Multi Year Accessibility Plan 2024-2029

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Section 1: Accessibility Policy

Compassion Canada is dedicated to providing accessible services and work environment for all employees, prospective employees, and stakeholders. Compassion Canada's AODA Policy outlines the organization's compliance with Parts I and III of the Integrated Accessibility

Standards Regulation (IASR) set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). It is inclusive of all Canadian provinces and territories and meets minimum standards and guidelines in each respective area in which Compassion Canada conducts business. It ensures Compassion Canada provides services and employment practices that follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

Section 2: Introduction

Our commitment in fulfilling our mission is to strive at all times to conduct our ministry in a way that respects the dignity of all people. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services, in the same place and in a similar way as other supporters. Compassion Canada is committed to excellence in serving all supporters including people with disabilities.

Section 3: Statement of Commitment

Compassion Canada is committed to providing an accessible environment for all clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. As an organization, we respect and comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and its associated regulations. We strive to provide an accessible and welcoming environment for everyone by identifying and removing barriers in our workplace and ensuring that new barriers are not created. Compassion Canada ensures that persons with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities. We are committed to meeting the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and integrative manner that respects their dignity and independence.

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. The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years. The next revision is planned for 2029.

Section 4: Past Achievements

Compassion Canada has completed the following accessibility initiatives.

A: Customer Service

- Provided accessible formats of written information upon request.
- Welcomed individuals with service animals and allowed them access to all areas open to the public.
- Provided appropriate assistance and accommodation for individuals who are accompanied by support persons.
- Ensured that all customer service areas are physically accessible, including entrances, counters, and seating areas.
- Developed and implemented procedures to provide advance notice of any temporary disruptions in services or facilities that may affect customers with disabilities.
- Clearly communicated alternative arrangements during disruptions.
- Ensured that customer information, including brochures, menus, and promotional materials, is available in accessible formats.
- Provided comprehensive training for all staff on the principles of accessible customer service, including scenarios related to interacting with customers with disabilities.
- Supporters were given the option to communicate by email or mail if telephone communication is not suitable for their communication needs or is not available.
- Invoices have been provided in either of the following formats: hard copy and electronic.
- If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Compassion ensures that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Compassion ensures that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

B: Information and Communications

- Used readable fonts with adjustable sizes and avoid the use of font styles that may be challenging to read.
- Provided sufficient color contrast between text and background for individuals with visual impairments.
- Included captions and transcripts for videos to make audio content accessible to individuals with hearing impairments.
- Used plain language in website content to enhance understanding for all users.
- Avoided jargon and provided explanations for industry-specific terms.
- Regularly reviewed and addressed user feedback to improve accessibility.
- Offered communication with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- Compassion ensures that the feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports, on request.
- Compassion makes information about the feedback process readily available to the public, upon request.
- Provide accessible versions of documents in alternative formats, such as HTML or accessible PDFs.

C: Employment

- All job postings include a statement indicating the organization's commitment to providing accommodation for applicants with disabilities.
- Clearly communicated the availability of accommodations for the application process.
- Informed all candidates that accommodations are available upon request for interviews and assessments.
- Provided flexibility in the interview process, such as allowing remote interviews or providing additional time for assessments.
- Regularly reviewed feedback and made improvements to enhance accessibility.
- Regularly monitored the implementation of accessible recruitment practices.
- Developed and implemented accessible orientation and training programs for new employees.
- All persons, whether employees or volunteers, who communicate with customers or supporters were trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Established a feedback mechanism for applicants to provide input on the accessibility of the recruitment and hiring process.

