

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan (2019-2022)

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A Message from CMHA Simcoe County

CMHA 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 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.

Introduction

CMHA, Simcoe County Branch, is committed to meeting the needs of our employee, volunteers, students, clients' and members of the general public for accessible services based on the four guiding principles set out in legislation and listed below.

We are committed to the development, ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility standards

Guiding Principles:

Dignity - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self respect and the respect of other people.

Independence - when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other individuals, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Equal opportunity - service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access our goods or services equal to that given to others

CMHA Simcoe County Branch is committed to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

This accessibility plan outlines the steps CMHA Simcoe County Branch is taking to meet those requirements and to improve opportunities for people with disabilities. This plan will be reviewed every three years.

Section 1: Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

1.1 Customer Service

CMHA Simcoe County Branch remains in compliance with the Customer Service Standard. CMHA supports and promotes policies, practices and procedures that are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity.

To succeed in achieving these principles requires all staff, volunteers and students to be fully trained in the policies and practices that are found under the Accessibility Act. Additional training is provided to employees, student placements, and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles. Ongoing training is provided when changes are made to policies, practices or procedures governing the provision of services to clients and their families with disabilities. A record is kept of all completed accessibility training.

As described in further detail below in subsection 1.2, all communications with a person with a disability are conducted in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability. All staff, volunteers and students are trained to support clients and the general public who may use assistive devices while accessing CMHA Simcoe County Branch services or attending functions hosted by CMHA. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal are welcomed at all agency owned and leased sites. CMHA is committed to allowing full access to our premises to people with disabilities and their support persons, ensuring the person with a disability has access to their support person at all times, and ensuring staff, volunteers and students are educated on how to interact appropriately with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

In the case of planned or unexpected disruption in the accessibility features offered at CMHA, every effort is made to notify clients in advance in a format that best meets their needs. In the case that a client or member of the public are not able to be notified in advance, notices are posted in prominent locations at public entrances with the details of the disruptions outlined and public service announcements are utilized when deemed useful to the situation.

CMHA invites feedback to improve its client accessibility standards, under the legislation, and to permit a timely response to issues that may arise from time to time despite the best intentions of staff, volunteers and students. A range of methods to solicit feedback are made available to ensure optimum access to the feedback process by people with disabilities including: verbal feedback in person or by telephone, written feedback through the Ontario Perception of Care Survey (available online or hard copy), an online form available through our website and feedback is welcome through our fax number posted online. CMHA also made considerable effort to ensure clients had several opportunities to provide verbal and written feedback on our client handbook revised in 2018, including accessibility of the document.

The policies defining CMHA's Accessibility Standards are available to anyone upon request. They are posted on our website and made available in alternate formats when the need is identified. Please refer to [Policies 10.00 through 10.12](#) for more detailed descriptions of the customer service policies and procedures described above.

1.2 Information and Communications

CMHA Simcoe County Branch has successfully introduced features to our website to ensure it is compliant with WCAG Level AA including distinguishable content, navigable content, readable text content, predictable web pages and input assistance.

All communications with a person with a disability are in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability. Staff, students and volunteers are trained in: communicating with individuals over the telephone and in person in clear and plain language, trained in understanding how to communicate with individuals who use assistive communication device and in offering alternative formats that are available to address the needs of individuals with disability.

CMHA Simcoe County maintains an internal directory of staff who speak languages in addition to English including sign language. CMHA also maintains TTY services at our crisis services where our highest volume of telephone services occur.

1.3 Employment

CMHA Simcoe County Branch is an equal opportunity employer committed to fostering a healthy and positive work environment. In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code CMHA provides accommodations throughout the recruitment and selection process to applicants with disabilities.

CMHA notifies employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants who have disabilities. Applicants are informed that these accommodations are available, upon request, for the interview process and for other candidate selection methods. Where an accommodation is requested, CMHA consults with the applicant and provides or arranges for suitable accommodation.

The agency interview process focuses on experience and skills and does not discriminate against candidates who have a disability or require an accommodation. CMHA Simcoe County is committed to hiring decisions that are unbiased and based on qualifications and past experience.

CMHA Simcoe County ensures that employees are aware of policies for employees with disabilities and any changes to these policies as they occur. The company provides the information required to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.

If a selected applicant requests accommodation, CMHA consults with the employee to determine the specific barrier and the best way to provide support. CMHA Simcoe County provides or arranges for accessible formats and communication supports for employees, upon request. Such accessible formats and communication supports are conversion-ready and are provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to employees.

When communicating with or providing information to an employee who requires accommodation or assistance due to a disability, the agency ensures that all communication with the individual is completed in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability.

CMHA offers individual accommodations to support the needs of employees with disabilities. Personalized accommodation plans are designed to allow employees to contribute and participate in job related functions and activities to the best of their abilities. The process of accommodating individuals takes a consultative approach and is a shared obligation of the agency, the employee, and any applicable professionals or representation required to assist the employee throughout the process. Plans are reviewed and revised every year and as needed upon request by the employee, or where there is a change that results in a health or safety risk.

If necessary or if requested, CMHA will create individualized workplace emergency response plans for employees with disabilities. The emergency response plan considers the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and is created in consultation with the employee. If an employee with a disability requires assistance from a support person during an emergency, the agency designates a fellow employee to act as such. Customized emergency response plans are reviewed when necessary (i.e. the employee's needs change, they are moved to another location or there is a review to agency emergency response policies).

