ROYAL ONTARIO MUSEUM ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

ROM

Tel: 416.586.8000
E-mail: info@rom.on.ca

Introduction

Museums worldwide are the heart of civic life, social institutions that provide a platform for education and public discussion about a vast array of subjects. With a collection of six million objects and research and conservation initiatives that span the globe, ROM offers visitors and students extraordinary experiences in art, culture, and nature.

A destination of wonder and discovery, ROM is a place of exploration that forms a lasting connection with people who walk through our doors or explore online. It is relevant to all, regardless of age, background, interest, or physical ability.

This opportunity should be available to everyone. ROM's strategic plan prioritizes promoting community engagement, universal access, and life-long learning. ROM views access to its research, collections, exhibitions, programs, and services as one of its primary and defining responsibilities and is committed to removing the barriers to participation by extending its reach to a greater diversity of visitors.

ROM is committed to meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), including any future additions or modifications to the legislation. ROM aims for the highest possible standard of accessibility for all visitors and strives to produce and foster the creation of outstanding and innovative experiences which exceed visitors' expectations. In keeping with this commitment, ROM's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated before each AODA compliance reporting deadline, or every five years, whichever period is shorter. The Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is next scheduled for review in 2026.

With extraordinary support from our donors, sponsors, staff and volunteers, here are some of the ways we have improved access to the Museum:

- Ongoing development of a Diversity and Inclusion Strategy that will lead the Museum to identify and address barriers within organizational systems; create policies, practices, procedures, programs and services that meet the diverse needs of those we serve; and attract and retain a talented workforce skilled at working inclusively and respectfully with one another and with the community.
- Updated audio systems in the Eaton Theatre, including the addition of eleven wireless receivers for the theatre's hearing assistance system.
- Designed galleries with accessibility as a fundamental priority – featuring elements such as tactile reproductions, labeled braille and raised font plinths and digital access to collections.
- ROM also offers a variety of supplementary resources, including videos captioned in English and French, audio guides, complimentary wheelchairs and large-format floor plans.
- The Museum's award-winning initiatives enhance the experience of visitors with disabilities through innovative technologies, partnerships, tours, displays, and ground-breaking programs. Among these advancements are the first-in-Canada tour for the deafblind, an audio-described tour program, ASL-interpreted programs, internationally award-winning tactile books, and an Alzheimer's Tour Program.

Working in partnership with diverse groups and community organizations, we intend to continually improve ROM's relationships with our many friends, advocates, supporters and partners. We will use their leadership to enhance our activities to access and further Toronto's artistic, cultural, and social life by offering an experience for all.

Section One: Report on Measures Taken

1. Accessibility for Customer Service Standard

In response to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its Standards for Customer Service, ROM reviewed its policies, practices, services, programs, awareness and infrastructure. In 2009, a gap analysis was compiled, identifying current or future barriers to access. This became an essential document for establishing goals, setting priorities, and monitoring change.

The main recommendation in the Gap Analysis Report was the enrollment of all operational teams in long-term accessibility planning.

As a result, amendments were made to the *Public Access Policy* and the Management Practice on *Accessibility for ROM Visitors with Disabilities, stating ROM's commitment to accessibility and the AODA implementation*. In addition, a set of "Summary Documents" was developed, communicating to the general public ROM policies, practices, and procedures on providing services to people with disabilities.

ROM has also taken the following steps to ensure the provision of accessible customer service to visitors with disabilities:

- Visitors can access the ROM's programs and services using their assistive devices.
- Service animals are welcome in those areas of the ROM that are open to visitors.
- The Admission Policy for people with disabilities permits free admission of a support person.
- When facilities or services relied on by visitors with disabilities are temporarily unavailable, disruption notices are posted in the galleries or on the website.
- An accessible process for visitors to provide feedback is in place. Visitors can provide feedback via telephone, TTY, mail, social media, fax, or in person.

1.1. Accessibility Training

ROM front-line staff and volunteers from all departments, senior management, and the Board of Trustees participated in accessibility awareness training sessions. The 2015 training focused on IASR and the OHRC as they pertain to people with disabilities.

In 2017, all paid staff received training on the elements of IASR and AODA. Additionally, training on Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act, was provided for all paid staff.

New staff and volunteers are trained in ways that best suit their duties. Different modules or sessions have been implemented in response to the training needs of each team within ROM. The training requirements under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service are embedded in ROM's Employee Orientation Practice under the New Employee/Volunteer Orientation checklist for Managers and Supervisors. Most staff and volunteers take the on-line *Serve-Ability: Transforming Ontario's Customer Service* training provided by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services and the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

In addition, ROM provides training to employees and volunteers on Ontario's accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities as per ROM's *Abuse, Harassment & Discrimination* Policy and its Management Practice on *Workplace Abuse, Harassment & Discrimination*

2. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)

2.1. Emergency Plan Information

ROM's Security team is responsible for the physical safety and security of the Museum's physical assets, such as the building and its contents, as well as the

safety and security of the staff, volunteers, and visitors. ROM has implemented a comprehensive emergency response plan, and the Museum is committed to providing visitors with publicly available emergency information in an accessible format upon request.

