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# Boys and Girls Club of Niagara

## Accessibility Plan

# 2025

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## ***Introduction***

In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This act requires that Ontario be an accessible province by 2025. To help public, private and not-for-profit organizations identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility, the AODA sets out specific accessibility standards in five areas: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Employment, Transportation, and the Built Environment.

This Accessibility Plan has been prepared to address issues and barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in the Boys and Girls Club community. This is a multi-year plan that outlines how we intend to identify, prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and meet the various requirements under the AODA legislation. It will also frame the next steps in our effort to create an inclusive and accessible environment.

This Accessibility Plan was created with input from senior staff representing various operating areas across the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara, and was reviewed by our Accessibility Committee. It is posted on the AODA section of our website and will be made available in an accessible format or with communication supports to persons with disabilities, upon request. The Plan will be reviewed and updated at least every five years and periodically as new legislation continues to come into effect. An annual status report will also be posted on the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara website outlining our progress to date.

## ***Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Accessibility (AODA) Policy:***

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara strives at all times to undertake reasonable efforts to provide goods, services or facilities in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. We are also committed to providing persons with disabilities with the same opportunity to access goods, services or facilities and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as that given to other persons. The full Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Accessibility Policy is available in supplement as Appendix A.

## ***Statement of Commitment:***

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara is committed to undertake reasonable efforts in the provision of goods, services or facilities to all persons, including persons with disabilities. We will carry out our responsibilities to meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner in the areas addressed within the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Accessibility (AODA) Policy consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act.

## ***2025 Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Accessibility Plan:***

The following pages outline the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara's multi-year Accessibility Plan. It also documents barriers to accessibility that have already been removed. Within each year there may be initiatives addressing one or more of the five accessibility standards. The individual or department responsible for each compliance component is also identified within this plan. The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara will review and update the multi-year accessibility plan in consultation with the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara's Accessibility Advisory Committee. An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan will be provided to the Board of Directors annually. The updated plan with current status will be posted on the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara's website and provided in an accessible format upon request. Questions about the multi-year accessibility plan may be directed to [concerns@bgcn.ca](mailto:concerns@bgcn.ca).

### ***Accessibility Committee:***

An Accessibility Committee was formed in conjunction with the regular duties of the Operations Committee which aims to guide and review accessibility initiatives at the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara. The committee consists of volunteer board members and staff of the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara. As of the publication of this plan, the current advisory committee consists of the following members:

David D'Addio	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Board President
Danielle Garner	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Board Vice-President (Operations)
Tim Denis	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Board Director
Allison VanRooijen	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Board Director
Rob Walters	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Board Director
JoAnne Turner	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Chief Executive Officer
Joe Macoretta	Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Chief Operating Officer

### ***Accessibility Plan: Accomplishments (2015-2018)***

#### **1. General Standards**

In 2015, the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara established an advisory committee to oversee the AODA compliance work and oversee the creation and monitoring of the multi-year accessibility plan. In its efforts, the committee established a statement of commitment (illustrated above) and undertook various initiatives including but not limited to annual reviews of the multi-year plan, policy review and a review of the club's training practices to ensure AODA compliance was well established in its efforts.

#### **2. Accessibility Policy**

Policy 01-14-01 (Accessibility Service Plan) has been created to convey the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara's commitment to accessibility and outline what the club does to remove barriers to persons with disabilities. The policy establishes the club's commitment to areas associated with AODA compliance including but not limited to overall staff training objectives, addressing disruption of services, care and treatment of service animals and support personnel as well as the club's feedback process. In addition AODA clauses have been embedded within other Boys and Girls Club of Niagara policies where appropriate including but not limited to updates made to the purchasing policy regarding AODA requirements for consideration.

#### **3. Training**

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara implemented training protocol for all staff particular to accessibility and AODA compliance. In efforts to make the training more accessibility conscious, it was designed with these ideals in mind and is currently offered through an audio/video format available to all staff online in addition to a written format by way of the Health, Safety and Accessibility handbook. Staff continue to develop and update the audio/video/written formats to ensure that an accessibility conscious format is continually strived for. This training is undergone by all staff at the time of hire and annually thereafter.

#### 4. Feedback Process

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara implemented a complaints and concerns protocol in 2015 in an attempt to ensure all concerns (including those concerning accessibility standards and AODA compliance) are heard and addressed. This method allows a further vehicle to bring concerns to the attention of management beyond verbal communication with site personnel by allowing an online e-mail address to express concerns toward. A sign with the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara logo is posted at all owned/leased sites in a conspicuous location that reads “The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara values your opinions. Please feel free to let us know how we are doing by talking to one our employee members or by e-mailing us at [concerns@bgcn.ca](mailto:concerns@bgcn.ca). Thank you.” This e-mail account is checked and viewed daily by assigned staff and concerns are forwarded to the appropriate manager and carbon copied to the Chief Executive Officer. All concerns/complaints are reviewed in the strictest of confidence and addressed as soon as practicably possible. Beyond this, specific wording has been added to the website about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports, if requested.

