

BLG

Borden Ladner Gervais

2014-2016

**Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
for Borden Ladner Gervais'
Ontario Offices**

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Introduction to Accessibility Standards in Ontario

In 2005, the government of Ontario set the goal of creating a barrier-free Ontario for people with disabilities by 2025 by creating the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (“AODA”).

To reach this goal, the Ministry of Community and Social Services (the “Ministry”) has created Regulations that set out the actions that organizations (public, private and not-for-profit) must take to meet this goal and the deadlines they must follow in doing so. The Regulations cover accessibility standards in customer service, information and communications, employment, transportation and the built environment.

Borden Ladner Gervais LLP (“BLG”) is committed to playing its part in helping Ontario become a more accessible province for all individuals. Our Firm’s Ontario offices have already complied with the standards under Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – by creating internal policies, practices and procedures to ensure our members recognize the role we play in making Ontario more accessible. These initiatives included the creation of a training program for all Firm members on the AODA and how to provide accessible services. We have also developed a feedback process, via our website (www.blg.com) and in hard-copy form available at our reception desk, for individuals to help us ensure that we maintain our high level of accessibility to all individuals.

Commencing in 2013, we began our preparations to meet the 2014, 2015 and 2016 requirements under Regulation 191/11 – Integrated Accessibility Standards – which includes information, communications and employment standards. BLG has created this multi-year accessibility plan to communicate our planned initiatives and their intended completion dates. We are committed to meeting these goals on or before the required dates to demonstrate our commitment to identifying and removing barriers that exist for persons with disabilities.

Finally, the accessibility standards regarding the built environment are currently in development by the Ministry. BLG will begin preparing to meet these standards once they are released. In 2013, the Toronto Office committed to new leased premises starting on January 1, 2017 and we will be incorporating the AODA requirements into its design.

Statement of Commitment

BLG is committed to treating all individuals in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence, as evidenced by our *Respectful Workplace* Policy and accessibility initiatives. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of individuals 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, 2005* and its Regulations.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

The multi-year accessibility plan is a tool for BLG to communicate its accessibility initiatives internally and to the public. This plan will be reviewed at minimum every 5 years and will be supplemented by annual reports that will also be available online. The attached chart outlines the planned initiatives for BLG's Ontario offices for the years 2014 through 2016, and the deadlines for completion of each initiative.

2011 – 2013 Accomplished Initiatives

1. In April 2011, we created our first accessibility policy to solidify BLG's commitment to building a more accessible community.
2. As of 2012, all of our members have been trained on the *AODA* standards and how to provide accessible services. New members are generally trained within 30 days.
3. In December 2012, we submitted our first Annual Report to the Ministry to demonstrate our compliance with the accessibility standards.
4. In 2012, we redesigned our reception services and resources to improve accessibility to all individuals.
5. In 2012, we have made additional telecommunications equipment available to our members and clients, as well as provided training to firm members on how to use this equipment to improve accessibility of our resources.
6. In 2012, we have identified the most accessible meeting rooms at BLG and ensure that all meetings with clients who have disabilities and all introductory meetings with clients occur in these rooms so that we are prepared to accommodate any client in a timely manner.

7. In 2012, we invested in additional signage to make office navigation easier for all individuals.
8. In 2013, we developed a feedback procedure via our website (www.blg.com) and in hard-copy form available at our reception desk that we regularly monitor and use to develop our future goals and initiatives.
9. In 2013, we created a new website that meets many of the WCAG 2.0 Level A standards for accessibility to ensure it is user-friendly for all individuals.
10. In 2013, we created our first multi-year accessibility plan, amended our internal accessibility policy and developed emergency response plans for our Firm members with identified disabilities.

Looking Forward: Planned Initiatives for BLG's Toronto, Waterloo and Ottawa Offices in 2014-2016

Deadline	Organizational	Information & Communications	Employment	Infrastructure	Ongoing
<p>Jan 1, 2014 (complete in 2013)</p>	<p>Approve updated internal policy on accessibility.</p> <p>Publish multi-year accessibility plan to the BLG website (www.blg.com).</p> <p>Ensure firm members are aware of BLG's new statement of commitment to providing accessible services.</p>	<p>Review feedback procedures to ensure that we are able to provide accessible formats for all individuals.</p> <p>Investigate methods of providing accessible formats and communication supports.</p>	<p>Review current employee and recruitment accommodation process in preparation for the 2016 requirements.</p>	<p>Communicate with the designers of BLG Toronto's new leased premises regarding <i>AODA</i> requirements.</p> <p>Ensure BLG Ottawa's new reception area meets all <i>AODA</i> requirements.</p> <p>Continue monitoring the Ministry's progress on upcoming accessibility standards for the built environment.</p>	<p>Publish annual Accessibility Report to BLG website (www.blg.com).</p> <p>Ensure firm members and clients remain updated regarding all <i>AODA</i> developments and the impact they have on BLG's service offerings, policies, practices and procedures.</p>
<p>Jan 1, 2015 (complete in 2014)</p>	<p>Updated training will be given to all Firm members, volunteers and those providing services on our behalf on new accessibility standards and the <i>Ontario Human Rights Code</i>.</p>	<p>Ensure feedback procedures are accessible and known to all firm members so that they can appropriately direct clients.</p> <p>Provide accessible formats and communication supports.</p>	<p>Begin implementing new employee and recruitment accommodation process.</p>	<p>Review final construction plans for BLG's new leased premises to ensure they are in compliance with <i>AODA</i> requirements.</p> <p>Review all policies and procedures for the new location of the Ottawa reception area.</p>	<p>Provide training to firm members, contractors and others who deal with the public or third parties on its behalf in respect of any changes to policies.</p>
<p>Jan 1, 2016 (complete in 2015)</p>	<p>Review multi-year accessibility plan for accessibility initiatives for 2017 and beyond.</p>	<p>Begin planning for transition to WCAG 2.0 Level AA standard by 2021.</p>	<p>Enhance accessibility in recruitment and accommodation processes.</p> <p>Develop individual accommodation plans for members with disabilities.</p>	<p>Review all policies and procedures for the Toronto Office's new location.</p>	

Conclusion

This plan will be available on BLG's website (www.blg.com) and information about its release will be communicated by internal memorandum and posted on our intranet. BLG is committed to Ontario's goal of creating a barrier-free Ontario by 2025 and will work diligently to ensure we meet our targets. If you have any feedback regarding the accessibility of our services at BLG, please visit our website and submit a feedback form.