CMHA is committed to a supportive return-to-work program and develops and implements return-to-work processes for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and require accommodations in order to return to work. The agency works with the employee to develop an individualized return-to-work plan and support the employee in the transition period by addressing any barriers.

Throughout all steps of the accommodation plan, emergency safety plan and the return to work process, employee personal and health information is kept confidential and protected at all times.

CMHA works to align training and development programs to meet the needs of employees with disabilities and provide training as soon as reasonably practicable upon the person being assigned applicable duties. The agency also considers employee barriers when implementing performance management processes, or when offering career development, employment support, or advancement opportunities.

Section 2: Strategies and Actions

2.1 Customer Service

CMHA Simcoe County Branch is committed to providing accessible customer service to people with disabilities. This means that we will provide goods and services to individuals with disabilities with the same high quality and timeliness as others. We are committed to the development, ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility policies and procedures described in section 1.1.

CMHA commits to the establishment of an AODA Planning Committee by **June, 2020**. This committee will be responsible for ensuring ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility standards and plans and offer a platform for staff and leadership to promote and discuss new ideas and opportunities in which to offer alternative methods of supporting individuals with disabilities.

CMHA commits to ongoing training of staff, students and volunteers as refreshers and when changes are made to policies, practices or procedures governing the provision of services to clients and their families with disabilities.

CMHA commits to posting their hours of operation, and for after hours, the telephone number for crisis services in a place visible from outside the main entrance at all locations, by **June 2020**.

CMHA Simcoe County Branch commits to posting information in each reception area or front office that welcomes assistive devices and service animals and encourages users to seek support from CMHA Simcoe County Branch staff volunteers and students, as they require it, by **June 2020**.

CMHA commits to revise all screening forms to include a field related to the clients' use of or need for assistive devices by **January 2021**.

CMHA commits to continue to review any feedback forms or reports with the Senior Leadership Team on an ongoing basis to determine if there are concerns related to accessibility to be addressed, considered, and improved. The Director of REQIP will continue to respond to this feedback in an accessible format with communication supports as required.

2.2 Information and Communications

CMHA Simcoe County Branch is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities. We are committed to the development, ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility policies and procedures described in section 1.2.

The CMHA IT Manager will communicate with the Senior Leadership Team on a regular basis if a new website is being considered and implemented. If it is determined that a new website is being considered, feedback from the AODA Planning Committee and Senior Leadership to ensure that it contains accessible content for individuals with disabilities.

CMHA Simcoe County Branch commits to providing additional assistive devices at program sites (in addition to the TTY service currently available) where and when a need is identified and when funds can be dedicated to the acquisition.

A directory of external translator resources and known cost, if any, will be developed by **June 2020** and maintained to ensure relevance.

A resource list indicating where to obtain other formats e.g. audio, video, Braille and sign language video will be made available by **June 2020**, to enable an agency response to less frequently required supports.

2.3 Employment

CMHA Simcoe County Branch is an equal opportunity employer committed to fostering a healthy and positive work environment. CMHA Simcoe County Branch is committed to the development, ongoing monitoring and improvement of accessibility policies and procedures

described in section 1.3 to ensure compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

To expand our efforts listed in section 2.3, CMHA will add a statement to each existing and any new job descriptions with reference to the agency's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities and our commitment to fulfilling our requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act by **June 2020**.

2.4 Training

CMHA Simcoe County will continue to provide training for its employees and volunteers regarding the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code as they pertain to individuals with disabilities. Training will also be provided to individuals who are responsible for developing CMHA Simcoe County's policies, and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of CMHA Simcoe County. Additional training will be provided to employees, student placements, and volunteers on accessibility as it relates to their specific roles.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis to new employees, volunteers and students as changes to CMHA accessibility policies occur or revisions to requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 for the Employment Standard set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

2.5 Design of Public Spaces

During the design and development of any new facilities or changes to existing facilities, the agency will take the following steps to satisfy the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces.

Parking

When/if the agency plans to build new or make changes to existing parking spaces CMHA Simcoe County commits to ensure off-street parking facilities include two types of accessible parking spaces; wider spaces for people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs, and standard-width spaces for people who use mobility assistive devices, such as canes, crutches, and walkers. The off-street parking facilities will include a minimum number of each type of accessible parking spaces and each space will have access aisles (a space between parking spaces) that allow people with disabilities to get in and out of their vehicles.

Service Counters and Waiting Areas

When/if the agency plans to build new or make changes to existing service counters and waiting areas, CMHA commits to ensure at least one service counter will be accessible to people who use mobility aids, such as wheelchairs. This may include being low enough for someone sitting in a mobility aid and/or has enough clear space in front for a person in a mobility aid to approach the counter, including space for the person's knees. The accessible service counter will be clearly identified with signage. When seating is fixed to the floor in a waiting area, at least 3% of the new seating in the waiting area will be dedicated to where someone using a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, can wait to receive service.

Self-Service Kiosks

At this time, CMHA Simcoe County does not have any self-service Kiosks. When/ if the agency plans to implement self service kiosks consideration will be given to the following items to ensure this service is available to clients or members of the public with a disability: colour contrast on the display screen, time allowed to complete tasks, availability of staff assistance, location, height, and stability of the public kiosk, volume controls, voice commands and touch screen features.

Maintenance

CMHA will continue to ensure the accessible parts of our public spaces will have a preventative and emergency maintenance procedures. This includes continuing to public post when regular or temporary maintenance to an accessible part of our public space occurs and letting people know about alternatives. Standard and accessible formats of this document are free on request through contact information below.

For More Information

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact:

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