



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Hamilton
Mental health for all

**Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale**
Hamilton
La santé mentale pour tous

CMHA Hamilton Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2023 - 2028)

A Message From CMHA Hamilton

CMHA Hamilton is committed to treating all 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 (AODA, 2005).

Introduction

CMHA Hamilton is committed to meeting the needs of our employees, volunteers, students, clients, and members of the general public for accessible services based on the four guiding principles set out in legislation and listed below.

We are committed to the development, ongoing monitoring, and improvement of accessibility standards.

Guiding Principles:

Dignity - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self respect and the respect of other people.

Independence - when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other individuals, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity - service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access our goods or services equal to that given to others.

CMHA Hamilton is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

This accessibility plan outlines the steps CMHA Hamilton is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. This plan will be reviewed every five years.

Section 1: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

1.1 Customer Service

CMHA Hamilton remains in compliance with the Customer Service Standard. CMHA Hamilton supports and promotes policies, practices, and procedures that are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity.

To succeed in achieving these principles requires all staff, volunteers, and students to be fully trained in the policies and practices that are found under Accessibility Act. All staff are AODA trained at hire or as part of their orientation.

As described in further detail below in subsection 1.2, all communications with a person with a disability are conducted in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability. All staff, volunteers and students are trained to support clients and the general public who may use assistive devices while accessing CMHA Hamilton services or attending functions hosted by CMHA Hamilton. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal are welcomed at all agency sites. CMHA Hamilton is committed to allowing full access to our premises to people with disabilities and their support persons, ensuring the person with a disability has access to their support person at all times, and ensuring staff, volunteers and students are educated on how to interact appropriately with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

In addition, in order to enable full client participation in the services offered by the CMHA Hamilton and provide procedures regarding translation and interpretation, we have created a Translation and Interpretation Policy.

In the case of planned or unexpected disruption in the accessibility features offered at CMHA Hamilton, every effort is made to notify clients in advance in a format that best meets their needs. In the case that a client or member of the public is not able to be notified in advance, notices are posted in prominent locations at public entrances with the details of the disruptions outlined, and public service announcements are utilized when deemed useful to the situation.

CMHA Hamilton invites feedback to improve its client accessibility standards, under the legislation, and to permit a timely response to issues that may arise from time to time despite the best intentions of staff, volunteers, and students. A range of methods to solicit feedback are made available to ensure optimum access to the feedback process by people with disabilities including verbal feedback in person or by telephone, written feedback through the CMHA Hamilton Website: an online Feedback Survey, input from CMHA Hamilton Client Surveys and feedback is welcome through our fax number posted online. In addition, CMHA Hamilton provides opportunities for verbal and written feedback outlined in our client handbook, including access to a client feedback form. All feedback processes are available in alternative formats.

CMHA Hamilton's Accessibility Standards in the Workplace Policy is available to anyone upon request. It is posted on our website and made available in alternate formats when the need is identified. Please refer to this for more detailed information regarding descriptions of the customer service policies and procedures described above.

1.2 Information and Communications

CMHA Hamilton (will) has successfully introduced features to our website to ensure it is compliant with WCAG Level AA including distinguishable content, navigable content, readable text content, predictable web pages, and input assistance.

All communications with a person with a disability are in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability. Staff, students, and volunteers are trained in communicating in clear and plain language, trained in understanding how to communicate with individuals and what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the CMHA Hamilton's programs, goods or services.

CMHA Hamilton maintains an internal directory of staff who speak languages. CMHA Hamilton also maintains TTY services on our phone lines.

1.3 Employment

CMHA Hamilton is an equal opportunity employer committed to fostering a healthy and positive work environment. In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code, CMHA Hamilton provides accommodations throughout the recruitment and selection process to applicants with disabilities.

CMHA Hamilton notifies employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants who have disabilities. Applicants are informed that these accommodations are available, upon request, for the interview process and for other candidate selection methods. Where an accommodation is requested, CMHA Hamilton consults with the applicant and provides or arranges for suitable accommodation.

The agency interview process focuses on experience and skills and does not discriminate against candidates who have a disability or require an accommodation. CMHA Hamilton is committed to hiring decisions that are unbiased and based on qualifications and past experience.

CMHA Hamilton ensures that employees are aware of policies for employees with disabilities and any changes to these policies as they occur. The agency provides the information required to new employees as they begin their employment.

If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, CMHA Hamilton consults with the employee to determine the specific barrier and the best way to provide support. CMHA Hamilton provides or arranges for accessible formats and communication supports for employees, upon request. Such accessible formats and communication supports are provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to employees.

When communicating with or providing information to an employee who requires accommodation or assistance due to a disability, the agency ensures that all communication with the individual is completed in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability.

CMHA Hamilton offers individual accommodations to support the needs of employees with disabilities. Personalized accommodation plans are designed to allow employees to contribute and participate in job related functions and activities to the best of their abilities. The process of

accommodating individuals takes a consultative approach and is a shared obligation of the agency, the employee, and any applicable professionals or representation required to assist the employee throughout the process. Plans are reviewed and revised every year and as needed upon request by the employee, or where there is a change that results in a health or safety risk.

If necessary or if requested, CMHA Hamilton has created an individualized workplace emergency response plans for employees with disabilities. The emergency response plan considers the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and is created in consultation with the employee. If an employee with a disability requires assistance from a support person during an emergency, the agency designates a fellow employee to act as such. Customized emergency response plans are reviewed when necessary (i.e. the employee's needs change, they are moved to another location or there is a review to agency emergency response policies).

CMHA Hamilton is committed to a supportive return-to-work program and develops and implements return-to-work processes for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and require accommodations in order to return to work. The agency works with the employee to develop an individualized return-to-work plan and support the employee in the transition period by addressing any barriers.

