



Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) ***FAQ***

1. What is the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)?

Accessibility means access. It is the ability for everyone, regardless of physical or mental disabilities, to access, use and benefit from everything within their environment. It refers to the degree to which a product, device, service or environment is available to as many people as possible.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is a law passed by the Ontario legislature in 2005 that allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility and to enforce them. The standards are made into laws called regulations and they provide the details to help meet the goal of the AODA. The goal is to make Ontario fully accessible and inclusive by 2025.

2. Who has to comply with the AODA?

All organizations in Ontario must comply with the AODA. The AODA applies to all municipalities in the province, as well as ministries and agencies of the Ontario government, non-profits, and businesses. The AODA includes mandatory requirements and deadlines based on the size of the organization.

As a whole, the Archdiocese is regarded as a large organization under the AODA, all of our clergy, employees, independent contractors, and volunteers – including paid and unpaid positions – regardless of whether they have contact with the public, have a duty to comply with the AODA requirements.

The Archdiocese of Toronto is committed to providing a welcoming, accessible and inclusive environment for all of its parishioners, visitors, volunteers and employees. We work to ensure that the standards of the AODA are conscientiously observed and all of our parishes provide a welcoming and equal opportunity for worship.

3. What is required of clergy, staff (employees & independent contractors) and volunteers with respect to the AODA?

Our family of faith works to assure that all persons within our community are aware of their responsibilities to foster an accessible and inclusive environment for persons with disabilities. Our belief, that encouraging an atmosphere that respects the worth, dignity and independence of all people as children of God, creates an accessible, inclusive and welcoming environment for worship.

Under the AODA legislation, and to ensure greater awareness and responsiveness to the needs of a person with disabilities, clergy, employees, independent contractors, and volunteers should;

1. be provided with (or directed to where they may find) a copy of the ***Archdiocese of Toronto's AODA Accessible Customer Service Policy***;
2. complete ***AODA Training*** on the requirements of the Accessibility Standards with an emphasis on the Customer Service Standard, as well as on disability-related obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code
 - o The Archdiocese has two options for training, either via reading the Archdiocese of Toronto's AODA Training Manual or watching online AODA training modules.

The above stated documents are located on the Archdiocese Accessibility website at [Archdiocese of Toronto - Accessibility](#) as well as on the Archdiocese employee website and the Volunteer Screening Program's Google Drive.

4. Which of our staff and volunteers are required to complete the AODA training?

All clergy, staff (employees & independent contractors) and volunteers **ages 16+** regardless of whether they have contact with the public, have a responsibility to complete the AODA training.

For lay members such as Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women's League and St. Vincent du Paul, etc., they are only required to complete the training if they are involved in a parish based ministry (i.e. parish usher).

5. Is the parish responsible for tracking AODA training compliance?

We are **not** expecting our parishes to track who has completed the training, as individuals should be submitting the online SurveyMonkey training acknowledgement (as stated in the AODA Training Options document) and it will be tracked at the archdiocesan level. We just ask that our parishes make their best effort to provide the information to all clergy, employees, independent contractors and volunteers.

6. Will the parish receive confirmation of training from the Archdiocese?

The parish will not be receiving any automatic confirmation of training as it is not a requirement for the parish to track training. If a parish would like a report listing who at their parish has completed the training, they may email accessibility@archtoronto.org requesting this information on a periodic basis.

7. If we have individuals who have completed the Archdiocese AODA training in the past are they required to retake the training?

No, if you have individuals who have previously completed our AODA training and submitted a training acknowledgment, their only requirement is to review the updated AODA Accessible Customer Service Policy. If they would like to, they may retake the training as a refresher.

8. A volunteer has taken AODA training at their place of work or through another volunteer position, do they need to take the training as a volunteer with our parish?

Yes, volunteers and staff alike are required to take training for each organization that they work/volunteer with. Note, that each organization may offer the training in a different manner.

9. How should we provide the AODA documents to our staff?

You can either email the documents to your staff or print hard copies and provide it to them directly. As well, the documents can be found on the Archdiocese employee website.

When new employees or independent contractors begin working for the parish, ensure that this is provided to them as part of their onboarding package.

10. We have a lot of volunteers; I'm not sure how to implement this initiative; how do you suggest we do this?

There are a few ways in which this initiative can be carried out;

- Get assistance from your Ministry Leaders by having them email the documents to their own volunteers. Or if the Volunteer Screening Committee has access to all the volunteers' email addresses, someone from the team can send a mass email with the documents.
(NOTE: blank carbon copy (bcc) the volunteers so that email addresses aren't shared with all).
- Post a message in your parish bulletin addressed to Parish Volunteers, directing them to where they may find the AODA Accessible Customer Service Policy and AODA Training Options document.
 - We have these documents available on the Archdiocese Accessibility website at [Archdiocese of Toronto - Accessibility](#).
- Going forward, ensure that this is being completed as part of Volunteer Onboarding – Orientation & Training, where in addition to being provided the Volunteer Guidelines and Code of Conduct document, they will receive the AODA Accessible Customer Service Policy and the AODA Training Options document.

11. We have individuals who do not have access to receive these documents electronically or to submit the online SurveyMonkey training acknowledgement, what should we do?

If there are individuals who do not have access to email or to view the documents electronically, they should be provided with hard copies of the documents (AODA Accessible Customer Service Policy and the Archdiocese AODA Training Manual for Parish Volunteers), though best practice is to provide them electronically.

With regards to submitting the online SurveyMonkey training acknowledgement, this can be submitted by the parish into SurveyMonkey on the individual's behalf, by having them advise the parish when they have completed the training. Alternatively, once the individual has advised the parish that they have completed the training, the parish may send an email confirmation to accessibility@archtoronto.org providing the full name of the individual, their position at the parish, the name and location of the parish and the date they completed the training.

12. Will the Archdiocese of Toronto's AODA Accessible Customer Service Policy and AODA Training be available in different languages?

At this time, we only have the documents in our official languages, English and French. We understand that there may be individuals whose native language is neither English or French therefore we are suggesting that either they obtain assistance with having the document explained to them or the parish may choose to hold a meeting for those individuals to provide the information in their preferred language.

If the parish chooses to hold a meeting, then instead of having each individual complete the SurveyMonkey training acknowledgement, a list of all attendees with the date they were provided the information can be emailed to us at accessibility@archtoronto.org.

We are asking parishes to make their best effort in providing the information.

13. I haven't heard about this initiative, should I be following up with anyone?

An email memo with regards to updated AODA documents was sent to parishes on April 14, 2021. You should follow up with your Pastor as he should be aware of this.

14. Where can we learn more about the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)?

To learn more about the AODA visit ontario.ca/accessibility.

More information about the Archdiocese of Toronto's commitment to AODA can be found on the Archdiocese Accessibility website at [Archdiocese of Toronto - Accessibility](#).