#### 5. Employment Recruitment Accommodation

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara has implemented a system to ensure accommodation is taken into consideration during all phases of the recruitment process. Prospective applicants are advised of the availability of accommodations within correspondence relating to that employment opportunity posting. All postings accompany the following verbiage:

“The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara is an equal opportunity employer committed to inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection processes and work environment. We will accommodate the needs of the applicants under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) throughout all stages of the recruitment and selection process. Please advise the Human Resources Department to ensure your accessibility needs are accommodated throughout this process. Information received relating to accommodation measures will be addressed confidentially.”

Selected applicants are advised of the availability of accommodations throughout all stages of the recruitment and selection process.

#### 6. Employment Accommodation

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara has implemented a system to ensure accommodation is taken into consideration when an employment offer is given and subsequently after during employment. Successful applicants are notified of accommodation practices and policies throughout job training and in addition employees are advised of their right to accommodation in their letter of employment.

#### 7. Emergency Response Accommodation

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara has implemented a system to ensure accommodation is taken into consideration in the preparation and execution of emergency response plans. All employees are given notice that an individualized emergency response plan is available to them upon request. This instruction is given upon hire and annually thereafter as part of the employee’s mandatory training courses. This information is also explicitly written in the employee Emergency Response, Health & Safety and Accessibility Handbook which is made accessible to all staff of

the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara. Employees are informed as per the methods of requesting an individualized emergency response plan and upon request are made available in an appropriate format with the guidance of those seeking accommodation. A copy of this accommodation is delivered to the employee and a second copy is placed in their employee file.

#### 8. Documentation of Accommodations

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara has implemented a system to ensure accommodation efforts are recorded for the benefit of the employee. When the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara provides individual written accommodation plans for an employee who requires and requests the individualized plan, a copy of the accommodation is delivered to the employee and a second copy is placed in their employee file for future reference.

#### 9. Return to Work Process

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara is committed to ensuring a return to work process is executed when possible. When an employee is eligible to return to work after injury or illness, the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara will provide an individual written return to work plan for those employees who require one. A copy of this return to work plan is delivered to the employee and a second copy is placed in their employee file.

#### 10. Reports and Reviews

Annual status reports have been completed annually on the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara's accessibility plan and all accessibility practices are reviewed and updated as applicable.

#### 11. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Upon request, documents produced at the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara are provided in an accessible format or with communication supports. The department where the document was created will consult with the requester to determine a suitable format, and it will be provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

### ***Accessibility Plan Priorities (2019-present)***

#### 1. Website Compliance

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara completed a review of its web presence in 2019 and is committed to ensuring the club's website and web content conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA throughout all current applications. An annual review of compliance is in effect with a third-party service provider to test our front facing web applications for compliance and the BGCN will continue to correct its website accessibility compliance issues as identified.

#### 2. Facilities

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara is committed to ensuring its facilities are AODA compliant and accessible. Senior management will continue to review current facilities and plans for any new construction to determine what is needed to ensure that the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara continues to be compliant with AODA regulations. Needs that arise



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outside of the review will continue to be addressed as time and budget permits. In addition, any future capital construction will be AODA compliant.

### 3. Training Review

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara is committed to reviewing and updating the mandatory AODA accessibility compliance training on an annual basis. Upon annual review the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act will be reviewed and any relevant updates will be made and implemented to the training materials.

### 4. Maintain Mandatory Provincial Accessibility Compliance Reporting

Provincial accessibility compliance reporting is mandated to be completed by organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara every 3 years. The last report was filed on March 30, 2023 complying with the December 31 2023 submission deadline. The next filing requirement is scheduled on or before December 31, 2026. Senior staff will endeavor to ensure that reporting remains compliant in the years to come.

## ***Appendix A: Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Accessibility (AODA) Policy***

### **POLICY**

The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara will promote excellence in program and service delivery to all persons with varying abilities.

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### **APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, students, members, visitors and any person engaged in programs and services.

### **PROCEDURES**

1. The Chief Executive Officer or designate will ensure that employees:
  - a. Are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by persons with disabilities while utilizing Boys and Girls Club of Niagara facilities, programs and services;
  - b. Communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability;
  - c. Welcome service animals in Boys and Girls Club of Niagara facilities, programs, and services where permitted by public health;
  - d. Welcome persons acting in the role of support person for those with varying abilities. Further there will be no additional charges for such support persons for attendance;
2. Provide notification in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for those with varying disabilities promptly. Notice will be posted at public facilities owned/operated by the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara. The clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available;
3. The Chief Executive Officer or designate will ensure training is provided to all employees, volunteers and others who interact with the public or other third parties on behalf of the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara;
4. The Chief Executive Officer or designate will accept feedback and complaints which will be addressed according to Boys and Girls Club of Niagara's regular feedback and complaint management procedures;
5. The Chief Executive Officer or designate will notify employees when changes are made to the accessible customer service plan.



