

Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre

Accessibility Policy for The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”)

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1. General Accessibility Policies

Policy Objectives

To ensure that WOCRC Community Resource Centre meets or exceeds the standards set by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”) and its regulations.

Purpose

Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (“WOCRC”) members and staff are committed to providing goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving persons with disabilities the same opportunity to access goods and services and allow them to benefit from the same services as all other clients. Unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable the person to access goods or services.

This commitment is consistent with WOCRC’s vision where everyone has access to the services and resources they require for their health and well-being; and our mission to provide and coordinate accessible community, health and social services for all members of our diverse communities; and with our guiding belief of equity for all people.

Scope

WOCRC is committed to excellence in serving all clients, including people with disabilities. This policy applies to all Employees, Board of Directors, Volunteers, Third Party Contractors, students, agents and persons acting on behalf of WOCRC.

Accessibility Plan

WOCRC will develop, maintain, and document an Accessibility Plan outlining our strategy to prevent and remove barriers from our program and service locations and to meet our requirements under the legislation.

Status updates on the Plan will be provided annually and we will engage in consultations with persons with disabilities once every five years. The results of the updates will be posted on our web site. Upon request, WOCRC will provide a copy of the Accessibility Plan in an accessible format.

Accountability

The Board of Directors and everyone with a management function at WOCRC is accountable to our clients, employees, staff, and volunteer, and to the government of Ontario for meeting the standards set by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“AODA”) and its regulations. If you have any concerns regarding this policy please contact the Director of Corporate Services at 613-591-3686X 225.

1.1 Accessibility Principles

Dignity – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people. People with disabilities are not treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience.

Independence – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to do things on their own without unnecessary help, or interference from others.

Integration – service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable the person to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity – people with disabilities have an opportunity equal to that given to others to access our goods or services.

1.2 Accessibility Pledge

Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre (WOCRC) welcomes and encourages people living with disabilities to use our services. WOCRC will provide access to our services for people with disabilities in a way that respects their right to dignity, independence, and integration.

WOCRC will consider the individual needs of people with disabilities in delivering service by:

- Considering individual and special needs when applying existing WOCRC policies
- Communicating with people in a way that meets their needs
- Welcoming feedback and suggestions about services in a variety of formats
- Welcoming accompanying support people
- Welcoming service animals
- Letting people know if services are not available where possible, for example, if a program is going to be closed or if the website is not available
- Ensuring emergency responses address accessibility
- Training staff and volunteers to provide the best possible service
- Providing a forum for addressing concerns or challenges associated with accessing our services including phone number and key contact information
- Providing opportunities for continuous improvement and regular review of accessibility policies and procedures

1.3 Application of Policies

Program Policies

Program policies will be applied in a way that considers the needs of people with disabilities and respects the principles of dignity, independence and integration.

Communication

WOCRC staff, students, and volunteers will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes their needs into consideration.

Feedback process

WOCRC welcomes client feedback and makes information available to all clients on how to provide feedback. This information is provided in the client welcome package and is available on our website.

Feedback is accepted by WOCRC in a variety of formats. Assistance is available to support all clients, including people with disabilities, in providing feedback.

Requests for Accommodation under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*

WOCRC will continue to meet the standards set by the *Ontario Human Rights Code* ("Code"). Where a request for accommodation is made, WOCRC will strive to provide accommodation in a way that most respects the dignity of the person. WOCRC recognizes that people with disabilities may require individualized accommodation and that each person's needs are unique. Accommodation will be provided unless WOCRC experiences "undue hardship" as defined in the Code by doing so.

2. Customer Service Standard Policies

The following directives address the requirements established by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 ("Customer Service Standard").

2.1 Definitions

Alternate formats - Means other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing.

Alternative Service - Means a service generally intended to be temporary that approaches the desired result until such time as the barrier is removed or an equivalent service is put in place.

Assistive Device - Means an auxiliary aid such as a communication aid, cognitive aid, personal mobility aid and medical aid (i.e. walker, magnifier, hearing device, or canes).

Barrier - A barrier as any policy, practice or procedure, or part of the built environment that prevents someone with a disability from participating fully in WOCRC programs or services because of their disability.

Contractor - Is a company or person with a formal or informal contract to provide a specific job or service on behalf of WOCRC.

Client - Means any person who receives or seeks to receive services directly or indirectly from WOCRC.

Disability - Means the same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

WOCRC uses the definition of disability in the AODA. A disability can include: a) physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement, b) mental impairment or developmental disability, c) learning disability, d) mental disorder, and e) an injury or disability for which government benefits are received.

Equivalent - Means having similar effects.

Reasonable Efforts - The Customer Service Standard requires organizations to make reasonable efforts to meet the needs of people with disabilities. WOCRC defines reasonable efforts as providing the best possible service within the context of: available resources, balancing the needs of people with disabilities with others who may encounter barriers to access and with the community at large, the health and safety of WOCRC staff, students, and volunteers, the security of WOCRC property, and existing laws and contracts.

Service animal - Means a service animal (usually a dog) for a person with a disability as defined in the Ontario Regulation 429/07 as amended.

Support person - Means a support person in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services as defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07, as amended.

