



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Fort Frances Branch

**CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION
FORT FRANCES BRANCH
MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2024-2026**

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MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN (2024-2026)

A Message from CMHAFF CEO

The Board and staff of CMHAFF recognize the importance of providing equitable, diverse, and inclusive mental health and addiction programming, services, and employment. Ensuring accessibility includes removing barriers that prevent individuals from fully participating in society, including physical, architectural, informational, communicational, technological, and procedural obstacles. CMHAFF is committed to eliminating these barriers and designing a community mental health and addiction organization that allows all community members, including people with disabilities, to access their workplace and to receive quality client-centred and recovery-oriented services and programming based on equity, diversity, and inclusion principles. CMHAFF remains steadfast to the *Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act, 2005* (AODA) by fulfilling our organizational commitments and working towards making the province of Ontario accessible for all community members by 2025.

“The disability is not the problem. The accessibility is the problem”-Mohamed Jemni, 2013

Introduction

CMHAFF provides diverse mental health and addictions programming and services throughout the Kenora and Rainy River Districts. CMHAFF has offices in six communities: Fort Frances, Kenora, Dryden, Atikokan, Red Lake, and Sioux Lookout. Our staff provides many services and programming, including but not limited to psychoeducation, peer support, psychotherapy, behavioural support, crisis services, and community support. These services are offered one-to-one and within group settings within our offices while also provided via outreach in people’s homes, including long-term care and recovery homes and hospital settings throughout the Kenora and Rainy River Districts.

CMHAFF launched its first 24/7 crisis residential facility in the community of Fort Frances in October 2021. The CMHAFF Safe Bed Program is a 5-bed residential facility that provides short-term support for individuals with mental health and addiction crises who are involved with the criminal justice system. The program is offered through collaboration with the Rainy River District Services Board, the Ontario Provincial Police, and the Treaty 3 Police Services. The CMHAFF Safe Bed Program site is undergoing a robust renovation, resulting in a fully

physically accessible building. CMHAFF is proud to have secured funding for the elevator for the building to ensure accessibility for all.

CMHAFF strives to meet the needs of its employees, clients, families, and visitors with disabilities. We are diligently working to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

CMHAFF is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act, 2005*. This accessibility plan outlines the steps to achieve those requirements and improve opportunities for people with disabilities.

CMHAFF is committed to and guided by the four (4) core principles of Dignity, Independence, Integration, and Equal Opportunity.

This plan demonstrates how CMHAFF will play its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians.

This plan is reviewed and updated at least once every two (2) years.

We train every new staff member at onboarding and provide training concerning changes to organizational accessibility policies and procedures.

CMHAFF maintains all records of training provided, including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom training was provided.

Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Customer Service

CMHAFF remains in compliance with the Customer Service Standard. Our Association supports and promotes policies, practices, and procedures that reflect the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity.

All staff, volunteers, and students are fully trained in accessibility policies, procedures, and practices and complete AODA training at onboarding and annually after that.

All staff, volunteers, and students are educated to support clients, family members, and the public using assistive devices. Any person with a disability whom a service animal accompanies is welcome at all Association sites. CMHAFF is committed to providing full access to our premises, services, and programming to people with disabilities and their support persons while ensuring the individual has access to their support person at all times.

All staff, volunteers, and students are provided education on interacting appropriately when a support person accompanies an individual.

In the circumstance of a planned or unexpected disruption in accessibility offered by CMHAFF, every effort is made to notify clients, families, and the public in a format that best meets the unique circumstances and needs. When a client, family member or public member cannot be notified in advance, the relevant information is posted in prominent locations at public entrances with details of the disruptions and public service announcements are made when deemed beneficial.

CMHAFF invites feedback to improve client experience and satisfaction, including improving accessibility within our Association. CMHAFF participates in the Ontario Perception of Care Survey, and it is available in accessible formats, including larger print, by telephone, and by email. The Association's "Compliments & Concerns" brochure is also available in accessible formats.

- Various accessible formats available for OPOC, Referrals, Compliments & Concerns

Information and Communications

CMHAFF is committed to offering information and communication that is accessible and barrier-free for employees, clients, families, and members of the public.

- CMHAFF has adopted a web page contracted through CMHA National and meets the AODA requirements of WCAG 2.0 levels A/AA. The website allows for distinguishable and readable content and input assistance.
- Large print appointment cards with dates/times available
- Staff Resource list for assistive support from CNIB and Stroke Communication Board
- Assistive Device Resource Lending Library available for staff, clients, and families (e.g., talking clocks, pocket-talkers, magnifying devices, radios with fewer buttons, wireless headphones, door alarm)
- Tablet-lending library established for remote care monitoring clients
- DMHSOAP have access to, are trained in, and utilize MoCA blind cognitive screening tool

Employment

CMHAFF is an equal-opportunity employer who fosters a healthy and inclusive work environment. As per the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, CMHAFF accommodates applicants with disabilities throughout the

recruitment and selection processes. CMHAFF notifies employees and the public regarding accommodation availability for job applicants with disabilities. Applicants are informed that these accommodations are available upon request for the interview process and other candidate selection methods.

