

2023–25 Accessibility Plan

General

Executive summary

At Halifax Employers Association we are committed to providing a barrier free workplace to the extent possible while meeting our bona fide occupational requirements as it relates to the hiring and training of ILA Represented employees and our own staff. Our entire organization is working to ensure accessibility is considered in all planning by considering legislation such as:

- *Canadian Human Rights Act*
- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*
- *Canadian Labour Code*
- *Employment Equity Act*
- *Accessibility Canada Act*

When developing this plan, we foresee, in consultation with our members employing labour, using tools such as surveys, focused discussions with team member and policy reviews to ensure a fully inclusive environment. We identified barriers and actions to improve accessibility.

To deliver on our plan, we have consulted with our employer members and sought input from the community and our employees through and survey and written requests to our community outreach contact list.

Our first accessibility plan is focussed on four main areas: recruitment and selection, training, workplace accommodation and communication.

Our accessibility statement:

The Halifax Employers Association is an equal opportunity employer, which includes active engagement of members of designated groups including persons with disabilities. We strive to ensure those with disabilities are treated fairly and with respect and we actively work with our employee representatives to meet our employment equity goals.

Your input

We openly welcome feed back from the community and our employees on how to reduce barriers in the workplace. From time to time, we seek input in the form of surveys, discussion groups or direct communication. To provide feedback on accessibility, use one of the contact methods below. Should you require assistance while providing feedback,

please let us know, and we will do our best to meet your needs. We will respond to your feedback in a timely manner should you choose to share your contact information. You may also choose to provide feedback anonymously.

Contact: Sadie Petrie, David Delaney,

HEA Mailing address: Halifax Employers Association, Suite 200, 5121 Sackville Street, Halifax, NS B3J 1K1

Email – HEA@hfxemp.ca

Webpage – www.halifaxemployers.com

Reporting on our plan

As required by the *Accessible Canada Act*, we will publish a status report every year that shows our progress against our commitments. We will review and update our accessibility plan **every three** years.

The Accessible Canada Act includes seven principles:

- Everyone must be treated with dignity.
- Everyone must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the life they are able and wish to have.
- Everyone must be able to participate fully and equally in society.
- Everyone must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire.
- Laws, policies, programs, services and structures must take into account the ways that different kinds of barriers and discrimination intersect.
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of laws, policies, programs, services and structures.
- Accessibility standards and regulations must be made with the goal of achieving the highest level of accessibility.

Areas described under the *Accessible Canada Act*

PSA Halifax has identified barriers in some of the areas identified in the Act, as well as actions to address them. These are outlined below;

1. Recruitment and Selection

HEA will continue to actively recruit and select members of the designated groups, including the disabled for all employment opportunities that arise. This will be done in the following ways:

- Direct contact with identified community groups.
- Updating this list of community outreach contacts on a regular basis.
- Meeting with community groups, job fairs and information sessions
- Posting of Employment and training opportunities on social and print media.
- Accommodation for testing and training

Desired outcomes

- Successfully attract members of designated groups to our industry
- Employees with disabilities report being treated with respect at a level that matches those of all employees without disabilities.
- Meeting our employment equity goals with respect to persons with disabilities.
- Successful accommodation of applicants

Barrier

Our recruiting process does not attract persons with disabilities although we are an equal opportunity employer.

Actions

- Increase public awareness of opportunities that exist for individuals with disabilities.
- Advise potential applicants that accommodation is available.
- All applicants are asked to self identify as being a member of a designated group.
- Accommodation while meeting bona fide occupational requirements in the following areas:
 - Strength and Endurance Testing – provide advanced training prior to testing, provide an exercise programme to aid potential applicants
 - Aptitude and Test of Workplace Essential Skills – provide accommodation for those require it where possible (this can include extra time, testing alone in a quiet space etc.)
 - Review all requests for accommodation

2. Training

Training of new and existing employees is very extensive as our system is based on attaining more and more skills in the workplace.

Desired outcomes

- Improved access to all training for people with varying disabilities.

Barrier

Equipment design and purchase is controlled by our employer members. Not all equipment can be modified. In addition, we operate in a safety sensitive environment which means all accommodation must meet any safety concerns or bona fide occupational requirements.

Actions

- Review all requests for accommodation on individual basis
- Review possible modifications to equipment and infrastructure with members employing labour to improve accessibility.
- Modify training to meet physical, mental and emotional demands of applicant/employee where possible.
- Seek input from workplace health and safety committees on hazards and barriers in the workplace as it relates to the disabled.

3. Accommodation

Accommodation of applicants and employees is an ongoing activity, and the number and types of accommodations continues to grow regularly.

Desired outcomes

- Effective response to applicant and employee requests for accommodation.
- Workplace accommodation that is safe, effective, and based on sound medical review of the applicants'/employees' condition and needs.

Barrier

The applicant/employee must make the HEA aware of the need for accommodation so that appropriate action may be taken.

Action

- Continue to follow our accommodation policy. Raise awareness of the policy and the fact that accommodation is available in communications to new recruits, applicants, and all employees.
- Review policy on a regular basis to assure it is meeting our needs

- Modify training programmes when required to assist accommodation.
- Continue to use a neutral third-party provider of professional health expertise to assist with the managing and review of workplace accommodation.

4. Communication

Communication with potential applicants, trainees and employees is quite difficult in this industry. Workers for the most part set their own hours of where and when they come to work. The HEA does not directly employ any ILA represented workers. They are employed by our members who hire and pay them for specific work periods.

Desired outcomes

- Improved communication to all employees including those with disabilities.
- Increased use and access to electronic media

Barrier

Communication to employees is difficult during the best of times. Individuals with disabilities may have issues with comprehension, computer skills, reading, writing, hearing, or may be visually impaired.

Action

- Continue to provide important information in written form, e.g. annual mailout, workplace postings.
- Complement written communication with access to same information on social media or HEA website
- Add features to Website for visually impaired, or those who have problems when it is next updated
- Offer alternative forms of communication when reaching out to applicants and/or employees.

Our consultation process:

Posting to all employees notifying them that we seeking feedback on barriers in the workplace either by phone, in person, in writing or through an online survey.

Community outreach groups were also canvassed to provide the information mentioned above.