

Accessibility Plan Annual Status Report

Prepared Date: February 2024

This Annual Status Report details the annual update for 2023 on the progress of measures taken to improve accessibility. The purpose of this report is to track our progress and make the public aware of our initiatives.

To request an alternate format of this annual status report, please contact:

Email: accessibility@ontarionorthland.ca

Toll-Free Telephone Number: 1-800-363-7512 ext. 0

Once your request is received, our team will contact you to provide you with additional information on when you can expect a response, based on the document and format you are requesting.

Statement of Commitment

Ontario Northland 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 by meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Purpose

This Accessibility Plan status report is prepared annually to update about Ontario Northland's Accessibility Plan and Policy. This status report provides the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy, including steps taken in compliance with the regulation (O. Reg. 191/11 Integrate Accessibility Standards under Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11).

Training

Ontario Northland provides accessibility training for all employees. This includes Human Rights, AODA, and Transportation training. These training modules include a quiz and are delivered to all new employees at employee orientation (takes place minimum once per month) and refresher training is as required.

Information and Communications

Existing websites, feedback processes and social media channels and content are compliant. In 2023 a re-design of our website was completed. Our new website meets WCAG 2.0 Level AA. We had the opportunity to receive feedback on the website from two of our Accessibility Advisory Committee members who tested screen readers and the reservation and ticketing system. Our aim is to create a more user-friendly, accessible website for our customers.

Employment

Ontario Northland complies with its multi-year accessibility plan for advertising of employment and accommodating people with disabilities during the recruitment process, including during interviews. Accommodation is considered and utilized in return-to-work practice, during performance management, during career development and redeployment processes. Accessibility barriers are part of the workplace health and safety committee checklists for workplace audits.

Accomplishments in 2023

General highlights for 2023 include:

- The hiring of an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Specialist. This position will allow Ontario Northland to expand engagement with passengers with disabilities, have a specialized focus on accessibility improvement, and dedicate more effort to the maintenance and development of Ontario Northland's Multi-Year Accessibility Plans.
- Draft finalized and approved for the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Completed a comprehensive WCAG 2.0 audit and update to www.ontarionorthland.ca including all pages and functionality as a part of the website refresh.
- We have two new motor coaches on order that will have extra space provided in the first row on the driver's side to be designated as a place for a service animal, while still providing sufficient leg room for the passenger.
- Provided education for Ontario Northland's Guide Dog and Service Animal Policy to passenger services employees.

Planned for 2024

- Continue implementing the 2023-2027 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan.
- Recruitment for the Accessibility Advisory Committee.
- Accessibility Policy Review.
- Host Ontario Northland's Public Accessibility Meeting and gather community feedback.
- Update pre-departure and destination announcements on the Polar Bear Express passenger train to be automated and available visually.
- Begin addressing the barrier free audit findings at Ontario Northland facilities.

For more information

For more information about Ontario Northland's accessibility plan, please contact us at:

- Phone: 1-800-363-7512 ext. 0
- Email: accessibility@ontarionorthland.ca

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