Federal Post

Federal Government Consultation on Accessibility Standard on Employment

Date: July 26, 2023

Accessibility Standards Canada (ASC) has published a draft Accessibility Standard on Employment (Standard) as part of its mandate under the *Accessible Canada Act* (the *ACA*).

Background

The *ACA* came into force on July 11, 2019, and the Accessible Canada Regulations (Regulations) made under the *ACA* came into force on December 13, 2021. The *ACA* and its Regulations require federally regulated entities to prepare and publish accessibility plans, set up feedback processes, and report openly on their progress in order to enhance accessibility in Canada.

The Regulations set out the following timeline for publishing initial accessibility plans:

- **December 31, 2022** for government entities including departments, agencies, Crown corporations, or government-related entities
- **June 1, 2023** for large federally regulated private sector entities with an average of 100 or more employees
- **June 1, 2024** for small federally regulated private sector entities with an average of between 10 and 99 employees

Items to Note in the Draft Standard

The Standard is intended to provide direction to employers in identifying, preventing and removing barriers to employment pursuant to the guiding principles and legislative requirements of the *ACA* and Regulations. The Standard applies to federally regulated industries and workplaces listed in the *ACA* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

The Standard sets out employment-related accessibility requirements including, but not limited to, the following:

- **Structural Support, Policy, and Leadership (Systems Policies and Practices)**: Developing an accessibility strategy with measurable objectives, supporting policies, and clear roles and responsibilities of key workplace parties.
- **Culture, Engagement, and Education**: Supporting workers with healthy and disability-inclusive workplace culture, leadership, communication, worker participation, training and education.
- **Recruitment, Hiring, and Onboarding**: Developing a fully accessible recruitment process to support workers or prospective workers with disabilities.
- **Retention and Career Development**: Implementing policies and practices to strengthen job retention and career advancement for all workers, with a focus on workers with disabilities, by fostering the continued employment of workers, providing equitable opportunities for training and promotion, and ensuring compensation is based on merit.
- **Work Disability Management, Accommodations, Stay at Work, and Return to Work**: Developing policies, processes, and programs for disability management in the workplace.

Interested stakeholders are invited to provide comments on the draft Standard to ASC by October 17, 2023.

If you have any questions or require further information about federal accessibility requirements, please reach out to your regular Hicks Morley lawyer.