Arthritis Society Canada - Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

Last Updated: October 30, 2026

CEO Statement of Commitment and Introduction

"Arthritis is Canada's silent epidemic. More than 6 million Canadians live with arthritis today. It is the number one cause of disability, forcing millions from work and community life. Arthritis Society Canada is a powerful public advocate for people with disabilities. In 2026, we marked a significant milestone for our organization as we officially launched **Arthritis Action Now: The Plan to End Arthritis in Canada** – the most ambitious and coordinated national strategy ever assembled to confront arthritis. Through three years of unprecedented collaboration across Canada's arthritis ecosystem, we united leading organizations, patients, clinicians, researchers, and advocates behind one bold commitment: to prevent, better treat, and ultimately cure arthritis. Building on our strategic leadership in the healthcare space, and looking forward, our organization is powerfully committed to fulfilling our duty and requirements to all people with disabilities, and accessible needs, under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*".

Trish Barbato, President and Chief Executive Officer (Toronto, ON)

Arthritis Society Canada strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Arthritis Society Canada is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. 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 Ontarians. The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years. We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Section 1: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

The following includes a summary of the accessibility initiatives Arthritis Society Canada has implemented to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and to meet requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

By January 1, 2014, Arthritis Society Canada established accessibility policies and plans. This included:

- Developing, implementing and maintaining a policy governing how the organization will achieve accessibility, ensuring such a policy is available to staff and volunteers for their awareness and reference.
- Establishing, implementing and maintaining a multi-year accessibility plan.
- Including within the multi-year accessibility plan a statement of commitment to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner.
- Making the multi-year accessibility plan available to all staff and the public on Arthritis Society Canada's website, with availability in accessible formats.

Customer Service

Arthritis Society Canada has remained in compliance with the Customer Service Standards.

Provision of Accessible Customer Service

By January 1, 2012, all staff and volunteers were trained, and continue to be trained, to serve customers of all abilities. This includes keeping a written record of the training, welcoming service animals and support persons, and creating accessible ways for people to provide feedback. Arthritis Society Canada also put an accessibility policy in place so employees, volunteers and customers can know what to expect.

By January 1, 2015, all staff and volunteers were trained, and continue to be trained, on Ontario's accessibility laws. This includes:

- Providing training on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation (IASR) and on disability-related obligations under Ontario Human Rights legislation, as well as similar legislative provisions across the country, to employees, volunteers and any others who may be acting on Arthritis Society Canada's behalf in dealing with the public or any other third parties. Training is also provided to all people who are involved in the development of Arthritis Society Canada's policies.
- Maintaining and retaining records of the dates when training is completed and the names of individuals who completed the training.

Provision of Feedback, Accessible Formats & Communication Supports

By January 1, 2015, Arthritis Society Canada:

- Placed a statement on its website about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports and committed, upon request, to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats in a timely manner. This includes:
    - Through our website, where the Feedback Form is available
    - Using the Feedback Form in-person (220 Bay St, Suite 300, Toronto, ON M5J 2W4)
    - Verbally via telephone (to 416-979-7228) or via email to accessibility@arthritis.ca
- Ensured that the processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports, upon request. All feedback will be directed to HR and addressed accordingly. Individuals can expect to receive a response within five (5) business days.

For more information about Ontario's Customer Service Standard, visit ontario.ca/accessibility.

Information and Communications

Provision of Accessible Websites & Web Content

- By January 1, 2014, Arthritis Society Canada's new internet websites and new content on such websites conformed with World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A.
- By January 1, 2021, Arthritis Society Canada's internet websites and web content conformed with WCAG 2.0 Level AA, except for exclusions set out in the IASR.

Provision of Feedback, Accessible Formats & Communication Supports

By January 1, 2015, Arthritis Society Canada:

- Placed a statement on its website about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports and committed, upon request, to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats in a timely manner.
- Ensured that the processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

Provision of Emergency Procedures, Plans & Public Safety Information

By January 1, 2012, Arthritis Society Canada:

- Provided accessible emergency and public safety information, like evacuation plans or brochures, in an accessible format, upon request.
- Provided, when necessary, accessible and customized emergency information to staff as soon as practicable after an employee asks for it or when Arthritis Society Canada becomes aware an employee may need accommodation in an emergency.

Employment

Recruitment and Training

By January 1, 2016, Arthritis Society Canada:

- On the careers page of its website, specified that accommodations are available for applicants with disabilities.
- Informed applicants selected to participate in an assessment or selection process (such as interviews and tests) that accommodations are available during the recruitment process, upon request, in relation to materials and processes to be used.
- Upon request, consulted with the applicant and arranged for suitable accommodation.
- Notified the successful applicant, when making offers of employment, of its policies including those for accommodating associates with disabilities.
- Included AODA information and training in orientation, with additional and ongoing training, awareness and workshops throughout employment rolled out by Human Resources and our Inclusivity, Diversity, Equality and Access (IDEA) Working Group (latter since 2020).

Informing Employees of Supports

By January 1, 2016, Arthritis Society Canada:

- Informed employees and new hires (during orientation) of Arthritis Society Canada's policies to support employees with disabilities and keep associates up to date on changes to these policies.
- Upon request from an employee with a disability, and further to consultation with the relevant employee, provided suitable accessible formats and communication supports for information needed by the employee to perform job, as well as provided information that is generally available to employees.

Documenting Individual Accommodation Plans / Return to Work Process

By January 1, 2016, Arthritis Society Canada:

- Developed a written process for the development of individual accommodation plans.
- Developed and documented a return-to-work process for employees who have been absent due to a disability. The process outlines the steps that Arthritis Society Canada will take to facilitate the employee's return to work, using the employee's individual accommodation plan as part of that process.

Performance Management and Career Development

By January 1, 2016, Arthritis Society Canada:

- Took into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities and individual accommodation plans when utilizing Arthritis Society Canada's performance management processes, considering career development and advancement opportunities.

Section 2: Strategies and Actions

Below are the projects and programs Arthritis Society Canada completed prior to 2021 to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, and to remove and prevent barriers for persons with disabilities.

Customer Service

Arthritis Society Canada is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods, services and facilities to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.

Arthritis Society Canada is planning to continue all the aforementioned activities in order to comply with the Customer Service Standard (e.g. training new staff as soon as practicable after being hired).

Information and Communications

Arthritis Society Canada is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

Arthritis Society Canada is planning to continue all the aforementioned activities in order to comply with this commitment.

Employment

Arthritis Society Canada is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Arthritis Society Canada is planning to continue all the aforementioned activities in order to comply with this commitment.

Training

Arthritis Society 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.

Arthritis Society Canada is planning to continue all the aforementioned activities in order to comply with this commitment.

Design of Public Spaces

Arthritis Society Canada will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces.

Arthritis Society Canada will put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

Transportation

Arthritis Society Canada is committed to accessible transportation services.

In the event that Arthritis Society Canada contracts a third-party vendor to provide transportation, for example to and from camp (for children and youth with arthritis) settings, we will ensure that accessible transportation services are made available upon request.

Other - Accessibility Compliance Reports

Arthritis Society Canada will on or before the deadlines required continue to submit all required accessibility compliance reports and retain records of such reports.

For More Information

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact **Sarah Ann McGrath, Senior Director of Human Resources Operations** at 416-979-7228 ext. 3418 or via email to smcgrath@arthritis.ca.

Our accessibility plan is publicly posted here.

Standard and accessible formats of this document are free of charge on request from Sarah Ann McGrath, Senior Director of Human Resources Operations at 416-979-7228 ext. 3418 or via email to smcgrath@arthritis.ca.