## Appendix B-Summary of Compliance Timelines

Accessibility Plan Accomplishments (2015-2018) & Accessibility Plan Priorities (2019-present)				
PART I: GENERAL STANDARDS				
Item	Deliverables	Compliance Date	Accountability	Status
Establishment of Accessibility Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;BGCN Accessibility Policy Created</li> <li>&gt;Statement of commitment established</li> <li>&gt;policy document made available on the BGCN website</li> </ul>	November, 2015	BGCN Accessibility Advisory Committee	Complete and Ongoing
Accessibility Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; BGCN multi-year accessibility plan established</li> <li>&gt; BGCN multi-year accessibility plan made available on BGCN website</li> <li>&gt;prepare annual status reports and update on website (first update October 2016)</li> </ul>	November, 2015	BGCN Accessibility Advisory Committee	Complete and Ongoing
Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;update made to purchasing policy regarding AODA requirements for consideration</li> </ul>	November, 2015	Chief Operating Officer/ Operations Committee	Complete and Ongoing
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; Ensure current training is adequate</li> <li>&gt;Annual Review of training resources</li> </ul>	November, 2015	Chief Operating Officer/Operations Manger	Complete and Ongoing
PART II: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STANDARDS				
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Wording will be added to existing web page about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports, if requested</li> </ul>	November, 2017	Community Engagement Manager	Complete and Ongoing
Website/Web Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt;Current websites and web content will meet WCAG2.0 Level AA compliance.</li> <li>&gt;If a significant refresh of the web site and web content is completed prior to the compliance deadline then the website</li> </ul>	January, 2019	Community Engagement Manager	Complete and Ongoing

	and web content will be compliant upon launch.			
<b>PART III: EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS</b>				
Recruitment, General	Prospective applicants are advised of the availability of accommodations within correspondence relating to that employment opportunity posting: “The Boys and Girls Club of Niagara is an equal opportunity employer committed to inclusive, barrier-free recruitment and selection processes and work environment. We will accommodate the needs of the applicants under the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) throughout all stages of the recruitment and selection process. Please advise the Human Resources Department to ensure your accessibility needs are accommodated throughout this process. Information received relating to accommodation measures will be addressed confidentially.”	November, 2017	Human Resource Manager/Human Resources Assistant	Complete and Ongoing
Recruitment, Assessment or Selection Process	Selected applicants are advised of the availability of accommodations throughout all stages of the recruitment and selection process in wording of job posting above	November, 2017	Human Resource Manager/Human Resources Assistant	Complete and Ongoing
Notice to Successful Applicants	Successful applicants are notified of accommodation practices and policies	November, 2018	Human Resource Manager/Human Resources Assistant	Complete and Ongoing
Informing Employees of Supports	Employees are advised of their right to accommodation in their letter of employment	November, 2018	Human Resource Manager/Human Resources Assistant	Complete and Ongoing
Workplace Emergency Response Information	Employees are informed as per the methods of requesting an individualized emergency response plan within emergency response training upon hire and annually thereafter	November, 2015	Chief Operating Officer/Operations Manager	Complete and Ongoing
Documented Individual	BGCN provides individual written accommodation plans for all	November, 2017	Human Resource	Complete

Accommodation Plans	employees who require and request the individualized plan. A copy of this accommodation is delivered to the employee and a second copy is placed in their employee file.		Manager/Human Resources Assistant	and Ongoing
Return-to-work Process	BGCN provides individual written return to work plans for all employees who require. A copy of this return to work plan is delivered to the employee and a second copy is placed in their employee file.	November, 2018	Human Resource Manager/Human Resources Assistant	Complete and Ongoing
<b>PART V: DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES STANDARDS (ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT)</b>				
Formation of the Accessibility Committee and Facility Design	>Formation of the Boys and Girls Club of Niagara Accessibility Committee >Committee to make suggestions to new construction to meet AODA requirements when applicable	November, 2015	BGCN Accessibility Advisory Committee	Complete and Ongoing
<b>PART VI: ACCESSIBLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (REVISIONS TO ONTARIO BUILDING CODE)</b>				
Requirements not yet enacted	The Accessible Built Environment Standards (Revisions to the accessibility portions of the Ontario Building Code) are not yet enacted into law in Ontario. BGCN representatives will continue to monitor and address items it believes pose barriers throughout all its sites. Management will meet with the Operations Director to voice any and all AODA compliance concerns and in turn those concerns will be brought to the attention of the BGCN Advisory committee as they arise.	Ongoing	BGCN Accessibility Advisory Committee/Chief Operating Officer/Operations Manger/Site Management	In Progress