


ST. LEONARD'S COMMUNITY SERVICES LONDON & REGION
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

 St. Leonard's community services LONDON & REGION	Section: Organizational Planning and Performance	Policy: 2.13
	Subject: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)	Page 1 of 7
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	Approved By SLCS Executive Director	Last Revision Date March 19, 2025

PREAMBLE

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* was enacted to develop, implement, and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 191/11, the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)*, establishes requirements in the areas of:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- Design of Public Spaces (Built Environment)

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, O. Reg. 429/07) is one component of the IASR framework.

The objective of this policy is to meet the requirements of the AODA and the IASR and to ensure that St. Leonard's Community Services (SLCS) provides an inclusive and accessible environment for all persons.

POLICY


SLCS endeavors to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures for the provision of services are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity as outlined in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. Services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The provision of services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from SLCS' services.

Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use, and benefit from SLCS' services.

SLCS is committed to identifying, preventing, and removing barriers to accessibility and to meeting all requirements under the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR)*.

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SLCS shall establish, implement, maintain, and document a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to prevent and remove barriers and to meet its requirements under the AODA. The plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five (5) years and shall be made publicly available.

Definitions

“Accessible formats and Communication Supports” shall mean formats and supports that enable persons with disabilities to access information, including but not limited to large print, audio format, captioning, or other methods.

“Assistive devices” shall mean a technical aid, communication device or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional abilities of persons with disabilities. Examples include, but are not limited to walkers, canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids, or oxygen tanks.


“Barrier” shall mean anything that prevents an individual with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

“Customers” shall mean any individual who receives goods or services.

“Disabilities” shall mean the same as the definition of disability found in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*:

- 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 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

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- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

“Employees” shall mean every individual who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Association, whether the individual does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

“Persons with Disabilities” shall mean persons who are afflicted with a disability as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

“Service Animals” shall mean any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability.

“Support persons” shall mean any individual, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend, who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

PROCEDURE

Use of Assistive Devices


SLCS recognizes that some individuals use assistive devices (such as wheelchairs, mobility aids, hearing aids, etc.) to access services. SLCS shall support people in the use of their assistive devices to obtain or receive services unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issue. In these situations, SLCS may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist in obtaining and using SLCS' services where applicable. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that their assistive device is operating in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

Communication

SLCS shall communicate in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

- Communication shall be respectful and individualized (i.e. in person, by phone, written or on-line).
- Requested documents shall be in a format that considers the person's disability and supports shall be provided to ensure the person is able to understand and use the documents.

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- SLCS shall ensure that any areas of the premises that are not open to the public are marked "Employees only."

SLCS shall provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request, in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs.

SLCS shall ensure that its internet websites and web content conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) as required under the IASR, where applicable

Service Animals

SLCS recognizes that some individuals may require the use of guide dogs or other service animals to access services. Persons who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal shall be permitted to enter SLCS' premises and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the animal is legally excluded from the premises, SLCS shall provide alternative measures to enable the person to obtain, use, or receive services. See Policy 4.33 Service Animals, Therapy Animals, Emotional Support Animals, and Pets for more information.

Support Persons


SLCS recognizes that some persons with a disability rely on support persons for assistance while accessing service and that these support persons may accompany them on the premises. As well, persons with a disability shall have access to their support person while on the premises.

If SLCS charges an admission fee in connection with a support person's presence at an event or function, advance notice shall be given regarding the amount, if any, that is to be paid by the support person.

Disruptions to Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to SLCS' facilities or services (i.e. temporary closure of a ramp, etc.), notice of the disruption shall be provided to the public including the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services that may be available. Notice of such disruption shall normally be posted on SLCS' website and may be posted on the physical premises by the Manager or designate.

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Barrier Identification

Employees shall inform their supervisor of any physical barriers, architectural barriers, information/communication barriers, technological barriers or a policy or practice that poses a barrier for persons with disabilities. SLCS shall consider the impact on persons with disabilities when planning new initiatives, when purchasing new equipment or technology, or undergoing facility repairs or renovations.

Employment Accessibility

SLCS shall ensure that its employment practices are accessible and inclusive in accordance with the IASR.

SLCS shall:

- Notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes;
- Provide accommodations upon request during the recruitment, assessment and selection processes;
- Inform successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities;
- Develop and implement written individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities;
- Provide individualized workplace emergency response information, where required;
- Support employees in returning to work following disability-related absences through documented return-to-work processes; and
- Consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities in performance management and career development.


Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

SLCS shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees with disabilities, where the disability is such that individualized information is necessary, and where SLCS is aware of the need for accommodation.

Training

SLCS provides training to its Employees, Volunteers and Students about the provision of services for people who have a disability. Training shall include the requirements of the AODA, the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation* (IASR), and the *Ontario Human Rights Code* as it relates to persons with disabilities.

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The training shall also include:

- How to interact and communicate with persons who have various types of disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, services animals or support persons;
- How to use any equipment or device available to SLCS that may help with the provision of services to persons who have a disability; and
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing SLCS' services.

Training shall be done on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. New employees shall be trained upon commencement of employment. Human Resources shall keep a record of all training.

Feedback Process

The goal of SLCS is to meet expectations of program participants while welcoming family members and other visitors. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated. Feedback may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements. 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 7.21 Feedback Process for Program Participants and/or Policy 2.08 Complaint Process.

SLCS shall ensure that its feedback processes are accessible by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports upon request.


Copies of the Policy

SLCS shall make available copies of this policy, as well as Policy 2.08 Complaints Process, on the SLCS website. SLCS recognizes that persons with a disability may use methods other than standard print to access information. Every effort shall be made to provide this policy, or the information contained in the policy, in a format that considers the person's disability. Accessible formats of this policy shall be made available upon request.

Design of New Spaces (Built Environment)

SLCS shall meet accessibility requirements when constructing or redeveloping public spaces, including but not limited to accessible entrances, ramps, parking areas, service counters, and waiting areas, in accordance with the Design of Public Spaces Standards under the IASR. In the event of a service disruption affecting accessible elements of public spaces, SLCS shall provide notice in accordance with its Disruptions to Service procedures.

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