

**APG# CS39: Accessibility Standards for
Information & Communication**

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1. Preamble

The Board is committed to ensuring that people with disabilities have the same opportunity of access to our services as do all others we serve. The Board is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities, in a timely manner, in the provision of services related to information and communications.

2. Definitions

- a) **Information** includes data, facts and knowledge that exist in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.
- b) **Communications** means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent, or received.
- c) **Accessible formats** include but are not limited to options such as large print, screen readers, braille, audio format, captioning.
- d) **Conversion-ready** is an electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an accessible format.
- e) **WCAG** refers to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

3. Responsibilities

- a) Supervisory Officers, Principals and Departmental Managers will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others providing services and programs on behalf of the board have received training in the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards including the Standards related to Information and Communications.
- b) Initial training will be completed by January 1, 2014.

4. Feedback

- a) The Board will ensure that its processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities.
- b) Upon request the Board will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and/or communication supports to facilitate feedback.
- c) The Board will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports with regard to its feedback processes.
- d) The above provisions will be in place by January 1, 2014.

5. Procurement

- a) The Board and all its managers and school-based administrators will, wherever practicable, incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods and services, designing new systems or planning a new initiative that are related to provision of information and communications services.
- b) The above approach will be in place by January 1, 2013.

6. Provision of information and communications in accessible formats

- a) Upon request, the Board will provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities to facilitate their access to the services of the Board.
- b) Accessible formats and communications supports will be provided in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs and at a cost no greater than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- c) The Board will determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support and, in so doing, will consult with the person making the request.
- d) The Board will notify the public, through websites, general publications and other relevant means, about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports.
- e) The Board will ensure that the provisions of 4.0 are in place by January 1, 2014.

7. Accessible Websites

- a) The Board will ensure that, as of January 1, 2014, all new websites and web content on these sites will conform to the WCAG 2.0 at Level A.
- b) The Board will ensure that, as of January 1, 2021, all its internet websites and web content will conform to WCAG 2.0 at Level AA.
- c) These requirements do not include Live Captions or Pre-recorded Audio Descriptions.
- d) These requirements apply to:
 - i. websites and web content, including web-based applications, that the Board controls directly or controls through a contractual relationship that allows for modifications of the product.
 - ii. web content published on a website after January 1, 2012.
- e) Where the Board determines that meeting these requirements is not practicable, such determination will include consideration of:
 - i. the availability of commercial software or tools or both; and
 - ii. significant impact on an implementation timeline that was planned or initiated before January 1, 2012.

8. Educational and training resources and materials

- a) The Board will, upon notification of need, provide educational or training resources or materials in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs due to a disability of the person to whom the material is to be provided.
- b) To do so, the Board will procure through purchase or obtain by other means an accessible or conversion-ready electronic format, where available.
- c) If the resources cannot be procured or converted into an accessible format the Board will arrange for the provision of comparable resources.
- d) The Board will upon notification of need, provide information on the requirements, availability and descriptions of programs in an accessible format to persons with disabilities.
- e) The Board will, upon notification of need, provide student records in an accessible format to persons with disabilities.
- f) The Board will ensure these services are in place as of January 1, 2013

9. Training for Program/Classroom Staff

- a) The Board will ensure that all staff involved in program or course design, delivery and instruction will be provided with accessibility awareness training related to these responsibilities.
- b) The Board will keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which training was provided and the number of individuals to who training was provided.
- c) The effective date for provision of this training is January 1, 2013.

School Libraries

- a) The Board will ensure that school libraries are able to provide, procure or acquire an accessible or conversion ready format of print resources upon request by a person with a disability.
- b) The effective date of the provision in 8.1 is January 1, 2015.
- c) The Board will ensure that school libraries are able to provide, procure or acquire an accessible or conversion ready format of digital or multimedia resources materials upon request by a person with a disability.
- d) The effective date of the provision in 8.1 is January 1, 2020.

10. References and related Administrative Procedures and Guidelines (APG)

Legal Framework

- a) Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)
- b) Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11
- c) Ontario Human Rights Code

Cross-Referencing

- a) Board's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan