

# ACCESSIBILITY PROGRAM (AODA)

WESTHILLS CARE CENTRE

# ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

## OVERVIEW

*The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* was passed into law in 2005. The purpose of the AODA is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities on or before January, 2025 through the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards.

*The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* (also known as the Accessible Customer Service Regulation), came into force on January 1, 2008. It was the first accessibility standard created under the authority of the AODA and was a significant step toward a GOAL of accessible ONTARIO.

*The Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 (IASR)*, which came into force in June 2011, created standards in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation and the design of public places. The requirements under this regulation are being phased in over time. The IASR requirements are to be phased in from 2011 to 2025, with specific compliance deadlines for various sections of the regulation.

The AODA and its standards do NOT diminish the Home's legal obligation towards persons with disabilities that arise under the *Human Rights Code* or any other Act or are otherwise imposed by law (AODA Section 3). Rather, both sets of obligations will apply to the Home, and will have to be complied with. If two laws conflict, the provision that provides the highest level of accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services facilities, employment, accommodation, buildings, structures or premises is the law that must be followed (AODA, Section 38)

All organizations and businesses which provide goods and services in Ontario are obligated to comply with the provisions outlined under the Act and Regulations and therefore, they must continually identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities are able to more effectively integrate and enjoy equal job opportunities.

## PURPOSE

To outline the Home's responsibilities for providing accessible goods and services to persons with disabilities as required by the regulatory requirements.

To break down barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities, in the area of information, communication, employment, building design and site environment.

## APPLICATION & SCOPE

1. This policy applies to:
  - \* all employees
  - \* all consultants and contractors to the Home
2. The policy is intended to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Our Home is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 whenever practicable and attainable.

## PRINCIPLES

The Home is committed to ensuring that its policies, practices, procedures, and programs are consistent with the following principles:

- i) Goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- ii) Goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities with the same attention to quality and timeliness that are provided to others.
- iii) Goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with regular services, unless an alternate measure is necessary, to enable a person with disability to obtain, use or benefit from the service.

Whether a person's disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their needs for disability-related accommodation respected.

## POLICY

1. The Home shall develop policies, procedures and practices, including staff education and training, and timely enforcement of legislated requirements as they pertain to persons with disabilities.
2. The Home shall undertake all reasonable efforts to provide goods, services or facilities in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

3. The Home shall, to the best of its ability, provide persons with disabilities the same opportunity to access goods, services or facilities with the same attention to quality, timeliness and to allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the similar way as that provided to other persons in the Home.

#### Accessibility Plan

4. The Home shall develop, implement, maintain and document an Accessibility Plan outlining the Home's strategy to prevent and remove barriers from its workplace and to improve opportunities for persons with disabilities.

The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years, and will be posted on designated information boards in the Home that are easily accessible

#### Education & Training

5. The Home will ensure that education and training is provided on the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the Regulation and continue to provide training on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities, to:

- \* all its employees and volunteers;
- \* all persons who participate in the development of policies and procedures, and
- \* all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

The education will be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons.

Education shall be provided on an ongoing basis when changes are made to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

New employees will receive proper orientation (within seven (7) days) and will receive training within the first three (3) months of their employment.

Record of all staff and volunteer education and training shall be maintained

The Training will include a review of the purpose of the AODA and the requirements under the Customer Service

Standards, Ontario Human Rights Code and include instruction in the following:

- \* the Home's policies, practices and procedures on the provision of services to the persons with disability;
- \* how to interact and communicate with persons with various disabilities including those who use an assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or support person to access the Home's goods and services;
- \* how to use equipment and/or assistive devices available/provided in the Home that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disability;
- \* what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods or services available in the Home.

Communication

6. Upon request, the Home shall provide, or will arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into consideration the person's accessibility needs due to disability. Communication may occur in a variety of ways - in person, by phone, in writing by mail, electronic email/text.

The Home shall consult with a person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

The Home shall post information notice about the availability of accessible formats.

If the Home is unable to meet the person's request for an accessible format or communication support, the Home shall provide an explanation to the individual making the request as to why the information is not available and shall provide a summary of the information to the person.

