



CDAC Communication Disabilities Access Canada

A CALL TO ACTION FOR CANADA'S AAC COMMUNITY


NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

ISAAC Canada

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CDAC Communication Disabilities Access Canada

- National, non-profit, disability organization
- Founded 2001.
- Social justice and accessibility for people who have disabilities that affect communication.
- Lived experience and professionals.
- Project funded.
- Online resources, education, consultation, watchdog.
- Volunteer work.

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Agenda

- Overview of Accessibility Laws in Canada
- Call to Action
- What we need to do:
 - Accessible Canada Act
 - Parliamentary Precinct Accessibility Committee
 - Provincial Accessibility Acts
 - Accessible British Columbia Act
 - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- Useful CDAC Resources
- Discussion

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Accessibility and Human Rights Laws

Inform businesses and organizations what they must do to make their services accessible to everyone.

- Charter of Rights and Freedoms
- Human Rights Acts
- Provincial Accessibility Legislation
- Federal Accessible Canada Act
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

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Legal Sources

Charter of Rights and Freedoms

- Clark v. Clark (1982)
- Eldridge v. British Columbia (1997)

Human Rights Acts

- Prohibits discrimination of people with disabilities.
- Federal and Provincial.
- Duty to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Duty extends only to the point of undue hardship.

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Legal Sources

Provincial Accessibility Legislation

- Standards (guidelines) and Regulations (mandatory)

Examples:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities (2005)
- Accessibility for Manitobans Act (2013)
- Nova Scotia Accessibility Act (2017)
- British Columbia Accessibility Act (2021)

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Legal Sources

Accessible Canada Act (2019)

- Federal Services
 - Employment
 - Built environment
 - Information and communications technologies
 - **Communication**
 - Procurement of goods and services
- Government of Canada (CRA, Service Canada, Public safety, elections)
- Transport Canada
- Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission
- Accessibility Commissioner (hiring)
- Accessible Standards Committee
- Working Committees
 - Plain language, Emergencies, Built environment, employment.

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Common Themes

Developed in collaboration with people who have disabilities.

To date accessibility legislation focuses on:

- Respectful attitude
- Accessible buildings and spaces (ramps, door openers)
- Information and communications (websites, alternate formats, plain language)
- Sign language interpreting, captioning.

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Who and what is missing?

People who have communication disabilities, not caused by hearing loss.

Examples of accessibility needs:

- More time to communicate
- Supports to understand and / or express messages in face-to-face interactions
- Alternatives and/or supports for telephone, remote communications
- Accommodations and supports for reading, completing and signing forms.
- Access to AAC methods
- Access to trusted person(s) to assist with communication
- Formal support for communicating in critical situations such as police, court, consent to treatment.



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Accessible Canada Act

On May 20, 2021, CDAC and 11 communication organizations sent a [CALL TO ACTION](#) to federal government.

- Collect data on communication disability in surveys.
- Include people who use AAC / representative organizations on all committees / working groups.
- Canadian Human Rights Commission to develop guidelines on the duty to accommodate people who use AAC.
- Provide clear directives for effective communication supports during pandemics.

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Our Role: Accessible Canada Act

Be informed:

(see resource handout)

- Accessible Standards Canada Website, Social Media, Canada Gazette and contact link
 - CDAC Social Media
 - ISAAC Canada Facebook
 - Speech Language Pathology Associations
 - AAC clinic networks

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Our Role: Accessible Canada Act

Participate:

- Person with lived experience and an AAC Clinician or Speech Language Pathologist
 - Public consultations
 - Committees / Working groups
 - Feedback on draft documents

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Our Role: Parliamentary Precinct Committee

- Convened by the Science and Parliamentary Infrastructure Branch of Public Service and Procurement Canada, the Advisory Panel advises the government on all matters related to accessibility in the Parliamentary Precinct in Ottawa.
- Several national disability advocacy organisations and service providers are represented. I represent CDAC and the goals of communication access.
- The major challenge has been the, almost exclusive, focus on physical accessibility. It has been difficult to "get air time" for our issues.
- At the same time, an openness on the part of the government has meant being able to make concrete change.
- The lesson for our community is advocacy in a context of multiple disabilities coming together requires patience and a willingness to "muscle yourself in".

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Accessibility Legislation (Provincial)



Accessible Canada Act (ACA)

Definition:

"...a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment..."

Accessibility Standards include:

(c) information and communication technologies;
(c.1) communication, other than information and communication technologies.



Accessible British Columbia Act (ABCA) – Bill 6

Definition

"...a physical, sensory, mental, intellectual or cognitive impairment..."

Accessibility Standards include:

(d) information and communications

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Our Role: Accessible British Columbia Act

Be informed:

- ISAAC Canada Facebook and CDAC Facebook/Twitter
- Disability Alliance BC (DABC)

Actions:

- Contributed to a review prepared by DABC and emailed to all BC MLAs (members of legislative assembly)
- Emailed 16 key Liberal MLAs

Recommendations:

- Ask questions, share your thoughts and concerns, participate when/where possible

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Our Role: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

Accessibility areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Transportation
- Employment
- Public spaces
- **Healthcare (draft for public feedback)***
- Education (pending)

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Our Role: AODA

Be informed:

- CDAC Social Media

Actions:

- Apply to be on committees
- Provide feedback on draft standards

Recommendations:

- Ask questions, share your thoughts and concerns, participate when/where possible

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CDAC Accessibility Resources

Key Resources:

- Call to Action
- Making Services Accessible for People with Communication Disabilities
- Guidelines and Tips
- Communication access symbol
- Report on communication barriers and recommendations

<https://www.cdacanada.com/>

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Where to go from here?

Questions

Discussion

Next Steps



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