2.2 Provision of Services

In keeping with WOCRC's mission of providing equitable access in a welcoming and supportive environment, WOCRC will use all reasonable efforts to:

- Provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and provides them with an equal opportunity to learn about, use or benefit from WOCRC services.
- Integrate services for people with disabilities. WOCRC understands that equitable access sometimes requires different treatment including separate or specialized services. Such services will be offered in a way that respects the dignity and full participation of people with disabilities.

2.3 Service Animals

A support animal may accompany a person with disabilities in the accessing of services unless otherwise excluded by law from premises.

2.4 Support people

A support person may accompany a person with disabilities in the access of services. Where there are fees for services WOCRC will provide advance notice of the amount payable if any in respect of a support person.

2.5 Assistive Devices

WOCRC will provide clients with assistance in the use of assistive devices.

2.6 Notice of temporary service disruption

WOCRC will provide notice of service disruptions which include the reason for the disruption, how long the disruption will last and a description of available alternatives, if any. In the event of an unplanned disruption, notice will be provided as quickly as possible, in the facilities used and on our website.

2.7 Documentation of Accessible Customer Service

When required by regulation, any documentation requested by a person with a disability shall be given in a format that takes into account the persons disability. Where possible WOCRC will ensure that the clients are aware that these documents are available.

2.8 Training for staff, students, and volunteers

WOCRC will provide training to employees, students, volunteers, and other persons providing services at WOCRC on Ontario's Customer Service accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.

Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, students, volunteers, and other persons providing services. Training is provided during orientation and ongoing as regulations, policies and procedures change.

WOCRC will keep a record of training provided under the Customer Service Standard.

3. Integrated Accessibility Standards Policy

Policies on Employment and Information and Communication

The following policies have been established by WOCRC to govern the provision of programs and services to comply with Regulation 191/11, "Integrated Accessibility Standards" ("IAS"). These standards are designed to break down barriers and increase accessibility for people with disabilities in the areas of information and communications, employment, and transportation.

3.1 Training Requirements

WOCRC will ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards and continue to provide training on the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities, to employees, staff, volunteers, and all persons who participate in developing WOCRC policies. The training will be appropriate to the duties of the job held by the person being trained.

Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, students, volunteers, and other persons providing services. Training is provided during orientation an ongoing as regulations, policies and procedures change.

WOCRC will keep a record of training provided under the IAS.

3.2 Information and Communications Standards

Feedback

WOCRC will ensure that its processes for receiving and responding to feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Upon request, WOCRC will provide, or will arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability. WOCRC will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

WOCRC will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports, on our website.

If you would like a copy of this policy in an alternate format please see main reception, call 613-591-3686 or email info@wocrc.ca.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

WOCRC will ensure that its Internet and Intranet websites, including web content, conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.00, at Level A except where this is impractical.

3.3 Employment Standards

Recruitment

WOCRC will notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.

Selection Processes

WOCRC will notify job applicants, when they are individually selected to participate in the selection process, that accommodations in materials or processes used are available upon request.

If a selected application requests an accommodation, the People Services Manager will consult with the applicant and provide, or arrange for the provision of, a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

Notice to Successful Applicants

When making offers of employment, WOCRC will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Support Available to Employees

WOCRC informs employees of policies and updates to policies used to support employees with disabilities. Upon the request of an employee with a disability, the People Services Manager will consult with the employee to provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports for information that is needed to perform job duties and to participate in the general workplace culture of WOCRC.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

WOCRC will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability that requires such individual information, when made aware of the need for an accommodation due to a disability. The People Services Manager will provide this information as soon as practical after becoming aware of the disability.

When an employee requires assistance, the People Services Manager will, with the consent of the employee, provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated to provide assistance.

The workplace emergency response information will be reviewed when the employee moves to a new work location, when the employee's accommodation needs change, and when the general emergency response policies are reviewed.

Documentation of Individual Accommodation Plans

Accommodation plans and emergency response plans will be documented and maintained in the employee's Human Resource file.

Return to Work Process

WOCRC will maintain a documented return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and who require disability-related accommodations to return to work.

Performance Management, Career Development, and Advancement & Redeployment

WOCRC will continue to take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when conducting performance appraisals, providing career development, or when redeploying employees.

Appendix 1: Training Plan

As noted in policies 2.8 and 3.2, WOCRC will ensure all staff, students, volunteers, and other persons providing services at WOCRC have training in all pertinent AODA standards.

Currently one document provides the information and links needed for all AODA training. That document can be found at:

<Y:\Human Resources\WOCRC Core Trainings\Trainings for New Hires\Accessibility Training.pdf>

1. Customer Service Standard (CSS) training includes
 - a. online training found on the Access Forward web site, with a certificate of completion, <http://accessforward.ca/front/information/>
And
 - b. more specific training on WOCRC policies and procedures follows this training.

2. Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) training includes
 - a. online videos from the Human Rights Commission, <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda>

 - b. online videos from the Access Forward site on the various parts of the standard, and <http://accessforward.ca/front/information/>

 - c. WOCRC-specific information on policies and procedures.

 - d. A knowledge review of the concepts learned is included at the end of the document that must be completed to pass the training.

3. Staff with supervisory functions are provided additional training pertinent to supervisors.

Changes to accessibility policies and procedures will be communicated to staff in a format deemed most suited to the type of change.