Website &  
Web Content

7. As per the AODA/IASR regulations and standards, the Home's website and website content shall conform with the WGAG 2.0 Level A.

Feedback

8. The Home shall ensure that its process for receiving and responding to feedback is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

The feedback process shall allow for feedback in person, by telephone, in writing or by delivering an electronic text/email and will specify the action to be taken by the Home if a complaint is received.

Assistive Devices

9. The Home shall ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that are on site or that can be provided to assist clients with disabilities while accessing services in the building, its property including parking areas.

Support Persons

10. Person with disability who is accompanied by a support person for health, safety or ANY other reason shall be allowed to have that person accompany them on premise.

Where the assistance of a support person is required by a person with a disability they shall NOT be prevented from having access to the support person.

The Home does NOT provide paid events and the persons with disabilities may bring a support person to attend scheduled events.

In a situation where confidential information of a person with disability is to be discussed, the Home shall request permission from that person (verbal or written) allowing their support person to be present.

Service Animals

11. Persons with disabilities accompanied by a service animal shall have access to Home areas that are open to the public or other third parties, and may keep the animal with them except where excluded by law.

Where law excludes the service animal, other options shall be made available to ensure the person with disability has access to Home's goods and services.

Where the service animal may affect the health and safety of other persons, the Home shall make every effort to meet the needs of both parties.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is being used as a service animal for reasons relating to person's disability, the Home shall request one of the following:

- \* a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to disability; or
- \* a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or
- \* a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog school or service animal training school.

Notice Of Temporary  
Disruption

12. The Home shall ensure that persons with disabilities are provided with written notice, in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services. Notice will be placed at the front desk or at public entrance to the building.

The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Site/Building  
Design

13. The Home shall comply with the Facility Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment when undertaking new development, alteration or addition to the existing site.

The Home shall comply with requirements set out in section 80.32 through 80.38 of the IASR when developing a new site or re-developing existing site.

The Home shall comply with requirements set out in section 80. through 80.5 and 80.23 through 80.31 of the IASR when constructing all applicable new or redeveloped paths of travel (e.g., external walkways) that are not regulated by the Ontario Building Code.

The Home shall assess the existing site and building design to determine the feasibility of site or structural modifications to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Recommended modifications, where appropriate will be outlined in Accessibility Plan.

## EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

1. As an equal opportunity Employer, the Home shall accommodate employees with disabilities provided the individual is able to perform the duties of the position.

2. Employees with disabilities will be informed of the supports available. An individualized accommodation plan will be developed for each employee based on identified disability.
3. The Home shall ensure that the employment policies are developed to encompass the employment of individuals with disabilities in the following areas:
  - \* Recruitment, assessment & selection process;
  - \* Notice to successful applicant;
  - \* Informing employees of support
  - \* Accessible format and communication support for employees;
  - \* Documented Individual Accommodation Plans;
  - \* Workplace Emergency Response Information;
  - \* Return to work process;
  - \* Performance management, career development and redeployment;
  - \* Continuous Quality Improvement.

Recruitment /  
Assessment/Selection

4. The Home shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process.

Notify selected job applicants to participate in the assessment process in relation to the materials and processes to be used.

Consult with the applicant to provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to disability.

Notice To Successful  
Applicant

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

Informing Employees  
Of Support

6. The Home will continue to inform its employees of its policies (and any updates to those policies) used to support employees with disabilities, including policies on the provision of job accommodation that takes into account an employee's accessibility needs due to disability.

This information will be provided to new employees during the orientation period.



Accessible Formats and  
Communication Supports

7. When requested by the employee with disability, the Home will consult with him/her to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for information that is needed to perform his/her job, and information that is generally available to other employees in the Home.

Workplace Emergency  
Response Information

8. The Home will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Home is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employees disability. The information will be provide as soon as practicable after the Home becomes aware of the need for accommodation.

Where the employee requires assistance, the Home will, with the consent of the employee, provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the Home to provide assistance to the employee.

The Home will review the individualized workplace emergency response information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the Home reviews its general emergency response policies.

Documented Individual  
Accommodation Plans

9. The Home will develop and have in place a written process for the development of documented individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The process will include the elements outlined in section 28(2) of the IASR.

