

Accessibility Policy

Last Revision Date:

December 28, 2023

Purpose

- To communicate Intellectual Property Ontario's (IPON) commitment to accessibility to employees, customers, and the public, and any plans IPON puts in place to achieve its accessibility goals so that Ontarians can access IPON's services and information when and how they need to without barriers.

Definitions

- **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005:** the standards of the AODA mandate how organizations must remove and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. The AODA standards govern how organizations can offer services that meet the needs of all Ontarians, including citizens with disabilities.
- **Regulations 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards (IASR)** under the AODA, 2005, requires organizations to create written accessibility policies and make them publicly available. Accessibility policies are the formal rules an organization puts in place to achieve its accessibility goals.

Statement of Organizational Commitment

Intellectual Property Ontario is committed to the core principles of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\), 2005](#): dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. Our goal is to ensure that all Ontarians can access our services and information when and how they need them, without barriers.

- IPON is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.
- IPON understands that obligations under the AODA and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.
- IPON is committed to excellence in serving and providing services or physical meeting spaces, where applicable, to all customers including people with disabilities. IPON's accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.
- IPON will maintain a written multi-year accessibility plan, update it at least once every five years and post it on its website. The accessibility plan outlines what steps IPON will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility. The accessibility plan will be provided in an accessible format upon request.

Training:

IPON is committed to training all employees in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. In addition, IPON will train all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

Training of IPON's employees, students, interns, and contractors on accessibility relates to their specific roles and includes:

- Purpose of the AODA, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- IPON's policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- 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
- If applicable, how to use the equipment or devices available on-site, online or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services or facilities

Initial training is completed within 30 days of the date the person begins a role with IPON, or as soon as practical. Ongoing training is provided within 30 days of changes being made to the policies. Training records are maintained including the individuals trained, date and type of training.

Use of assistive devices:

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing IPON's goods, services or facilities.

Communication:

IPON will communicate with individuals with disabilities in ways that account for their disability while remaining accommodating and respectful. This may include asking the person with a disability for their preferred method(s) of communication and what additional support or accommodation they require.

Service animals and support persons:

IPON welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person or service animal.

Notice of temporary disruption:

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or a physical meeting space for customers with disabilities, IPON will notify customers promptly including posting a notice of the disruption on IPON's website or on the webpage of the impacted application/service. The notice will set out the anticipated length of time of the disruption, and a description of alternative facilities or services if available.

Feedback process:

IPON welcomes feedback on how IPON provides accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help IPON identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback is welcome in several ways:

Email:

info@ip-ontario.ca

Mail:

Intellectual Property Ontario
210-137 Glasgow St., Unit 140
Kitchener, ON
N2G 4X8

Feedback will be acknowledged with a confirmation message within three business days. Feedback will then be reviewed by the IPON team and an update will be provided within 10 business days, including possible actions and reasonable accommodations to improve the accessibility of IPON's services. IPON ensures the feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports on request.

Notice of availability of documents:

IPON will provide documents in an accessible format or with communication support on request, in a timely manner, and at no additional cost. IPON will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support.

Procurement:

IPON incorporates accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. If it is not possible and practical to do so, IPON will provide an explanation upon request.

Information and communications:

IPON has a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request. IPON communicates with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, IPON will provide information about the organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- In a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- At no additional cost.

IPON will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If IPON determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- A summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

When applying for IPON's programs or services, IPON notifies the applicant of the availability of accommodation or alternative formats.

IPON also meets internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment:

IPON notifies employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. Suitable accommodations will be arranged based on an individual's specific needs.

Notice of the availability of assistance or accommodation alternatives during the recruitment process is provided on job postings and in initial recruitment conversations with job applicants.

Successful applicants are notified of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment. IPON provides updated information, in an accessible format if requested, to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability. IPON consults with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to a disability, including:

- Information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job;
- Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace;
- Customized emergency and evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency; and
- Performance management and career advancement that takes accessibility needs into account.

IPON has a process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees as well as a process for employees who are returning to work following a disability-related absence.

Changes to existing policies:

Any IPON policies that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed as identified.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.