



Accessibility Plan

2014 – 2021

The Township of Ear Falls' Accessibility Plan is for the 2014-21 period. It outlines the steps that the organization will take to comply with Ontario's accessibility laws, improve opportunities for people with disabilities by preventing and removing accessibility barriers.

Statement of Commitment

The Township of Ear Falls is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Accessible Emergency Information

The Township of Ear Falls is committed to providing residents and customers with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way upon request. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary.

Training

The Township of Ear Falls will provide training to employees, volunteers and other staff members on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers and other staff members.

The Township of Ear Falls will take the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessible laws by **January 1st, 2015**.

- Provide Accessibility Training for all new employees in a timely manner – in accordance with the Township's Accessibility Policy – Customer Service Policy
- Ensure that completion certificates are available for all Accessibility Training

The Township of Ear Falls will take the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario's accessible laws by **January 1st, 2021**.

- Provide Accessibility Training for all new employees and volunteers in a timely manner in accordance with the Township's Accessibility Policy – Customer Service Policy
- Provide Accessibility Refresher Training for employees at a Tailgate Meeting
- Ensure that completion certificates are available for all Accessibility Training and Refresher Training
- Provide Accessibility Refresher Information to employees in a news bulletin distributed with paystubs

Information and communications

The Township of Ear Falls is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.

The Township of Ear Falls will take the following steps to make ensure existing feedback processes are accessible to people with disabilities upon request by **January 1st, 2015**.

- Provide public notice at the Municipal Office and on the Municipal Website of the availability of accessibility options
- Post the Accessibility Policy and Accessibility Plan on the Municipal Website, and make it available at the Municipal Office
- Train employees on the process to provide documents in accessible formats

The Township of Ear Falls will take the following steps to make sure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request by **January 1st, 2016**.

- Train employees on the process to provide documents in accessible formats
- Retain a consultant to assist in reformatting publicly available documents for the January 1st, 2012 – current period posted on the website www.ear-falls.com to conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA standards. Documents posted prior to January 1st, 2012 are not required to be reformatted.

The Township of Ear Falls will take the following steps to make all websites and content conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA by **January 1st, 2021**.

- Retain a consultant to redesign the website www.ear-falls.com to conform with WCAG 2.0, Level AA standards
- Procure the necessary equipment and/or supplies to ensure that employees are able to maintain the website and post content in accordance with the WCAG 2.0, Level AA standard
- Continue to monitor the WCAG 2.0, Level AA standard to ensure that any changes are considered in the Township of Ear Falls website development.

NOTE: WCAG 2.0 is an internationally accepted standard for web accessibility developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international team of experts. WCAG 2.0 sets out guidelines for organizations to follow to make their websites more accessible for people with disabilities. The guidelines cover things like writing web content in clear language, providing alternate text for images and making sure someone can navigate your website with just a keyboard. Each guideline has three levels of accessibility: A, AA and AAA. Level AAA is the highest level of accessibility. Following these guidelines should make it easier for everyone to access your website and content, including people without disabilities.

Employment

The Township of Ear Falls is committed to fair and accessible employment practices. We will take the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, will accommodate people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes and when people are hired.

- Wording stating the Township of Ear Falls' commitment to accessible employment practices will be included in all job postings.
- Supervisors will be provided training on the importance of accommodating people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment process and when people are hired.

- Accessible job recruitment and assessment opportunities will be provided such as accessible interview formats.

The Township of Ear Falls will follow the process, as defined in the Township of Ear Falls' Health and Safety Policy, for developing individual accommodation plans for employees that have identified a disability and return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability. These plans will outline:

- the accommodations that will be provided
- how the employer will help the employee(s) stay safe in an emergency
- accessible formats and communications supports that the employee(s) need, and
- how and when the plan will be reviewed and updated

The plans will remain private to the greatest extent possible, while recognizing that the Township, in coordination with the employee, will need to implement the plan within municipal operations which are primarily public workplaces.

The Township of Ear Falls will take the following steps to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified.

- Review all requests / comments received regarding the employment process and make necessary changes to better accommodate people with disabilities.

Design of Public Spaces

The Township of Ear Falls will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces. Public spaces include:

- Recreational trails
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces
- Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
- Accessible off street parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

In the event of a service disruption, we will notify the public of the service disruption and alternatives available.

Review

The Township of Ear Falls

- will review and update the Accessibility Plan every five years
- Will make the Accessibility Plan available to the public on the municipal website and at the Municipal Office. These documents will be provided in accessible formats, upon request.

- will prepare Annual Update on progress that has been made to achieve the Accessibility Plan what has been done to reduce barriers to accessibility. These updates will be available to the public on the municipal website and at the Municipal Office.

For More Information

For more information on this Accessibility Plan, please contact:

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Accessible formats of this document are available free upon request.