

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

INTRODUCTION

St. Leonard's Community Services' (SLCS) endeavors to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures for the provision of its services are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity as outlined in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. Our services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities. The provision of our services to individuals with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable an individual with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from SLCS services. Individuals with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from SLCS services.

DEFINITIONS

- **Multi-Year Accessibility Plan** – [Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#) under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#), 2005 requires organizations to create multi-year accessibility plans, update them at least once every five years and post them on their websites if they have one. An accessibility plan outlines what steps an organization will take to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and when it will do so.

OUR COMMITMENT

SLCS strives to meet the needs of its employees and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Our organization is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. This accessibility plan outlines the steps SLCS is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. Our plan shows how SLCS will play its role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians. The plan is reviewed and updated at least once every 5 years. We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. 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.

PAST ACHIEVEMENTS TO REMOVE AND PREVENT BARRIERS

This section will provide a summary of the accessibility initiatives that SLCS has completed:

- **Customer Service**
 - SLCS has remained in compliance with the Customer Service Standard.
 - Feedback regarding the provision of services to persons with disabilities can be made in person, by phone, e-mail, in writing, through SLCS' website, or through the mail and shall be dealt with in accordance with Policy 2.08 Complaint Process and/or for current program participants, in accordance with Policy 7.21 Feedback Process for Program Participants. Feedback regarding SLCS'

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service can be made to any Manager, Director or designate.

- We have not received any feedback from customers on potential barriers to accessing service at SLCS. However, we have identified potential barriers through an accessibility study (2019) which reviewed physical barriers at multiple work locations. As a result of the study, we submitted funding requests to allow us to make recommended changes to some of our premises.
- To support a client with a disability, SLCS sent in a proposal for funding to make the entrance to our MLA Centre wheelchair accessible. Funding was received and automatic door openers were installed, allowing the client to exit and enter the facility. In addition, we reconstructed the entrance to MLA centre by leveling the sidewalk concrete ramp leading to the entrance of the facility, thereby allowing individuals using wheelchairs the ability to enter and exit the facility.
- **Information and Communications**
 - Our website is assessed every six months to ensure it meets ongoing accessibility according to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
 - Communications staff attended training on strategies for using accessible language in communications material.
 - SLCS program descriptions have been revised to be more accessible.
- **Employment**
 - Job vacancies are posted electronically with instructions to request an accommodation at any point during the recruitment process, if needed. Our statement of commitment to an accessible workplace is included in all internal and external job postings. Accommodations may include, but are not limited to verbally reviewing a job posting with candidates, providing the job posting in another format (i.e. large print, recorded audio, electronic formats, Braille, etc.), including support persons and/or animals in the recruitment process as requested, etc.
- **Training**
 - All SLCS employees, students and volunteers complete accessibility training provided during the onboarding process by SLCS' human resources department. In addition, SLCS uses a third-party training provider to deliver enhanced accessibility training to all staff during their orientation period.
 - SLCS' Accessibility Policy was developed and implemented in 2019 and is reviewed and updated annually. SLCS employees and the Board of Directors review and sign-off on accessibility policies on an annual basis.

STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

This section will identify projects and programs that SLCS plans to accomplish to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities:

- **Customer Service**
 - SLCS is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods and services to people with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others.



- SLCS will continue to investigate opportunities to make our goods and services more accessible to the people we serve and our community as a whole. We will continue to consult with our clients and participants regarding their accessibility needs and work to deliver solutions that meets their needs. SLCS will continue to train all staff, students and volunteers on accessibility in the workplace.
- SLCS will strive to identify services that could be called upon to create alternative formats of communication (i.e. conversion of information to Braille, audio, etc.) and will establish potential vendor partnership to ensure a quick response is provided to alternative format requests.
- SLCS will undertake the reconstruction of the reception area at our corporate office to ensure this space is fully wheelchair accessible.
- **Information and Communications**
 - SLCS is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.
 - SLCS will strive to identify accessibility enhancements to information and communications, such as:
 - Offering alternative formats (i.e. large print, recorded audio, electronic formats, Braille).
 - Increasing awareness of individuals engaging in communications to ensure they are disability-inclusive (accessible) such as using people-first and/or inclusive language.
 - Avoiding special characters and symbols when possible, as they affect those who rely on screen reader assistive technology.
 - Using description links, hypertext and alt text for images.
 - Writing information in short, clear sentences (avoiding complicated words or jargon).
- **Employment**
 - SLCS is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.
 - SLCS will enhance onboarding practices by offering the support of assistive devices to new employees at the time of hire and during the onboarding process. SLCS will continue to provide technological support to employees through a collaborative, consultative process within its financial resources (to the point of undue hardship).
- **Training**
 - SLCS is committed to providing training in the requirements of Ontario's accessibility laws and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it applies to people with disabilities.
 - SLCS will investigate enhancements to the Ontario Human Rights Code portion of accessibility training provided to staff, students and volunteers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

SLCS' multi-year accessibility plan is publicly posted on the organization's website: www.slcs.ca. Standard and accessible formats of this document will be provided free of charge on request. For more accessible formats or information on this accessibility plan, please contact us at:



- Michael Oates at 519-850-3777 ext.228 or stleonards@slcs.ca. For individuals who may be hearing impaired, interpretive services can be accessed through Canadian Hearing Society <http://www.chs.ca/>.

References: *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards, Policy 2.08 Complaints Process*