2.2.　Procurement

ROM considers many things when making a purchasing decision, including quality, cost, and environmental impact. Adding accessibility to that list makes the Museum more welcoming and inclusive to visitors, staff, and volunteers.

ROM has reviewed its procurement documents and templates and developed a set of *Guidelines for Accessibility Language for Procurement Documents* that ensure that accessibility requirements are embedded in ROM's procurement process. When procuring goods, services and facilities, ROM incorporates accessibility, design criteria and features. When applicable, procurement documents specify the desired accessibility criteria to be met and provide guidelines for evaluating proposals concerning those criteria. When it is impractical for the Museum to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring specific goods, services or facilities, the Procurement Manager and Administration provides a written explanation, upon request.

In addition, ROM has developed a set of Accessibility Standards for Self-Service Kiosks or Interactive Devices that consider the needs of people with a disability.

3. Information and Communications

3.1. Feedback Process at ROM

ROM values visitor feedback and is committed to ensuring an inclusive and accessible experience for all. We offer multiple ways to share your comments or concerns, taking into account different communication preferences and access needs:

Telephone: 416.586.8000 (Main Switchboard)

Bell Relay Service (24 hours): Dial 711

Email: info@rom.on.ca

In Person: Ask to speak with a Lead or Manager during your visit. Depending on staff availability, we will do our best to address your concern as promptly as possible.

You can also share feedback through our online Contact Us page, which includes additional contact options .

All feedback will receive a response within 7 business days. If you would like us to respond using a specific communication method (e.g., email, phone), please let us know when you submit your feedback.

3.2. Accessible Website

In 2024, ROM developed and launched a new website with access as one of the core objectives. Accessibility is a fundamental aspect of every good digital experience. From content hierarchy, screen-reader compatibility, and high colour contrast to intuitive navigation patterns, every element of ROM.on.ca has been designed for everyone. ROM followed strict guidelines to ensure that the website complies with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.2, level AA to meet or exceed our obligations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

- ROM's website meets WCAG 2.0 Level AA standards, making the website

fully accessible to visitors using screen readers.

- Text-based content is written to be readable and understandable, and the Museum continues to evaluate and update archival content with this objective.

- The new website further allows ROM to communicate with a broader audience through images, video, and audio. This strategy targets visitors with lower literacy levels.

- All images posted to the site include alternative text which provides visual descriptions of the content contained in the graphic. Visitors with vision loss using screen readers can use alternative text to access the information contained within the graphic.

- The web structure was developed so visitors using screen readers can navigate the content sequentially. This was a change made at the programmatic level. Further, all colour used in the site design was tested for contrast, ensuring visitors with colour blindness and low vision could view content.

3.3.   Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

ROM took the following steps to make sure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request by January 1, 2015:

Programs and Events

- Provide American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation upon request with at least three weeks' advance notice for all lectures and learning programs.
- Added ASL interpretation to select ROM Speaks presentations as part of special exhibition planning.
- Reviewed speakers' contracts to add language that describes ROM's commitment to comply with the IASR and explains the speaker's responsibilities and the expectation that the speaker will support ROM's commitment.

- Offer assistive listening devices for all ROM Lectures and adult programs.
- Make available audio recordings of lectures upon request.
- Inform visitors on the website about the availability of communication support for all special ticketed programming or programs that require pre-booking.

Exhibition and Gallery Content:

- Woven accessibility considerations through all stages when planning exhibits and galleries.
- Offer captioning in English and French for all videos in galleries and exhibitions.
- Provide descriptive audio tours for select special exhibitions.
- Integrate technology elements where practical to bolster gallery and exhibition access.
- Provide tactile opportunities in galleries and exhibitions by implementing touchable objects and increased opportunities for discovery learning throughout the Museum.
- Provide tactile books featuring braille, raised line graphics and large print for selected galleries and exhibitions.
- Make available ASL video and audio podcasts highlighting Museum research and collections.
- Within available resources, offer a variety of programs that make information accessible for visitors with diverse needs and abilities.
- Upon request, accessible formats and communications supports are coordinated with ROM.

Visitor Relations & Audience:

- Train new staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with visitors in a manner that considers their disability.

- Communicate to visitors the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- Provide large print visitor guides and floor plans, which are available online through the Museum website's accessibility page. These guides are also available at the Museum through the admissions desk.
- Provide a 'mobility-friendly' floor plan online through the Museum website on the accessibility page.

