

Durham Community Health Centre's Multi-Year AODA Accessibility Plan 2015 to 2020 – 2021 to 2026

Introduction

Durham Community Health Centre (Durham CHC) is a registered, charitable organization that provides integrated, accessible, and equitable community-based primary care, wellness services, and health education to Durham community members who face multiple barriers to their health and well-being.

Durham CHC also provides equity-based programs and services that focus on priority populations such as Indigenous, Black, the 2SLGBTQI Community, Newcomers to Canada, Seniors, and Unattached patients (i.e., those without a family doctor), to name a few. Durham CHC ensures Durham community members receive not only sick care, but preventive care as well.

At Durham CHC, we are a team-based interprofessional group of staff including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counselors, dietitians, outreach workers, medical secretaries, and other administrative staff. We always place every client at the center of our approach to care, based on their needs. We address these needs through integrated clinical and wellness care and health education.

Durham CHC's 2023 – 2026 Strategic Goals

- Drive Program and Service Integration and Client Experience Across All that Durham CHC Does
- Evolve Program Offerings to Improve Health Equity and Meet the Needs of Durham CHC's Priority Populations
- Establish Durham CHC as a System Advocate and Champion for Equity
- Enhance Durham CHC's Brand and Awareness Across Durham Region
- Become an Employer of Choice with a Focus on Recruitment, Retention, and Development

The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlines Durham CHC's compliance with AODA, including the requirements with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations.

Executive Summary of Plan

Durham CHC strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working diligently to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Durham CHC will work to improve accessibility by developing a multi-year accessibility plan that conforms to the Regulation which outlines a phased-in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and address the current and future requirements of the AODA and its standards.

Statement of Commitment

Durham CHC is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. Durham CHC is committed to reducing barriers to accessing care and services and that includes ensuring that our locations are accessible to all.

This accessibility plan outlines the steps we are taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years.

Barriers to Accessibility

Durham CHC has made a commitment to ensure that barriers to accessibility are being identified and addressed. In 2020, the organization established the IDEAAA Committee which ensures that there is a collaborative approach to the identification of systemic barriers and a way to raise that awareness to address and solution.

Durham CHC's commitment is recognized in the establishment of the IDEAAA - Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Advocacy, Acknowledgement and Awareness – Committee in 2020. This committee leads conversations and initiatives within Durham CHC that enhance inclusion, diversity, equity, advocacy, acknowledgement, and awareness for staff and an opportunity to collectively address where systemic barriers need to be addressed for staff and clients.

SECTION 1. PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS

Durham CHC is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have the same opportunity of access to employment opportunities and related services as do all prospective employees and employees. Durham CHC is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, in its human resources practices, processes, policies and procedures and employment related services. The commitments in the Accessible Standards for Employment – Commitment Statement - are intended to ensure that accessibility remains a priority in the Durham CHC’s decision-making process and will serve to assist in ensuring that decisions improve accessibility and do not inadvertently create barriers.

Customer Service and Training

Durham Community Health Centre delivers services to clients through staff, students, volunteers, contractors and community partners. Our Accessible Customer Service Standards Training policy sets out the standards for Accessible Customer Service Training required by all persons who interact with the public or who participate in developing the organization’s policies, practices and procedures that govern the provision of service delivery. This policy applies to all employees, students, and volunteers.

Accessible customer service training is provided to every staff, including students, volunteers, and contractors who interacts with the public and our clients on behalf of Durham CHC as well as those who participate in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of customer service for the organization. We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

A form of ongoing training is provided to individuals and/or groups as soon as practicable after that individual or group is assigned the applicable duties. Any substantive amendment to a policy, practice and procedure with respect to the provision of accessible customer service may also necessitate further training. [Accessible Customer Service Standards Training \(careachc.ca\)](http://careachc.ca)

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Information and Communication

Durham CHC is committed to ensuring that our information and communication is accessible by all Ontarians. Durham CHC has taken the following steps to ensure that all new websites and content on those sites conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA (except for live captions and pre-recorded audio descriptions):

- Notify the public via the company website about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Provide accessible formats and communication support when requested.
- Provide accessible formats and communication support in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost.
- Provide services in Sign Language if requested.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

Durham CHC provides individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities. If this individual consents, Durham CHC will provide this emergency response information to the person designated to aid the employee.

<https://matrix.careachc.ca/content/15476/accessibility-standards-workplace>

Return to Work Process and Accommodation Process

Durham CHC has an established best practice and process for employees who require accommodation on a temporary or permanent basis upon returning to work due to a medical leave of absence. This process is applicable to employees who require medical accommodation at any time.

Employment

As part of our commitment to providing fair and accessible employment, Durham CHC provides accommodation to employees with disabilities on an individual basis as required.

Durham Community Health Centre is dedicated to creating an inclusive environment. On every job posting, Durham CHC has a statement of commitment to compliance with AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Applicants are given contact information for human resources to advise if they have any accessibility needs or require alternate formats or accommodations.

Procurement

Durham CHC recognizes the value of improving planetary health and environmental sustainability and endeavours to procure from Suppliers who strive to achieve the lowest environmental impacts of their products and services and/or incorporate criteria into the evaluation of a Competitive Procurement process. The agency considers environmentally responsible and sustainable Goods, Services, and Construction when making Procurement decisions.

All Goods, Services, and Construction for Durham CHC considers accessibility designs, criteria, and features by consulting with key stakeholders when appropriate, including but not limited to staff with disabilities.

