

BGC Niagara

Accessibility Plan

2026



Opportunity
Changes
Everything

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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. BGC Niagara does not provide conventional or specialized transportation services as defined under the AODA Transportation Standards. As such, these standards are not currently applicable to BGC Niagara operations.

This Accessibility Plan has been prepared to address issues and barriers preventing persons with disabilities from participating fully in the BGC Niagara 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 BGC 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 annually and periodically as new legislation continues to come into effect. An annual status report will also be posted on the BGC Niagara website outlining our progress to date. The multi-year accessibility plan and annual status updates are posted on the BGC Niagara website in the Accessibility section and are available in accessible formats or with communication supports, at no cost, upon request.

BGC Niagara Accessibility (AODA) Policy:

BGC 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 BGC Niagara Accessibility Policy is available in supplement as Appendix A.

Statement of Commitment:

BGC 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 BGC Niagara Accessibility (AODA) Policy consistent with the Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act.

2026 BGC Niagara Accessibility Plan:

The following pages outline BGC 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. BGC Niagara will review and update the multi-year accessibility plan in consultation with BGC 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 BGC 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.

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 BGC Niagara. The committee consists of volunteer Board members and staff of BGC Niagara. As of the publication of this plan, the current advisory committee consists of the following members:

David D'Addio	BGC Niagara Board President
Bill Walters	BGC Niagara Board Vice-President (Operations)
Allison VanRooijen	BGC Niagara Board Director
Andrew Gill	BGC Niagara Board Director
Joe Macoretta	BGC Niagara Interim Chief Executive Officer

Accessibility Plan: Accomplishments (2015-2018)

1. General Standards

In 2015, BGC 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 BGC Niagara'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 BGC Niagara's commitment to accessibility and outline what BGC Niagara does to remove barriers to persons with disabilities. The policy establishes BGC Niagara'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 BGC Niagara's feedback process. In addition AODA clauses have been embedded within other BGC Niagara policies where appropriate including but not limited to updates made to the purchasing policy regarding AODA requirements for consideration.

3. Training

BGC 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

BGC 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 BGC Niagara logo is posted at all owned/leased sites in a conspicuous location that reads “BGC 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. 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. Feedback related to accessibility may also be provided in accessible formats or with communication supports, upon request.

5. Employment Recruitment Accommodation

BGC 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:

“BGC 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

BGC 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

BGC 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 BGC 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

BGC Niagara has implemented a system to ensure accommodation efforts are recorded for the benefit of the employee. When BGC 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

BGC 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, BGC 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 BGC 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 BGC 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

BGC Niagara completed a review of its web presence in 2019 and is committed to ensuring BGC Niagara'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

BGC Niagara is committed to ensuring its facilities are AODA compliant and accessible. All new construction and major renovations undertaken by BGC Niagara comply with the applicable Design of Public Spaces Standards currently in force under the AODA. Senior management will continue to review current facilities and plans for any new construction to determine what is needed to ensure that BGC Niagara continues to be compliant with AODA regulations. Needs that arise 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

BGC 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 BGC 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. This reporting is completed through the Province of Ontario's Accessibility Compliance Reporting system in accordance with legislative requirements. 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.

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

PART III: EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS				
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 Accommodation Plans	BGCN provides individual written accommodation plans for all 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.	November, 2017	Human Resource Manager/Human Resources Assistant	Complete 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
PART V: DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES STANDARDS (ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT)				
Formation of the Accessibility Committee and Facility Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> >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
PART VI: ACCESSIBLE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (REVISIONS TO ONTARIO BUILDING CODE)				
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