D: Training

- All staff are trained within 30 days of start date, with respect to accessibility guidelines and policies.
- Training records are maintained, including the date the training was provided and for which staff.
- All staff were asked upon hire if they require a specific accommodation due to a disability.
- Employees are prepared and ready to use different means of communication such as pen, paper, memo or note applications on Smart Phones, etc. when meeting with supporters, etc.
- Employees were trained to communicate with supporters over the telephone in clear and plain language and speak clearly and slowly.
- All persons, whether employees or volunteers, who communicate with Supporters were trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- When meeting with supporters, employees are prepared to ask a person in advance if he or she requires any specific accommodations due to a disability.
- We have offered to communicate with supporters by email or mail if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

E: Design of Public Spaces

- Ensured that pathways leading to and within the outdoor recreation area are firm, stable, and slip resistant.
- Provided accessible features, such as ramps, level entry points, and wide entrances, to accommodate assistive devices.
- Included seating options with back support and armrests for individuals with mobility challenges.
- Installed clear and visible signage with easy-to-read fonts and pictograms.
- Designated accessible parking spaces near the entrance with proper signage.
- Ensured adequate and evenly distributed lighting throughout the outdoor area.

- Implemented regular maintenance and inspections to address any barriers promptly.
- Regularly inspected and maintained accessibility features, such as ~~ramps and~~ elevators.
- Established a process for receiving and addressing feedback regarding the accessibility of the outdoor recreation area.
- Designated a parking space for the use of persons with disabilities.
- Put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

F: General

- Demonstrated visible and vocal commitment from organizational leadership to prioritize accessibility.
- Developed and communicated clear and accessible policies and procedures related to accessibility within the organization.
- Regularly reviewed and updated policies to reflect best practices and compliance with AODA standards.
- Fostered open communication channels to encourage employees to share ideas and concerns related to accessibility.
- Established a confidential and accessible mechanism for employees to provide feedback on accessibility concerns.
- Regularly reviewed and addressed feedback to continuously improve accessibility initiatives.
- Streamlined the process for employees to request accommodations and ensure confidentiality in handling requests.
- Ensured that organizational events and celebrations are accessible to all employees, including those with disabilities.
- Incorporated accessibility considerations into event planning and execution.
- Provided resources and support for employees to access necessary accommodations.
- Shared statement of organizational commitment to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner in our policies.
- Established, implemented, maintained and documented a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation.
- Posted the accessibility plan on their website and provided the plan in an accessible format upon request.

G: Notice of Temporary Disruption

- In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities (such as our elevator) for supporters/visitors with disabilities, Compassion Canada notifies supporters/visitors promptly. This clearly posted notice includes information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- The notice is placed at all public entrances and communicated by employees over the phone.

H: Use of Services Animals & Support Persons

- Compassion is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- Compassion ensures that all employees are trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- Compassion is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

I: Assistive Devices

- Compassion ensures that our employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by supporters with disabilities while accessing our goods and services.
- Compassion ensures that employees know how to operate the elevator available on our premises for supporters/visitors.

- Compassion explains to our employees that they should not touch or move a person's assistive device out of their reach without the person's permission.
- Compassion communicates to supporters/visitors in our building about the accessible features in the immediate environment such as automatic doors or accessible washrooms.

J: Workplace Emergency Response Information

- Compassion Canada will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability.

K: Individual Workplace Emergency Plans

- Individualized workplace emergency response information will be provided to an employee that provides Compassion Canda with the necessary information about their disability in order to create one and make Compassion staff aware of their need for accommodation as a result of their disability.
- Staff members that share and identify their disabilities as requiring emergency or evacuation plans, receive consultation and assistance in developing an individualized plan.

L: Return to Work Process

- Compassion Canada has return to work process that includes a process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability related accommodations in order to return to work.

Section 5: Strategies and Future Actions

- Compassion Canada plans to complete the following accessibility initiatives within the next five (5) years.

A: Customer Service

- Conduct regular audits and assessments of customer service practices to identify and address any accessibility barriers.
- Consult with persons with disabilities to determine their information and communications needs.