The CMHAFF interview process focuses on candidate experience, skills, and required qualifications and does not discriminate against candidates who have a disability or require accommodation. CMHAFF is committed to hiring decisions that are unbiased, inclusive, and equitable.

If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, consultation with the employee determines the barrier and the best way to provide necessary support to eliminate the barrier. CMHAFF provides or arranges for accessible formats and communication support for employees upon request. Accessible supports are provided promptly and at no cost to employees.

CMHAFF offers individual accommodations to support the needs of employees with disabilities. Personalized accommodation plans allow employees to contribute and participate in job-related functions and activities to the best of their abilities. The process of accommodating individuals takes a collaborative approach. It is a shared obligation of the Association, the employee, and any applicable professionals or representatives required to assist the employee throughout the process. Plans are reviewed yearly and as needed upon the employee's request or when a change results in a health or safety risk.

If necessary or requested, CMHAFF has created a process for developing Individualized Workplace Emergency Response Plans for employees with disabilities. The emergency response plan considers the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and is created collaboratively with the employee. If an employee with a disability requires assistance from a support person during an emergency, the agency designates a fellow employee to act as such. Individualized emergency response plans are reviewed when necessary, including when employees' needs change, or employees are to be relocated to another site.

CMHAFF is dedicated to a supported return-to-work program and develops and implements return-to-work processes for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and require accommodations to return to work. The Association collaborates with the employee to develop an individualized return-to-work plan and supports the employee in the transition period by addressing any barriers.

Employees' personal and health information is always kept confidential and protected Throughout the accommodation plan, emergency safety plan, and the return-to-work process.

CMHAFF endeavours to align training and development programs to meet the needs of employees with disabilities and provides training as soon as reasonably possible upon the person being assigned applicable duties. CMHAFF also considers barriers when implementing performance management processes and engaging in career development, employment support, or advancement opportunities.

- Process for development of a documented Individualized Accommodation Plan established and utilized
- Accessibility training, AODA training, and review of all related policies and procedures completed by all staff, visitors, and students

Procurement

CMHAFF is dedicated to procuring goods and services that remove barriers to promote accessible employment and client-centred, recovery-oriented services that are equitable, diverse, and inclusive services.

- Touch screen desktops and laptops purchased
- Elevator for Safe Bed site
- Assistive devices for staff, client, and family lending library

Training

CMHAFF is committed to providing staff, volunteer, and student education and training on accessibility for all Ontarians, including AODA Service and Human Rights training.

- AODA Customer Service

Design of Public Spaces

CMHAFF recognizes the importance of designing public spaces to ensure accessibility for all community members, including those with disabilities.

- Yellow lines painted on steps at two (2) locations
- Moved office in Red Lake to a fully physically accessible site
- Accessible ramp railing installed at 612 location

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- Funded elevator at Safe Bed Building
 - Accessible parking is available at all locations
 - Renovation in Dryden, developing accessible hallways for mobility devices

Transportation

CMHAFF is dedicated to supporting accessible transportation for all community members, including those with disabilities.

- Association vehicles have room to store mobility aids
- Staff assist in booking accessible transportation (e.g., handi-van)

Other

- Virtual meetings and psychotherapy
- Home visits and outreach provided, e.g., seniors homes, long-term care, recovery homes, hospital
- All CMHAFF meetings, including teams and committees, have Accessibility as a standing item to identify any issues or areas of needed improvement

Strategies and Actions for 2024-2026

CMHAFF is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities based on equity, diversity, and inclusion principles. CMHAFF leadership is dedicated to developing, monitoring and improving accessibility policies, procedures, and processes to eliminate barriers. CMHAFF recognizes our part in making Ontario accessible to all by 2025.

The following are strategies and actions for the 2024-2026 period that CMHAFF has identified and is committed to implementing:

Customer Service

- Post information in reception/waiting areas that welcomes assistive devices and service animals and encourages asking for support from staff, if needed.

Information and Communications

- Revise intake forms to include a field related to assistive device use or the need for an assistive device
- Development of QR code business cards to access website easily and to replace brochures with small print

Employment

- Continue to offer employment opportunities that are equitable, diverse, and inclusive.
- Ongoing staff training, including AODA Customer Service Standard Training and Understanding Human Rights Training

Procurement

- Secure TTY telephone services
- Secure push-button doors at entrances for barrier-free access
- Secure grab-bars, where needed
- Flooring that is non-slip and carpeting that is firm and dense, easy for mobility devices to roll over without difficulty

Training

- Ongoing staff, students, and volunteers training on policies, procedures, and practices related to accessibility and working towards a barrier-free Ontario.

Design of Public Spaces

- Apply for funding for capital renovations at two sites. Renovation for a fully accessible washroom in Dryden. Renovation for barrier-free reception, with a waiting area that is wide enough for mobility devices, client/family meeting rooms, and a washroom at 612 Portage in Fort Frances, which are compliant with AODA
- Signage with high-contrast and larger text

Transportation

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- Apply for funding for vehicles in Kenora and Dryden that will fit mobility devices