



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act Multi-Year Plan

Last reviewed: November 2024

Message from the Executive Director

Community Living Thunder Bay ("CLTB") vision is to envision a supportive and accepting community that values all its citizens equally. To effectively act upon our vision, CLTB must be a community champion of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act ("AODA"). In many ways, CLTB has been a community champion of AODA in form of community participation and employment for people with developmental disabilities. A goal of CLTB is providing services and support to persons with an intellectual disability, and to their families, so that persons with an intellectual disability have the opportunity to participate effectively in all elements of living in the community. We are proud of the work we do to promote community inclusion and will continue to build upon the work that is being done.

To be a community champion for the AODA, we must shift our focus to the digital world. In our work in championing physical community inclusion, our focus on the ever-growing digital world has fallen behind. Our practices in updating policies, providing relevant on-going training, and creating a more accessible website and digital database can be improved upon. The focus of our multi-year plan will create the framework to become not only a champion in the physical community but in our practices in the digital world.

At Community Living Thunder Bay, we are committed to providing an inclusive and accessible environment for all individuals, including our employees, customers, and community members. We strive to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR).

Our organization is dedicated to:

- Ensuring that our services, facilities, and communications are accessible to all individuals.
- Identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to accessibility in our policies, practices, and procedures.
- Providing training to our employees on accessibility standards and best practices.
- Engaging with people with disabilities to understand their needs and improve our accessibility efforts.
- Reviewing and updating our accessibility policies and plans regularly to ensure ongoing compliance and improvement.
- We believe that accessibility is a shared responsibility and are committed to fostering a culture of inclusion and respect. By working together, we can create a more accessible and equitable environment for everyone.



Introduction

CLTB is dedicated to promoting inclusivity and accessibility across all areas of its operations, aligning with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 and I.O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Section 4 of the IASR requires the Government of Ontario and designated public sector organizations, including CLTB to create, maintain and make publicly available a multi-year accessibility plan. The accessibility plan must be created, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities. The accessibility plan must also be reviewed at least once every five years, and all organizations are required to report annually on the progress they have made to implement the accessibility plan and comply with the IASR. The status reports must be made available to the public.

The CLTB Multi-Year Accessibility Plan 2024 describes our commitment to accessibility, and the steps we are taking to prevent and remove barriers for persons with disabilities in employment, services and in making policy.

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

CLTB has made significant strides in enhancing accessibility within our organization. To ensure that our services remain compliant with Customer Service Standards, we have implemented various actions and policies to remove barriers. Our commitment to an accessible environment includes providing accommodation as part of our employment program, which has successfully secured competitive employment for 70 individuals with disabilities within the community. Additionally, we support another 60 people in preparing for community participation and employment readiness.

To create a more inclusive hiring process, CLTB includes accommodation offers in all job postings and recruitment materials. We are also proud to work with consultants like Nima Novak, engaging in diversity and inclusion training with our management teams. Our Microaggression Policy and ongoing cultural audits further promote a respectful and welcoming work environment. Monthly diversity check-ins with staff, along with BIPOC affinity groups and LGBTQ+ policies, strengthen our support for diverse communities within our workforce.

Customer Service

CLTB is committed to providing accessible and inclusive customer service to all members of our community in a way that best respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Ensuring that stakeholders, clients and employees are aware of their roles and responsibilities under this accessible customer service procedure. Promptly addressing accommodation and accessibility issues identified in a dignified and respectful way, to facilitate effective access to, and participation in, OHRC services. Responding to identified accommodation and accessibility needs on an individual basis.

As part of our commitment, we work closely with People First Canada, a national advocacy organization that amplifies the voices of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, advocating for their rights to freedom, choice, and equality. Through this partnership, CLTB hosts



regular information sessions to educate and empower self-advocates, offering resources to support their personal and social independence.

To further enhance our customer service, we have established a dedicated Quality Improvement team that reviews and responds to feedback. We provide accessible feedback forms that can be completed on our website or in physical formats available at our offices. Customers can submit their feedback by mail, email, or in person at our office locations, ensuring that all community members can share their experiences and suggestions. Our Quality Improvement team continuously analyzes this feedback to improve services and make adjustments as needed to create a welcoming and accessible environment for all.

All CLTB-hosted public events take place at accessible locations or on accessible video conferencing platforms. CLTB takes steps to confirm that each physical and virtual event space is fully accessible before finalizing an event.

Information and Communications

CLTB is committed to providing accessible and user-friendly information and communication tools. Our administrative team has made significant investments to enhance digital communication, ensuring that information is easily accessible to all. Staff are trained annually on best practices in accessibility, and we actively seek feedback to improve the clarity and accessibility of our communications.

To support seamless access to organizational resources, CLTB uses a SharePoint platform that centralizes essential documents and resources for staff. Efforts are ongoing to enhance this platform, which houses most documents in accessible, audible formats to support diverse needs. Additionally, CLTB employs various communication methods, including mail, email, telephone, video conferencing, Internet-based platforms, and social media to connect with stakeholders and the public. All public documents, such as correspondence and publications, are available in accessible digital formats, including HTML, accessible PDFs, and MS Word format upon request.

Employment

we are deeply committed to creating employment opportunities that are accessible, inclusive, and supportive of individuals with disabilities. Our employment program has successfully achieved active, competitive employment for 70 individuals within the community workforce. In addition to these placements, we provide ongoing support to an additional 60 individuals, focusing on community participation and job readiness training.

Our organization's inclusive employment initiatives include several key components:

- Dedicated consultations with Diversity Consultant Nima Novak, who leads monthly sessions on diversity and inclusion with our management team.
- A robust Microaggression Policy and Procedure to foster a respectful and safe work environment.
- An Annual Cultural Audit to assess and improve our diversity practices.



- Regular monthly check-ins with staff regarding diversity and inclusion topics.
- Ongoing BIPOC affinity groups that provide spaces for community and support.
- An established LGBTQ+ Diversity and Inclusion Policy that reflects our commitment to a diverse workforce.
- Comprehensive diversity and inclusion training, with all CLTB employees having completed Workplace Diversity and Inclusion training through HR Downloads.

Procurement

CLTB maintains an inclusive procurement strategy by prioritizing vendors who share our values of accessibility and diversity. Vendors that address physical barriers and support our employment program for individuals with disabilities are given preference.

Self-Service Kiosks

CLTB is invested in developing an employee Intranet platform and are working to introduce a chatbot on it. This chatbot will provide frequently asked questions (FAQs) and assist visitors in navigating our services and resources efficiently.

Our website complies with AODA requirements and adheres to WCAG AA standards to ensure an accessible and user-friendly digital experience. These initiatives are part of our commitment to making self-service resources available and accessible to all community members.

Training

With a comprehensive approach to diversity, CLTB partners with Diversity Consultant Nima Novak to conduct monthly sessions on diversity and inclusion with management. Our established Microaggression Policy, annual cultural audits, monthly check-ins, BIPOC affinity groups, and LGBTQ+ policies—solidified with organization-wide training—further underscore our commitment to fostering an environment where all individuals feel respected and valued. Through our multi-year AODA plan, CLTB will continue to build a culture of accessibility, equality, and respect for all.

Annual training sessions ensure that all employees are equipped with the knowledge and skills to support accessible practices across the organization. We also maintain a comprehensive HRIS system to manage and track training completion for over 400 employees.

Design of Public Spaces

To improve accessibility in our physical spaces, CLTB has secured funding to upgrade our parking lots, creating smoother paths and designated accessible parking spaces. Additionally, we have worked with city officials to advocate for crosswalk installations near our facilities, improving safety and accessibility for individuals with disabilities. In our head office, we have implemented accessible entrances to ensure that our spaces are welcoming and accommodating for all community members.



Transportation

Transportation is a key component of accessibility at CLTB. We have expanded our fleet to over 20 vehicles, including five designated accessible vans to better serve individuals with disabilities. CLTB has also developed strong partnerships with local accessible transportation providers to support the diverse transportation needs of our community members. As a Transfer Payment Agency representative for Passport funding, CLTB employs a dedicated Manager to create Individual Support Plans that prioritize accessible transportation within personal funding allocations. We offer management and case managers access to company-issued credit cards, allowing them to procure accessible transportation passes for clients through the Passport Program.

In collaboration with Enterprise Fleet Management, CLTB continues to grow its fleet, gaining access to enhanced procurement tools and adopting proactive fleet safety measures. Our Passport program has expanded, and we remain committed to strengthening partnerships with local transportation services. This growth enables us to serve our community members more effectively, supporting their independence and participation in community life.

Strategies and Actions

CLTB makes the following commitments to meet the goal of being an organization that is fully accessible. In consultation with people with disabilities, CLTB will review and make any necessary changes to improve the accessibility of its:

Customer Service

- Customer service policy and practices in accordance with the standards under the IASR, including:
 - Reviewing potential barriers that visitors with disabilities may experience when arriving at the CLTB office
 - Clarifying that the customer service policy applies to individuals who use mobility devices
- Mechanism/procedure for CLTB to receive AODA compliance-related feedback or inquiries, including complaints, in accordance with section 11 of the IASR:
 - Including clarifying the process to provide feedback via mail, email and verbally.

Information and Communication Standards

- In addition to print and electronic delivery, CLTB intends to develop a third method of delivering its training materials, likely audio.
- Efforts are underway to develop new digital tools, including an Intranet platform, which will centralize important organizational resources for staff.

Website Accessibility

- CLTB has ensured that our websites meet the internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) Level AA standards, as required by Ontario's accessibility



laws. Moving forward, we will conduct annual reviews to guarantee continued compliance with these standards and to address any evolving accessibility requirements.

Training

New staff will receive, and current staff is requested to complete the requested training on the *AODA*, including all accessibility standards including:

- Customer Service Standard
- General Requirements
- Information and Communications Standard
- Employment Standard
- Design of Public Spaces Standard
- Transportation Standard