If requested, information regarding accessible formats and communications supports provided will also be included individual accommodation plans.

In addition, the plans will include individualized workplace emergency response information (where required), and will identify any other accommodation that is to be provided.

Return To Work  
Process

10. The Home will develop, document and have in place a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability and require disability-related accommodations to return to work.

This return to work will NOT replace or override any other return to work process created by or under any other statute (i.e., the Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997)

Performance Management,  
Career Development and  
Advancement &  
Redevelopment

11. The Home will take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when conducting performance management, providing career development and advancement to employees, or when redeploying employees with disabilities

Continuous Quality  
Improvement

12. As part of our quality improvement process, the Home will encourage individuals with disabilities to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

All feedback, including complaints will be directed to the Administrator.

Individuals can expect to hear back within five (5) business days

Corrective action plans will be developed in response to identified access deficiencies and service barriers for individuals with disabilities.

Notice Of  
Availability

13. The Home will notify the public that AODA policies are available upon request via web site or in printed form made available at the front office

RESPONSIBILITY  
  
disabilities.

ALL employees, agents, volunteers or others who are responsible for delivering goods, services or facilities to persons with

ADMINISTRATOR

**Administrator** is accountable and responsible for the overall coordination, implementation, monitoring and enforcement of established policies, procedures and practices based on the Act and Regulation, including staff education and training at all levels of the organization.

Plan

Responsible for developing and implementing Accessibility Plan in collaboration with senior management team and representatives from the corporate office and to monitor and evaluate progress of scheduled activities compliance dates.

Responsible for communicating required information in a timely manner through committee meetings, organized presentations, Accessible Services - Information Handbook, Resident or Family Council, etc.

Responsible for responding (in writing) within five (5) business days to any concerns, complaints or recommendations filed and or expressed by a person with disabilities or any other person.

Must ensure each Manager is fully trained and oriented to the requirements under the Act/Regulations and the Home's policy, procedures and practices, and that systems in place are adhered to by each Manager.

## MANAGERS

**Managers** are accountable and responsible for ensuring that this policy is communicated to staff and carried out consistently. They are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, Ontario Regulation 429/07 and the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 within their department, and for reporting on compliance with Accessibility Plan for their department.

## STAFF

**Staff** are responsible for being aware of accessibility legislation, compliance with established policies and procedures, meeting these requirements in their daily work, and ensuring that accessible customer service is provided to all persons in accordance to policy and related procedures.

All staff are required to participate and complete educational components related to persons with disability offered on line through Surge learning program.

All staff shall review and be familiar with the information outlined in the Accessibility Services - Information Handbook.

## Questions About This Policy

This policy has been developed to break down the barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities, in the areas of information and communication and employment. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by the Administrator/designate.

## Related Documents

- \* Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- \* Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

- \* Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards
- \* Blind Persons' Rights Act
- \* The Human Rights Act
- \* Accessibility Plan
- \* Accessible Services Information Handbook

DEFINITIONS

As defined by the AODA and/or Human Rights Code:

Disability:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- (c) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workers' Safety & Insurance Act, 1997.

Assistive Devices

Technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids that are used to increase, maintain, or improve how a person with disability can function. Examples may include, but are not limited to wheelchairs, walkers, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, and assistive listening devices.

Accessible Formats

As defined per Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, may include, but are not limited to , large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Barrier

Is defined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act as anything that keeps someone with a disability from participation in all aspects of society. Examples of barriers include architectural or structural barriers, information or communication barriers, technological barriers, and attitudinal barriers.

Communications	Is defined per Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation as the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received.
Communication Support	Supports that individuals with disabilities may need to access information. As defined per Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, these may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.
Customer	Is defined per the OPS Service Directive, as direct user or recipient (sometimes involuntary recipient) of a service.
Information	Is defined per the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation as data, facts, and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.
Service Animal	As defined in the Accessibility Customer Service Standard: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person with a disability for reasons relating to his /her disability, or</li> <li>(b) If a person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.</li> </ul>
Support Person	As defined in the Accessibility Customer Service Standard: <p>A “support person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him/her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods and services.</p>
Temporary Disruption	Is a short term planned or unplanned disruption to facilities or services that the public usually uses to obtain goods and services.