Policy Title: St Francis Herb Farm AODA Multi-Year Plan
Accessibility Plan
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ST FRANCIS HERB FARM ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA) MULTI-YEAR PLAN

MESSAGE FROM CEO

To Our Valued Stakeholders,

As the CEO of St Francis Herb Farm, I am pleased to share our commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible environment for all individuals within our organization, as well as for our customers and those who engage with us. To support this effort, we have developed this AODA Multi-Year Plan.

At St Francis Herb Farm, we view accessibility as a shared responsibility and are committed to meeting the requirements of the AODA, as well as going beyond compliance to create meaningful, lasting change. Our Multi-Year Plan outlines our goals, strategies, and actions for improving accessibility over the next three years, with a clear focus on customer service, information and communication, recruitment, and ongoing training and awareness.

We believe that achieving these goals requires an ongoing, collective effort. We will engage with our employees, customers, and stakeholders throughout the process to ensure that our actions reflect their needs and feedback. Through collaboration and dedication, we will create a more inclusive society where everyone can participate fully.

At St Francis Herb Farm, accessibility is a legal requirement that we embrace. We are committed to leading by example, ensuring that our work environment reflect the diversity of our community, and provide opportunities for all individuals to succeed and be included.

I look forward to working together with you to achieve these important objectives and to building a future where accessibility is seamlessly integrated into every aspect of our business.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership.

Sincerely,

Paul Rivett-Carnac
CEO, St Francis Herb Farm

INTRODUCTION

This accessibility plan outlines the strategy of St. Francis Herb Farm to prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities and comply with the requirements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* regulation under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

This plan is reviewed and updated at least once every three years. The current plan is in effect from January 1, 2025, to December 31, 2027. We have outlined our past initiatives and plans for the next three years as follows:

- **Year 1**: January 1 – December 31, 2025
- **Year 2**: January 1 – December 31, 2026
- **Year 3**: January 1 – December 31, 2027

SECTION 1: PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS

Customer Service and Information and Communications

As a manufacturer, it is rare that we have customers visit our facility, but we do interact with them on a daily basis. We define customers as both our retail partners and consumers of our products. In the past few years, we have implemented the following:

- Our customer service team completes the AODA Customer Service Standards Training as mandated along with other customer service training with the goal of providing accessible, dignified and exemplary customer service.
- Increased our communication channels by not only offering phone, fax and email support but also communication via social media chat options.
- Created a larger print order form for our retail partners.
- Ensured that new customer and credit application forms are available both online and as a paper form with assistance available if needed. If a store or consumer prefers hard copies of information, we are always happy to mail that out to them.
- Have asked for preferred method of communication and tailored our interactions based on those preferences.
- Added a toll-free number to our website dedicated to consumer calls along with an email address, links to our social media for chat communication and our address for those that prefer to communicate via mail or in person.
- Added the ability, on any product page, for customers to reach out to ask questions.
- We updated our website colours to be 85% black on a white background. In instances where we have reverse type, the typeface is in a heading and is larger font.

Employment

Over the past several years, we have consistently included accessibility statements in all our job postings. These statements ensure that potential candidates are aware of our commitment to providing an inclusive and accessible work environment.

We have also integrated accessibility statements into our email communications when engaging with candidates. This ensures that candidates are informed about the availability of accommodation throughout the recruitment process.

Training

Over the past several years, we have prioritized accessibility by ensuring that all new hires receive comprehensive training on the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) upon joining our organization. This training covers the principles of accessibility, relevant policies, and best practices for creating an inclusive and accessible workplace.

SECTION 2: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Customer Service

Year one: Ensure everyone on Customer Care team understands the AODA requirements and is trained on the current accessibility tools and policies we have in place.

Year one initiatives:

- Publicly post this plan on the St Francis Herb Farm website.
- Create an accessible format of this plan and have it available upon request.
- Investigate additional training available to staff on accessible Customer Service.
- Complete comprehensive SEO audit of our website and implement changes, especially those related to accessibility.
- Create a customer feedback program that is accessible by multiple means and train staff to respond to accessibility feedback respectfully and effectively. Monitor this as feedback comes in.
- Determine feasibility of a digital order form for retailers and implement if it is warranted.

Year two: Implement the new tools/programs created and strive for continuous improvement in the level of accessible customer service we provide.

Year two initiatives:

- Determine the feasibility of adding a live chat feature to our website as an additional means of contact and implement the technology
- Create a quarterly departmental meeting that includes staff for problem-solving, identifying areas for improvement in our plan, and coming up with action items to address accessibility issues.

Year three: Determine how we are performing as an organization and customer service department by monitoring the effectiveness of our initiatives. Goal is 100% compliance with AODA standards by end of year 3.

Year three initiatives:

- Audit all of our modes of communication and customer facing platforms to ensure they are accessible and look for opportunities to improve.
- Research the customer feedback we have received since year one to look for trends, improvements and opportunities.
- Imbed accessibility mentality into team culture by including in yearly goals and looking for examples of exemplary accessible customer service to recognize.

Employment

Year one: Continue to ensure all job postings and email communications to candidates include information on how to request accommodations.

Year one initiative:

- Compliance with AODA Standards: ensure that our accessibility statements align with current AODA standards, including the Information and communication and employment standards.

Year two: Explore and Implement Accessible Recruitment Formats

Year two initiatives:

- Best Practices: explore and implement best practices for accessibility, such as providing information to job seekers in accessible formats upon request and ensuring digital content is accessible (e.g., using AODA-compliant fonts).
- Conduct Regular Reviews: Conduct annual review of our accessibility statements to reflect any changes in AODA regulations and best practices.

Year three: Explore and Implement Feedback Mechanisms

Year three initiatives:

- Conduct Regular Reviews: Conduct annual review of our accessibility statements to reflect any changes in AODA regulations and best practices.
- Feedback Mechanism: Include a mechanism for receiving feedback from employees and candidates on the accessibility of your statements and processes, and use this feedback to make continuous improvements.

Training

Year one initiative:

- Compliance with AODA Standards: ensure that our current training meets AODA standards.
- Continue to provide AODA training to all new hires within their first month of employment.
- Conduct regular (minimum annually) refresher training sessions for all current staff to ensure ongoing compliance and awareness.

Year two initiatives:

- Compliance with AODA Standards: ensure that our current training meets any updates to AODA standards.
- Achieve a 100% AODA training rate for all current staff and new hires within 1 month of hire.
- Conduct Regular Reviews: Conduct annual review of our accessibility statements to reflect any changes in AODA regulations and best practices.

Year three initiatives:

- Compliance with AODA Standards: ensure that our current training meets any updates to AODA standards.
- Continue to achieve a 100% AODA training rate for all current staff and new hires within 1 month of hire.
- Incorporate AODA training into ongoing professional development programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:

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Our accessibility plan is publicly posted at:

https://stfrancisherbfarm.com/

Standard and accessible formats of this document are free on request from:

Customer Service
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