

### **Introduction**

Community Support Connections is committed to working towards full compliance with current standards of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Policy, Regulation 191/11* under *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) as updated and amended from time to time. In so doing, we confirm our mission to enable people, including those with disabilities, to live at home and provide quality services in a manner that respects their independence and dignity.

In this multi-year accessibility plan, Community Support Connections outlines our policies, achievements, and actions aimed at improving opportunities for persons with disabilities. This plan covers the 5-year period from 2020 to 2025, at which time it will be reviewed and updated as necessary.

### **Statement of Commitment**

Community Support Connections is committed to treating all people in a way that requires them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people 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*.

Community Support Connections is committed to developing, implementing and maintaining policies that govern how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting this Regulation. To facilitate this commitment, Community Support Connections has established, maintained and documented a multi-year accessibility plan that is updated reviewed and updated at least once every five years to identify progress made in addressing barriers. The plan will be posted on the Community Support Connections' website and staff intranet (SharePoint). It will be made available in an accessible format upon request.

## **Standards of Accessibility under AODA:**

### **I. General Requirements**

#### **(i) Accessible Emergency Information**

Community Support Connections is committed to providing clients with publicly available emergency information, plans or public safety information in an accessible way upon request. This information will also be available to the public.

Community Support Connections has provided and will continue to provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary, and as soon as practically possible. If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance, with the employee's consent the workplace emergency response information will be given to the designated employee.

Community Support Connections has created a process for documenting issues of accessibility and recording and providing accommodations for individualized accessible emergency response information. Community Support Connections will continue to review the individualized workplace emergency response plans when necessary, i.e. the locations of the employee changes and/or if there is a change in disability.

#### **(ii) Accessibility Policies and Plans**

Community Support Connections has developed, implemented, and maintained a multi-year plan that outlines strategies and actions to identify, prevent, and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

- The IASR is incorporated into Community Support Connections Policy and Procedure manual as *Policy 2160 – AODA Customer Service and Integrated Standards*. The policy manual must be read, reviewed, and signed off upon hire, and annually thereafter
- The applicable agency staff and/or Board of Directors reviews and updates all policies and procedures at least annually, and amendments are communicated to staff as necessary

**(iii) Training**

Community Support Connections provides training to all volunteers and employees on the Accessibility Standards and on the Ontario *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities. Training is provided to volunteers and employees in a manner that best suits the duties and needs of employees and volunteers and every person who deals with the public on behalf of Community Support Connections.

Community Support Connections has taken the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet current standards and legislation:

- Provide educational or training resources in an accessible format that takes into account the accessibility needs of a person with a disability
- Ensure new employees and volunteers complete training within 30 days of employment or placement
- Keep and maintain a record of the training participant's names and dates of completion. Completion of training of employees is tracked and recorded and will be available for inspection as required.

**II. Customer Service Standard**

Community Support Connections uses its best efforts to ensure that its internal policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Goods and services are provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- The provision of services to all persons are integrated, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporary or permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to access our goods or services
- Persons with disabilities are given an equal opportunity to that given to others to obtain, use, and benefit from the goods and services we offer
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in order to access our goods and services

- Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by service animals are welcome on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties, except as excepted by law (for example, service animals are not permitted in food preparation areas). If it cannot easily be identified that an animal is a service animal, the agency may ask the individual to provide documentation from a regulated health care professional confirming that the animal is a designated service animal.
- When communicating with persons with disabilities, agency staff will do so in a manner which takes into account the individual's disability.

The following measures have been implemented by Community Support Connections:

- Creation of the *Accessibility and Accommodation* Policy (1600)
- Creation of the *AODA Customer Service and Integrated Standards* Policy (2160)
- The agency provides clients with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services used by persons with disabilities. This notice includes information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities' services, if available. The notice is placed at all public entrances on our premises, at agency program sites, and on the Community Support Connections external website.
- Notice will be provided on the website, over the phone, or in writing where applicable, when a service disruption occurs and will be done as quickly as possible if the disruption is unexpected
- Required online training modules including *AODA Customer Service Standards Training* and *Understanding Human Rights Training* (AODA Edition)
- Completion of training of all employees is tracked and recorded
- The agency strives to meet and surpass client expectations while serving clients with disabilities. Comments related to our programs and services with regard to customer service are welcome and appreciated. A process for feedback, questions, or concerns has been established to encourage feedback regarding the way the agency provides goods and services to persons with disabilities. This feedback can be made: In writing, by e-mail, by telephone, or other accessible format.

