks, dual monitor configurations on adjustable stands, lightweight doors, universal washrooms, and larger door and hallway widths. The Move Project will be complete in April of 2023.

For more information on this accessibility plan, or to request for an accessible format of this document, please contact:

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Office

Legal Aid Ontario

40 Dundas Street West, Suite 200

Toronto, ON

M5G 2H1

Tel: 416-979-2352

accessibility@lao.on.ca