



AODA Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

DeafBlind Ontario Services is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, Ontario's accessibility laws and through current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

DeafBlind Ontario Services is committed to excellence in providing services to people with disabilities.

Our organization's policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Training

We are committed to training all employees and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

In addition, we will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
- b) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization

Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles. Training includes:

- purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities. These include equipment/devices to break down barriers for people who are deafblind, as well as for people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and non-verbal with a developmental disability.

We offer training to employees as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies and to meet the specific needs of the people we support. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided

Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our services. We work with each person supported to ensure their input on any changes using a person-centred approach.

We ensure that our employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing our services.

Communication

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include but is not limited to the following: American Sign Language (ASL), tangible symbols (like object and picture cues), Signing Exact English (SEE), fingerspelling, and print on palm.

We will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method(s) of communication works for them.

Service Animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

Feedback Process

DeafBlind Ontario Services welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback may be provided in print or by email and directed to Leslie Giesbrecht at l.giesbrecht@deafblindontario.com.

DeafBlind Ontario Services ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of Availability of Documents

DeafBlind Ontario Services notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request in an accessible format or with communication support, on request by email l.giesbrecht@deafblindontario.com. We will consult with the person making



the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Information and Communications

We have a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and,
- b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment

We notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

We notify employees that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace



Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This Multi-year Accessibility document is publicly available in an accessible format on our website www.deafblindontario.com.

