

Sept 14, 2021

Recommendations to Canadian Human Rights Commission

On August 13 and 18, 2021, CDAC met with representatives from the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) relating to their role in the implementation of the Accessible Canada Act and specifically the complaint process about accessibility to federal services.

CDAC provided an overview of communication access issues and resources for Canadians who have speech, language and/or cognitive disabilities.

Specifically, CDAC recommended that the CHRC:

1. Work with the communication disability sector to develop guidelines and safeguards specific to the duty to accommodate communication needs that comply with national and international human rights legislation.
2. Ensure that Canadians who have disabilities that affect communication have information about their communication accessibility rights.
3. Provide a range of accessible communication methods that people can use to make a complaint, such as telephone accessibility options, accessible e-forms, email, video conference and other methods.
4. Ensure that people receiving complaints have training in how to interact and communicate with people who have speech, language and/or cognitive disabilities.
5. Adopt a strong enforcement process that includes negotiation and education.
6. Solicit desired solution(s) from the complainant and / or their authorized support person and update them on how the complaint is being addressed/resolved.
7. Be familiar with generic communication access requirements and educational resources when resolving complaints.
8. Implement a process whereby entities are required to provide evidence of how they have resolved the issue. For example: sharing a certificate of completion of an approved educational resource; follow up with complainant.
9. Have procedures in place to identify when and how to access people with appropriate knowledge and skill to assist in the negotiation of complex accessibility resolutions in critical communication situations such as healthcare, justice and financial services.