



What is the new *Accessible Canada Act (ACA)*?

What is the ACA?

- The ACA is a new law that aims to achieve a barrier free Canada by 2040.
- The ACA aims to achieve a barrier free Canada by identifying, addressing and preventing barriers. It defines barrier as anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with a physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication or sensory impairment or functional limitation.

I've been told that the ACA is federal or that it only applies to federal organizations. What does this mean?

- The ACA is federal accessibility legislation, therefore it only applies to organizations under federal jurisdiction. These organizations are regulated by federal laws, not provincial and territorial laws. In practice, this means that the ACA may remove barriers that prevent people with disabilities from:
 - travelling on railways, airplanes and inter-provincial buses;
 - being employed by or working for the Government of Canada, banks, mining companies, railways, airlines, trucking companies, First Nations governments, and other federally regulated industries or companies;
 - accessing federal buildings;
 - accessing federal programs and services, like Canada Pension Plan-Disability, Employment Insurance, Registered Disability Savings Plan, Disability Tax Credit, Canada Revenue Agency, Service Canada, the Social Security Tribunal, the Immigration and Refugee Board, the Canadian Human Rights Commission and Tribunal, and others;
 - communicating with federally-regulated service providers like railways, airlines, inter-provincial buses, telecommunications companies, and federal programs and services; and
 - using information and communication technologies, like television, radio and internet.

Will the ACA impact persons with disabilities living in Ontario?

- Yes! The ACA may remove barriers within the federal government and federally-regulated private industries which people with disabilities living in Ontario interact

with every day.

- For example, the ACA may make it more accessible for people with disabilities living in Ontario to:
 - work for the Government of Canada and other federally-regulated employers;
 - receive benefits like Canada Pension Plan – Disability or Employment Insurance;
 - apply for Disability Tax Credit and interact with Canada Revenue Agency;
 - travel on planes, trains and inter-provincial buses; and
 - file a complaint or have their case heard by the Canadian Human Rights Commission, the Canadian Transportation Agency, the Immigration and Refugee Board, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, or the Social Security Tribunal.

What will the ACA do to identify, address and remove barriers?

- The ACA created the Canadian Accessibility Standards Development Organization (CASDO) and charged it with developing new accessibility standards.
- The ACA gives powers to the Government of Canada, the Canadian Transportation Agency and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission to create new legal requirements for accessibility in federal:
 - employment;
 - the built environment;
 - transportation;
 - procurement of goods, services and facilities;
 - information and communication technologies;
 - communication, and
 - the design and delivery of programs and services.
- Under the ACA, organizations in federal jurisdiction will create accessibility plans. These plans need to be developed through consultations with persons with disabilities. Organizations will also need to create processes to receive and respond to feedback. They will need to report on their progress to implement their accessibility plans.

For more information

Before the ACA became law, it was known as Bill C-81. ARCH conducted extensive legal analysis and advocacy to strengthen Bill C-81. You can find updates, submissions, reports, advocacy tools and media coverage of ARCH's work by going to: www.archdisabilitylaw.ca/initiatives/advocating-for-accessibility-in-canada

ARCH offers public legal education presentations and free, confidential summary legal advice about the ACA and other accessibility laws to persons with disabilities in Ontario. Contact ARCH for more information about these services.