Throughout all steps of the accommodation plan, emergency safety plan and the return to work process, employee personal and health information is kept confidential and protected at all times.

CMHA Hamilton works to align training and development programs to meet the needs of employees with disabilities and provide training as soon as reasonably practicable upon the person being assigned applicable duties. The agency also considers employee barriers when implementing performance management processes, or when offering career development, employment support, or advancement opportunities.

Section 2: Strategies and Actions

2.1 Customer Service

CMHA Hamilton is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods and services to individuals with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others. CMHA Hamilton is committed to accommodate people with disabilities who attend agency trainings/workshops. We are committed to the development, ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility policies and procedures described in the CMHA Hamilton Accessibility Standards in the Workplace Policy.

CMHA Hamilton Leadership is committed to working with their staff and stakeholders to promote and discuss new ideas and opportunities in which to offer alternative methods of supporting individuals with disabilities. CMHA Hamilton commits to the establishment of an AODA Planning Committee by May 2023. This committee will be responsible for ensuring ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility standards and plans and offer a platform for staff and leadership to promote and discuss new ideas and opportunities in which to offer alternative methods of supporting individuals with disabilities.

CMHA Hamilton commits to ongoing training of staff, students and volunteers as refreshers and when changes are made to policies, practices or procedures governing the provision of services to clients and their families with disabilities. A record is kept of all completed accessibility training.

CMHA Hamilton commits to posting their hours of operation, and for after hours, the telephone number for crisis services in a place visible from outside the main entrance.

CMHA Hamilton commits to posting information in the reception area that welcomes assistive devices and service animals and encourages users to seek support from CMHA Hamilton staff volunteers and students, as they require it, by June 2023.

CMHA Hamilton commits to revise all agency Intake forms to include a field related to the clients' use of or need for assistive devices by June 2023.

CMHA Hamilton commits to continue to review any feedback or reports with the Senior Leadership Team on an ongoing basis to determine if there are concerns related to accessibility to be addressed, considered, and improved.

2.2 Information and Communications

CMHA Hamilton is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. We are committed to the development, ongoing monitoring, and improvement of accessibility policies and procedures described in the CMHA Hamilton Accessibility Standards in the Workplace Policy.

The CMHA Hamilton websites will conform to WCAG 2.0 level AA. The CMHA Hamilton Operations Coordinator will communicate with the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis if a new website is being considered and implemented. If it is determined that a new website is being considered, feedback from the AODA Planning Committee and Senior Leadership to ensure that it contains accessible content for individuals with disabilities.

CMHA Hamilton commits to providing additional assistive devices at program sites where and when a need is identified and when funds can be dedicated to the acquisition.

A directory of external translator resources and known cost, if any, will be developed by June 2023 and maintained to ensure relevance.

All communications with a person with a disability are in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability. Staff, students and volunteers will be trained in communicating with individuals over the telephone using TTY technology, with individuals who use assistive communication devices, and in offering alternative formats that are available to address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

A resource list indicating where to obtain other formats e.g. audio, video, Braille and sign language video will be made available by July 2023, to enable an agency response to less frequently required supports.

2.3 Employment

CMHA Hamilton is an equal opportunity employer committed to fostering a healthy and positive work environment. CMHA Hamilton is committed to the development, ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility policies and procedures described the CMHA Hamilton Accessibility Standards in the Workplace Policy to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

To expand our efforts listed the CMHA Hamilton Accessibility Standards in the Workplace Policy, CMHA Hamilton will add a statement to each existing and any new job descriptions with reference to the agency's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities and our commitment to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by September 2023.

2.4 Training

CMHA Hamilton will continue to provide training for its employees and volunteers regarding the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) and the Ontario Human Rights Code as they pertain to individuals with disabilities. Training will also be provided to individuals who are responsible for developing CMHA Hamilton's policies. Additional training will be provided to employees, student placements, and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis to new employees, volunteers, and students as changes to CMHA Hamilton accessibility policies occur or revisions to requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 for the Employment Standard set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

2.5 Design of Public Spaces

During the design and development of any new facilities or changes to existing facilities, the agency will take the following steps to satisfy the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces.

Parking

When/if the agency plans to build new or make changes to existing parking spaces, CMHA Hamilton commits to ensuring off-street parking facilities include two types of accessible parking spaces; wider spaces for people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, and standard-width spaces for people who use mobility assistive devices, such as canes, crutches, and walkers. The off-street parking facilities will include a minimum number of each type of accessible parking spaces and each space will have access aisles (a space between parking spaces) that allow people with disabilities to get in and out of their vehicles.

Service Counters and Waiting Areas

When/if the agency plans to build new or make changes to existing service counters and waiting areas, CMHA Hamilton commits to ensuring at least one service counter will be accessible to people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs. This may include being low enough for someone sitting in a mobility aid and/or having enough clear space in front for a person in a

mobility aid to approach the counter, including space for the person's knees. The accessible service counter will be clearly identified with signage.

Self-Service Kiosks

At this time, CMHA Hamilton does not have any self-service Kiosks. When/if the agency plans to implement self-service kiosks, consideration will be given to the following items to ensure this service is available to clients or members of the public with a disability: colour contrast on the display screen, time allowed to complete tasks, availability of staff assistance, location, height, and stability of the public kiosk, volume controls, voice commands, and touch screen features.

Maintenance

CMHA Hamilton will continue to ensure the accessible parts of our public spaces will have a preventative and emergency maintenance procedures. This includes continuing to public post when regular or temporary maintenance to an accessible part of our public space occurs and letting people know about alternatives.

Standard and accessible formats of this document are free on request through contact information below.

For More Information, please contact:

CMHA Hamilton
Phone: 905 521 0090