

Multi-year Accessibility Plan

December 27, 2023

Summary

Archaeological Research Associates Ltd. (ARA) is an independent consulting firm dedicated to conserving the heritage of Ontario. Our longevity flows from the experience of our staff and our ongoing commitment to excellence and customer service. Over the past 50 years, our work has contributed to the enrichment of Ontario's heritage through discovery, documentation, research, and presentation.

Our core values are:

1. We will always be mindful that it is a tremendous privilege to work with the heritage of any community.
2. We acknowledge Indigenous stewardship over their own cultural properties, the ongoing trauma of Colonialism, and the burden it imposes on us to de-colonize all aspects of our practice.
3. We hold ourselves to the highest professional, ethical, and environmental standards in everything we do.
4. We seek collaborative relationships with our colleagues, clients, and partners, based on integrity and respect.

ARA 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. In our core values, we demonstrate our longstanding belief in respect and integrity for all peoples.

Statement of Commitment

ARA is committed to equal accessibility to and participation in our goods and services. ARA shall always strive to be inclusive in our service offerings in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to preventing and removing accessibility barriers as outlined under the AODA and IASR.

1. General Requirements

Develop Accessibility Policies

ARA is committed to maintaining an accessibility policy. The policy includes an organizational statement of commitment and direction for employees at all levels of the organization to meet the accessibility requirements for people with disabilities.

- In 2023, ARA updated its Accessibility Policy. This policy was reviewed and posted to ARA's website. The Policy is available in accessible formats upon request.
- The Accessibility Policy shall be reviewed and updated at least once every three years, or whenever there is a need to ensure compliance based on a change to AODA/IASR requirements.
- ARA maintains a Multi-year Accessibility Plan.
- In 2023, ARA updated its Multi-year Accessibility Plan. This plan was overhauled and posted on ARA's website. The Plan is available in accessible formats upon request.
- The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years, or to ensure compliance whenever there is change to AODA/IASR requirements.

Training Requirements

ARA employees, volunteers, all those who participate in developing ARA's policies, and those who provide goods, services, or facilities on ARA's behalf, shall be required to undergo training on the requirements of the AODA, the IASR, and on the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

- In 2019, online eLearning video-training modules were introduced.
- Training is mandatory when onboarding new staff.
- Refresher training will be implemented to ensure knowledge remains current for all full-time, part-time, and seasonal staff.
- Records will be kept of employees who have completed training.

2. Information and Communication Standards

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

ARA shall provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, upon request. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner and shall consider the person's accessibility needs to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

- ARA will continue to update its policies on accessible formats to ensure compliance.
- ARA will review the need for accessibility clauses on official documents.
- Communication supports for feedback will be reviewed and updated.

Feedback

ARA has committed to strategies to ensure feedback by persons with disabilities may be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, or by electronic means. Feedback received by ARA shall be responded to, documented, and tracked.

Feedback will be received respectively by mail, email, or telephone at:

- Address: 205 Cannon Street East, Hamilton, Ontario, L8L 2A9
- Email: info@ar heritage.ca
- Phone: 519.804.2291 x101

Emergency Procedures, Plans, and Safety Information

ARA shall provide emergency procedures, plans, and safety information to employees and the public, in an accessible format upon request. Provision will be made in a timely manner and with appropriate communication supports.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

When updating or making significant change to its website, ARA shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features, and shall conform with World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level A initially and Level AA in accordance with the schedule set out in the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards.

- In 2021, ARA conformed its website to meet WCAG 2.0, Level AA standards.
- ARA will create future guidance for any new content to be published on its website.

3. Employment Standards

Recruitment

ARA shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process. ARA shall notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate further in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes to be used. If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, ARA shall consult with the applicant and provide, or arrange for the provision of, a suitable accommodation in a manner that considers the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

- ARA has updated its Careers web page to provide notification to the public that accommodations for applicants with disabilities can be made and who to contact if required.
- All external job postings will identify ARA as an equal-opportunity employer.
- During the request for an interview, ARA's Human Resources office will inquire whether the applicant needs any accommodations for the interview.
- Since 2020, ARA has conducted all interviews via online video conferencing.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

Upon the request of an employee with a disability, ARA shall consult with the employee to provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports for information needed to perform the employee's job as well as information that is generally available to employees.

- ARA shall inform its employees of its policies (and any changes to those policies) used to support employees with disabilities.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

ARA shall maintain a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. If requested, information regarding accessible formats and available communications supports is also included in individual accommodation plans. In addition, the plans shall include individualized workplace emergency response information (where required) and shall identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

ARA shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that individualized information is necessary, and if ARA is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability. ARA shall provide this information as soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation.

- Where the employee requires assistance, ARA shall, with the consent of the employee, provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by ARA to aid the employee.
- ARA shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed, and when ARA reviews its general emergency response policies.
- ARA will review and revise any individualized workplace emergency response information on an ongoing basis to ensure that employees with disabilities are accommodated.

Return-to-work Process

ARA has in place a documented return-to-work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations to return to work. The return-to-work process outlines the steps ARA shall take to facilitate the return to work and includes documented individual accommodation plans. This return-to-work process does not replace or override any other return-to-work processes created by or under any other statute (i.e. the Ontario Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997).

- ARA will review and revise the return-to-work process on an ongoing basis to ensure that employees with disabilities are accommodated.

4. Customer Service Standards

Assistive Devices

ARA employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors shall accommodate the use of personal assistive devices which enable a person with a disability to access ARA's goods, services, and facilities.

- Assistive devices include, but are not limited to: GPS, mobility devices, personal oxygen tanks, miniature pocket recorders, and communication boards.

Service Animals

ARA employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors shall accommodate the use of service animals by people with disabilities who are accessing ARA goods, services, and facilities unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

- A guide dog is defined in Section One of the Blind Persons' Rights Act. To be considered a service animal under the Customer Service Standard, it must be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability must provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability.

Support Persons

Where a person with a disability accessing ARA goods, services, or facilities is accompanied by a support person, ARA employees, volunteers, and third-party contractors shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and shall ensure that the person with a disability can access the support person while on the premises.

- A support person is a person who accompanies the person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs; or who assists with access to goods or services. The support person can be a paid support worker, volunteer, a friend, or a family member.

Training - Contractors, Consultants and Service Providers

ARA shall ensure that its employees and volunteers who deal with the public on behalf of ARA, and those who are involved in ARA's policy and program development, receive training on accessible customer service.

- Third-party contractors who deliver goods and services on behalf of ARA are also required to ensure that they meet the legislative requirements of accessible customer service.
- Training includes information on the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07.

- Managers and supervisors shall ensure that training records are maintained, including dates when training is provided and the employees who received training.
- ARA training can be provided at an orientation session and a mandatory eLearning video module.

Feedback

ARA shall receive and respond to feedback about how goods and services are delivered to people with disabilities. Public feedback may be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, or by electronic means. Feedback received by ARA shall be responded to, documented, and tracked.

ARA will continue to monitor and evaluate any feedback related to accessibility throughout the year. This information will be used to continuously improve our processes and may be integrated into our multi-year accessibility plan.

We welcome all feedback and ask you contact us:

- **In Person:** 205 Cannon St. East, Hamilton, Ontario, L8L 2A9
- **By Email:** info@araheritage.ca
- **By Phone:** 519.804.2291 x101