- A process is in place to ensure that all feedback collected from clients, staff, or the general public is reviewed and analysed to identify potential gaps in customer services, and to ensure appropriate actions are taken. All feedback will be directed to the Human Resources Manager and clients can expect a response within five business days.
- Accessible formats and communication supports are available on request to ensure the accessibility of the feedback process.
- The agency welcomes persons with disabilities who are accompanied by support persons. Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by support persons are invited to enter Community Support Connections' premises or program sites with their support persons. In certain cases, the agency might require persons with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person for health and safety reasons. In such situations, the agency will waive the admission fee or fare for the support person, if one exists. Before making a decision in this regard, Community Support Connections will consult the person with a disability to understand their needs; consider health or safety reasons based on the available evidence; and, determine if there is any other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.
- Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal will be allowed to enter Community Support Connections' premises with their support person and/or service animal. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or service animal be prevented from having access to his or her support person and/or animal while on our premises, except as excepted by law (for example, service animals are not permitted in food preparation areas, such as our kitchen).
- The Human Resources Manager is responsible for completing compliance reporting through the official Government of Ontario website.

### **III. Information and Communications Standards**

Community Support Connections is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs in an effort to achieve effective and efficient access to information for all users.

The agency has taken the following actions to ensure compliance with this standard:

- A feedback process has been established that is accessible. Alternative formats are available such as telephone, e-mail, on-line, in-person, Bell relay services, hard copy, and large print.
- Our website has been designed to be user friendly for people with a range of needs, and consistently assesses the accessibility of website organization and content.
- Our website includes a feature that allows users to change the size of text, font type, contrast, and background to suit their preference.
- Community Support Connections is committed to providing clients with publicly available emergency information, plans or public safety information in an accessible way, and with any necessary communication supports, upon request. This information shall also be made available to the public as needed.
- The agency, upon request and consultation with persons requesting alternative formats, will provide accessible formats and communication supports to persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account their accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to everyone else.

#### **IV. Employment Standards**

Community Support Connections is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain individuals with disabilities. We have taken the following steps to notify the public and employees that, upon request, the agency will accommodate persons with disabilities throughout the recruitment, onboarding and orientation process, as well as throughout the course of their employment with Community Support Connections.

##### **Recruitment**

Community Support Connections is committed to ensuring that our recruitment and screening processes are fair and accessible. All supervisors will be required to complete the Workplace Diversity and Including Training online training module that provides best practice tools for developing diverse strategies in recruitment.

The agency has taken the following steps to ensure compliance with this standard:

- Specify that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities in recruitment materials, including but not limited to job postings and interviews
- When making offers of employment, notify the successful applicant of our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities
- Inform employees of policies supporting employees with disabilities. Provide this information to new employees as soon as practical after hiring
- Provide updated information on accommodation policies to employees when changes occur
- Consult with employees to determine suitability of various formats and/or supports

##### **Documented Individual Accommodation Plans**

Community Support Connections is committed to producing and providing documented individual accommodation plans that include the following:

- Participation of the employee requiring the individual accommodation plan
- Ability to request outside medical evaluations to determine if accommodation can be achieved and how

- Ensure a high level of privacy
- Regular reviews and updates
- Reasons for denial, if applicable
- The means of providing individual accommodation plans in a format that take into account the needs of employees
- If required, include individualized workplace emergency response information

### **Return to Work**

Community Support Connections is committed to developing and establishing a process for creating individual accommodation plans and return to work policies for employees who have been away from the workplace due to a disability.

We have developed and maintain a return to work process for our employees who have been away from work due to disability and require disability related accommodations in order to return to work. The process establishes the steps the agency will take to facilitate the return to work process and uses documented individual accommodation plans.

For further details on the return to work process, employees can refer to Policy 4900 – Stay at Work/Return to Work.

### **Performance Management, Career Development, and Redeployment**

Community Support Connections is committed to ensuring the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are considered with respect to performance management, career development and redeployment processes. The agency has reviewed and updated our Policy and Procedures Manual to include the following elements:

- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into consideration when using performance management processes
- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account when providing career development and advancement opportunities



- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account when redeploying employees with disabilities

## **V. Transportation Standard**

Community Support Connections is neither a conventional transportation provider nor a specialized transportation service provider under the AODA and, as such, has no obligations pursuant to these standards as it does not provide services to the public.

## **VI. Design of Public Spaces**

Community Support Connections will establish plans to meet the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when applicable in the new construction or redevelopment of public spaces under the agency's control on or after January 1, 2017 except in respect of any contract entered into on or before December 31, 2012.

The agency will take appropriate measures to prevent service disruptions to accessible parts of its public spaces. In the event of a service disruption, we will notice the public of the service disruptions and alternatives available.

### **Contact Details**

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:

#### **Human Resources Manager**

Community Support Connections

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Standard and accessible formats of this document are available upon request.