B: Information and Communications

- Continue to review any updates to the obligations under this standard, and revise processes to assist with ensuring the accessibility of both print and online content and platforms.
- Continue to ensure the website is designed with a clear and consistent layout, providing easy navigation.
- Implement a responsive design that adapts to different screen sizes and devices.
- Provide alternative text (alt text) for all images on the website to convey essential information for individuals using screen readers.
- Ensure that decorative images are marked appropriately to avoid confusion.
- Ensure that multimedia elements are navigable and controllable by keyboard commands.
- Design forms with clear labels and instructions, allowing users to complete them with ease.
- Ensure that interactive elements, such as buttons and links, are easily navigable using a keyboard.
- Ensure that PDFs are tagged properly to enhance navigation with screen readers.
- Implement accessible navigation menus that can be easily navigated using a keyboard or assistive technology.
- Provide skip navigation links for users who may want to bypass repetitive content.
- Establish a mechanism for users to provide feedback on the accessibility of the website.
- Train employees responsible for website content creation and maintenance on accessible design principles.
- Keep staff informed about the importance of maintaining accessibility standards.
- Conduct regular accessibility audits of the website to identify and address any barriers.
- Monitor and update the website regularly to ensure ongoing accessibility.
- Hire a Third party to review current accessibility plan and suggest improvements on our website.
- Ensure that internal communication channels, such as intranet, email, and messaging platforms, are accessible to all employees.
- Encourage the use of inclusive language in all internal communications.
- Integrate accessibility into the organization's mission, vision, and values.

- Engage employees in discussions about accessibility initiatives and involve them in decision-making processes.
- Empower these champions to advocate for accessibility and support their colleagues in implementing inclusive practices.
- Conduct regular internal audits and assessments to evaluate the organization's progress in promoting accessibility.
- Prepare a status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy referenced (post status report on website).

C: Employment

- Compassion Canada is committed to fair and accessible employment practices and will meet the accommodation needs of employees with disabilities to the point of undue hardship as mandated by the Human Rights Code.
- The People & Culture department in conjunction with Leaders responsible for supervising staff will be responsible for implementing and maintaining the accessible employment practices of the organization.
- The People & Culture department will be responsible for the development, oversight, and implementation of these policies.
- When offering a job position to a successful applicant, inform them of the Compassion Canada policy on accommodating employees with disabilities.
- Compassion notifies all employees, candidates, and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in our recruitment processes.

D: Training

- Compassion Canada will inform its employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee’s accessibility needs due to disability.
- During a recruitment process, job applicants will be notified, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used.
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, Compassion Canada will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant’s accessibility needs due to disability.
- Provide information on accommodation policies and procedures along with the job offer.
- Provide training to staff involved in the recruitment and hiring process on accessible practices and the organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- Provide information in multiple formats, including braille and tactile signage.
- Compassion Canada 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.
- Familiarize staff with common types of assistive devices and ensure they are knowledgeable about how to assist customers or supporters who use them.
- Compassion Canada will provide the information required under this section to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.
- Compassion Canada will provide updated information to its employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee’s accessibility needs due to disability.

E: Design of Public Spaces

- Compassion Canada will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces.
- Plan to implement tactile paving indicators to guide individuals with visual impairments.
- Designate quiet and shaded rest areas for individuals with sensory sensitivities.
- Ensure amenities, for example water fountains are accessible.
- Avoid the use of plants that may cause allergies or irritation.
- Involve the community, including individuals with disabilities, in the design and planning process for public spaces.

F: General

- Compassion Canada shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary, and the employer is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.
- Compassion Canada shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information,
    - when the employee moves to a different location in the organization.
    - when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed.
    - when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.
- Compassion Canada uses performance management in respect of its employees and will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when using its performance management process in respect of employees with disabilities.
- Compassion Canada provides career development and advancement to its employees and will take into account the accessibility needs of its employees with disabilities as well as any individual accommodation plans, when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities.
- Compassion will review and update the accessibility plan annually.

G: Notice of Temporary Disruption

- The notice will be placed at all public entrances and communicated by employees by email and via Compassion's employee intranet, instant messaging platforms and over the phone as is necessary.

Section 6: Summary

- For more information on this accessibility plan or to request standard and accessible formats of this document, please contact the following:

  Last Name: Jaques
  First Name: Carmen
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- Our accessibility plan is publicly posted at Accessibility statement - Compassion Canada.

Section 7: Revision Control

Effective Date	Revision	Reviewer
June 25, 2024	Update to Multi Year Plan	Carmen Jaques
December 6, 2024	Added new sections to highlight future strategies and plans. Statement of commitment in section 3 was updated. Service disruptions plans updated. Public Spaces notes updated.	Carmen Jaques