Durham CHC uses public funds to procure Goods, Services and Construction required for the provision and support of client care. Durham CHC acts in accordance with any and all legislative requirements that govern Community Health Centre Procurement practices in the Province of Ontario. These include and are not limited to the BPSAA and the BPSPD, the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, and Trade Agreements.

Design of Public Spaces

Durham Community Health Centre takes into consideration accessibility criteria when designing public spaces or making major modifications to public spaces.

Over the last several years, whenever Durham CHC has made modifications to our public spaces (eg: client facing spaces or office workspaces) we have always taken into account ways to ensure accessibility for our clients and employees with disabilities or those requiring accommodation.

Other

IDEAAA Committee

In 2020, Durham Community Health Centre established the IDEA+ Committee, since renamed to IDEAAA. The purpose of the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Advocacy, Acknowledgement and Awareness committee is to lead conversations and initiatives within Durham CHC that enhance inclusion, diversity, equity, advocacy, acknowledgement, and awareness for staff. The IDEAAA committee shall provide input and make recommendations to Durham Community Health Centre's leadership and shall bring forth areas within Durham CHC where systemic barriers need to be addressed for staff and clients.

Durham CHC is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment for all our employees.

- Scent Free Environment - The organization is committed to providing a Scent Free Environment. Durham CHC sends out regular reminders to our employees of this commitment.
- Allergy Alerts - Employees who have specific food or sensitivity allergies are reminded to provide the organization with an allergy alert to ensure that we provide a healthy and safe work environment for all. Durham CHC sends out regular reminders to our staff of food allergy alerts within the relevant workspaces and includes this training in the Onboarding of new staff.
- Durham CHC ensures that all buildings are wheelchair accessible, and that wheelchair accessible parking is also available at all locations.
- Durham CHC recently installed televisions throughout our buildings so that our signage and announcements could be made via audio and visually as well.

SECTION 2. STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Customer Service and Training

Durham Community Health Centre is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

DURHAM CHC is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.

Accessible customer service training will be provided to every staff, including students, volunteers, contractors/agents who interacts with the public and our clients on behalf of Durham CHC as well as those who participate in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of customer service for the organization. Durham CHC will train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

A form of ongoing training will be provided to individuals and/or groups as soon as practicable after that individual or group is assigned the applicable duties. Any substantive amendment to a policy, practice and procedure with respect to the provision of accessible customer service may also necessitate further training. [Accessible Customer Service Standards Training \(careachc.ca\)](https://www.durhamchc.ca/accessible-customer-service-standards-training)

We will maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Information and Communications

Durham CHC is committed to ensuring that our information and communication is accessible all. Durham CHC will always take the following steps to ensure that all new websites and content on those sites conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 Level AA (except for live captions and pre-recorded audio descriptions):

- Notify the public via the company website about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Provide accessible formats and communication support when requested.
- Provide accessible formats and communication support in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost.
- Provide services in Sign Language if requested.

Planned activities:

Durham CHC will be launching a new website in 2024. We will ensure that the new website meets AODA and all other compliance requirements.

Employment

Durham CHC is committed to fair and accessible employment practices and to creating an inclusive environment. We will continue to adhere to our statement of commitment to compliance with AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code. Applicants are advised to advise if they have any accessibility needs or require alternate formats or accommodations.

Procurement

Durham CHC takes into consideration accessibility criteria in our procedures for buying and acquiring goods, services and facilities, where possible.

Planned activities:

In the next fiscal year, Durham CHC will be launching a Procurement Policy. This policy will recognize Durham CHC's commitment of improving planetary health and environmental sustainability and endeavours to procure from Suppliers who strive to achieve the lowest environmental impacts of their products and services and/or incorporate criteria into the evaluation of a Competitive Procurement process.

Durham CHC will consider environmentally responsible and sustainable Goods, Services, and Construction when making Procurement decisions.

Durham CHC will recognize the value of corporate responsibility and social value and makes every effort to procure from Social Enterprises and Indigenous or minority-owned businesses and/or incorporate criteria into the evaluation of a Competitive Procurement process.

All Goods, Services, and Construction for Durham CHC considers accessibility designs, criteria, and features by consulting with key stakeholders when appropriate, including but not limited to staff with disabilities.

Durham CHC uses public funds to procure Goods, Services and Construction required for the provision and support of client care. Durham CHC acts in accordance with any and all legislative requirements that govern Community Health Centre Procurement practices in the Province of Ontario. These include and are not limited to the BPSAA and the BPSPD, the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, and Trade Agreements.

Self-Service kiosks

Durham CHC is committed to incorporating accessibility features/ considering accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Design of Public Spaces

Durham CHC will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. We will put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

In the event that Durham CHC requires to conduct preventative or emergency maintenance of any of our accessible spaces, arrangements will be made to notify the public as required and where possible, alternate spaces made available.

Other Planned Activities:

- 1) In the coming fiscal years, the IDEAAA Committee will be adding a dedicated focus on AODA in the committee annual workplan reviewing opportunities to improve accessibility for our clients and staff.
- 2) In 2024, Durham CHC will be onboarding Voyce interpretation services (real-time medical interpretation via video). The plan would also explore the possibility of accessing Voyce's American Sign language and Certified Deaf Interpreters as part of this service.
- 3) Durham CHC is exploring the possibility of installing Self-Service Kiosks in the coming fiscal year. Will ensure AODA compliance in this project.
- 4) With staff being relocated to different work spaces and locations in the coming years, JHSC committee will continue to revisit our Fire safety plans to ensure ongoing AODA compliance.