4. Employment

ROM believes in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to fair and accessible employment practices and meeting the standards set forth by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). ROM has a long history of modeling the spirit of Ontario's Human Rights Code and has developed and implemented policies that support accommodation and ensure a discrimination- and harassment-free environment.

ROM took the following steps to notify the public and staff that, when requested, the Museum accommodates people with disabilities during the recruitment and assessment processes:

- Include ROM's commitment to fair and accessible employment practices in all job postings. This statement outlines that accommodation is provided for candidates with disabilities upon request.
- Notify job applicants invited to an interview or at another stage in the selection process that accommodation is available upon request.
- Reviewed the written employment offer template, notifying successful candidates about accommodation availability for ROM employees with disabilities.
- Human resources management practices are reviewed, and accessibility practices are documented during the recruitment, selection, and orientation processes.

ROM has taken the following steps to develop and put in place a process for developing individual accommodation plans and a return-to-work practice for employees who have been absent due to a disability:

- As required, individual workplace emergency response plans are developed for employees with disabilities.
- The process of developing an individual workplace emergency response plan has been embedded into ROM's hiring and orientation process for new staff.
- ROM is committed to assisting each employee in realizing their full potential as productive and contributing employees. As a result, ROM has a comprehensive accommodations process for employees with disabilities.
- ROM is committed to providing accommodation to meet the needs of its employees with permanent or temporary disabilities. ROM offers a Disability Management & Accommodation Program where all the necessary steps are identified to support employees returning to work after a disability -related leave of absence.
- The Human Resources Department is offering training modules and information sessions to inform managers of the expectations for compliance with the Employment Standard.

5. Design of Public Spaces

5.1. Preventative and Emergency Maintenance

Preventative Maintenance

ROM staff regularly check significant and critical infrastructure to ensure that systems are working in optimal conditions. ROM's security team completes the inspection and operational testing of accessible elements every day before the museum opens. Any problems or concerns are reported to the Facilities team for immediate action or further examination (e.g., bringing in a subject matter expert to assist in diagnosis and determination of the next steps).

ROM has standing maintenance agreements with outside contractors for its critical accessible elements, such as elevators, and depends on those routine maintenance checks to keep systems in good running order.

Emergency Maintenance

ROM's Facilities team maintains a list of critical infrastructure projects and prioritizes those for allocation of annual capital repair and rehabilitation funding from the province.

Should a system fail and require immediate repair for which funds are not available, Facilities will communicate with the province (Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport) for funding in one of two ways; either re-allocation of existing capital funds or by a request for emergency funding above and beyond current funding.

5.2.   Temporary Disruptions

To provide a safe and accessible environment, ROM is committed to letting visitors know about services and features that are available to them. In the event of a service disruption at the ROM, we will immediately address the issue by:

- Notify visitors through the Museum website.

- Updating the switchboard with notifications of the disruption

- Post notifications regarding disruptions within the museum.

- Ensuring notifications are appropriately located and visible to Museum visitors.

- Explaining the nature of the disruption and why the service is unavailable.

- Anticipating the duration of the disruption and communicating this information to Museum visitors.

- Providing alternate facilities or services for the duration of the disruption.

Section Two: Strategies and Actions Planned for 2025

1. **Accessibility for Customer Service Standard**

   Activities projected for 2025 include strengthening internal practices to renew the ROM's commitment to accessibility.

   1.1.   Accessibility Training

   The ROM will prepare to move into its next phase of leadership, expanding its focus to inter-sectional inclusion.

2. **Information and Communications**

   - ROM is committed to making its website and contents comply with W3C WCAG 2.0, Level AA, by January 2025. To increase the accessibility of its website and publicly available information, ROM will implement the following initiatives:
     - Train ROM website administrators through social media workshops to progressively change all English and French PDFs posted on ROM's website to text-only versions.
     - E-learning training will be provided for the design team on how to make accessible PDFs.
     - For documents that are too complex to convert to text-only PDFs while still conveying the same meaning, or when designing two separate documents is inefficient, an accessible PDF will be considered from the onset.

3. **Employment**

   ROM is reviewing its performance management, career development, and redeployment practices and will ensure that the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are considered in these processes.

4. Design of Public Spaces

ROM will meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to public spaces, including:

- Provide at least one service counter that accommodates a mobility aid for each type of service provided; the accessible service counter must be identified with signage unless the entire counter is accessible.
- Ensure fixed queuing guides are cane detectable and their design allows the passage and rotation of mobility aids and assistive devices.
- Ensure waiting areas where seating is fixed to the floor, a minimum of 3% of the new seating must be accessible.

Summary of Revisions:

2013   Original version

April 2025   Updated

Contact Us:

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:

Tel: 416.586.8000

E-mail: info@rom.on.ca

Accessible formats of this document are available free of charge upon request.