

Community Living Essex County Multiyear Accessibility Plan

Community Living Essex County's Accessibility [ADM-100-18] policy guides the Agency's work in accessibility. The Accessibility [ADM-100-18] policy statement, approved by the Board of Directors, is the Agency's commitment statement and is as follows:

“Community Living Essex County is committed to being responsive to the diverse needs of all by providing, to the best of its ability, barrier free access to services, supports and employment. In the most accessible environment possible and based on the key principals of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity the Agency will comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Code and other legislative requirements.”

Description of Community Living Essex County

Since incorporating in 1961, the Agency has provided supports and services to adults, youth and children with an intellectual disability, and their families. Community Living Essex County has a strong community membership and is governed by a talented Board of Directors, composed of family members, advocates and community leaders.

The Agency is guided by our vision of a community that celebrates inclusion and inspires possibilities. The Agency operates approximately 60 locations and provides support to over 700 people. Services include independent living, residential support options, specialized services, community participation, employment, planning, respite/short break, and other family funded requests. Quality supports are provided by over 700 employees.

Accessibility Goals

Community Living Essex County is dedicated to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility through advocacy work and as available resources allow.

Purpose

The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to identify and address accessibility issues in the community including locations owned/leased/operated by Community Living Essex County. The Agency is dedicated to identifying and removing barriers that limit and restrict the ability of people with disabilities from fully accessing the community and Agency locations. This plan identifies barriers that have been identified and Community Living Essex County intends to address as well as any new ones brought to the Agency's attention. Completion deadlines may or may not be in place dependent on available resources.

The barriers identified below in the 2023-2024 plan were completed by March 31, 2024.

- 19 Countess – install Q-ramp at front door
- Elevate the tub and enlarge the shower
- 39 McBride – install walk-in tub in ensuite
- 51 Martin Crescent – automatic flush valve toilet in main bath

- 372 Talbot Street North – upgrade old red exit signs to current standard green “running man” exit signs
- County Road 18 – Convert the bath to a wheelchair accessible shower
- 51 Martin Crescent – Install an auto flush toilet

Barriers identified for 2024-2025 as either completed, being addressed or in planning stages for consideration include:

- Installation of higher toilets at Centre Street locations - Completed
- Redesign fence and gate to increase access to the grade entrance and backyard at Division – Completed
- Increase sidewalk width to the ensuite to accommodate wheelchair access at County Rd 18 – Completed
- Installation of walk-in shower at Forest Hill – in progress
- Installation of a higher toilet at 48 Heritage – in progress

Definitions

Barrier	An obstacle that prevents a person with a disability from doing the day-to-day activities that many take for granted. A barrier may make it difficult or impossible for people with disabilities to take part in society, to go shopping, work or take public transportation.
Performance Management	The methods the Agency uses to assess and improve an employee’s performance, productivity, effectiveness, and overall success.
Career Development	Providing employees learning and development opportunities and increasing their current job responsibilities.
Job Changes	Moving an employee to another position within the Agency.

Assessment

Community Living Essex County has extensive experience in accessibility matters due to more than sixty years in the provision of supports and services to people who have an intellectual disability and many with mobility and health related challenges.

Methods and tools that may be used by the Agency to identify accessibility barriers could include:

- An annual accessibility assessment survey will be distributed to people supported, families and employees
- A report identifying the results of the annual accessibility assessment survey will be prepared for the Executive Director and will include:
 - trends and key learnings identified
 - action steps and method of implementation
 - evaluation of the effectiveness of actions taken
 - plan to share results with internal stakeholders
- People supported, families and employees identify any potential barriers and report them to the Manager, and/or the Accessibility Committee,

- The Accessibility Committee meets regularly to be an objective resource in all matters concerning accessibility, which would include identifying any barriers, including attitudinal barriers,
- The Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) conduct regular inspections of all Agency locations and any barriers would be recorded for action, and
- Annual review of the Multiyear Accessibility Plan.

Customer Service

Community Living Essex County will uphold the customer service standards of the AODA. Current customer service practices are outlined in Community Living Essex County's Accessibility training module

Accessible Emergency Information

The Agency is committed to providing the people supported and others with publicly available emergency information in available accessible formats upon request.

Training

The Agency will provide training to employees, volunteers, and other stakeholders as appropriate regarding its:

- Accessibility [ADM-100-18] policy
- Multiyear Accessibility Plan
- Accessibility Committee
- The purposes of the AODA, 2005, and its regulations and five standards (Customer Service, Transportation, Information and Communication, Employment and Built Environment)

Training will be delivered as soon as is practical following any changes to the Agency's Accessibility [ADM-100-18] policy and procedures, at a minimum annually, and in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers, and stakeholders.

Kiosks

The Agency is not required to have a self-service kiosk and therefore not bound by the January 1, 2014, AODA deadline in this regard. The Agency has also not received any requests for this service.

Information and Communications

Community Living Essex County is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities and will consult with the person to determine the alternative format that will remove the barrier to information and communication.

Website

The Agency has once again modernized its website, which was launched in November 2021.

The website and content conform with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA effective January 1, 2021.

- Any live video or audio on the website will have the necessary captions for accessibility.
- Descriptions for all the media will be provided in order to receive the information in various forms.
- Text on the website will be able to zoom to 200% to ensure accessible reading for all.

- Text on the website will be accessible through text-to-audio for people who have a vision impairment.
- Large text will have a contrast ratio of 3:1, while presentations of text and images will have a contrast ratio of 4:5:1.

The Agency's REAL Xchange website, launched in January 2018 is also in compliance with the requirements of WCAG 2.0, Level A and includes many of the features listed below.

Feedback

Any feedback requested from Community Living Essex County will cater to the person and their communication needs in compliance with AODA requirements for January 1, 2015.

- If the Agency is requesting feedback information (i.e., signature to confirm policy review, survey responses, or workplace questionnaires) from an employee, person supported, families etc. the information given and received will be provided in an accessible format as required. Examples include:
 - If the person is visually impaired, the information will be delivered audible.
 - If the person is hearing impaired, the information delivered and received will be completed on paper and in handwritten form or via computer.
 - For all information, plain language will be used in accordance with our policy.

Public Information

Community Living Essex County will ensure all publicly available information is made accessible upon request within available resources.

Employment

Community Living Essex County is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Emergency Information

Emergency information has been and is provided to employees who have a disability in an accessible format prior to the January 1, 2012, compliance date. Employees with disabilities are accommodated by having individualized emergency response information as necessary.

Accommodation Plans

The Agency requires individual accommodation plans for employees who have a disability which may include:

- the accommodation to be provided by the Agency,
- how the Agency will help the employee be safe in an emergency,
- the accessible and communication supports the employee needs,
- how and when the employee's accommodation plan will be reviewed and updated, and
- in what circumstances the person's accommodation plan will be shared with others, including the employee's signed consent.

Process to Accommodate Employees

The Agency will continually review the following employment processes to identify any barriers to employment for people with disabilities:

- the recruitment, assessment and hiring processes,
- return-to-work policies for employees that have been absent due to a disability,
- the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities are taken into account when using performance management, career development and job changes, and

- methods to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified.

The Agency is in compliance with the applicable employment requirements of the AODA that came into effect January 2, 2016.

Design of Public Spaces

Community Living Essex County meets the Ontario Building Code Requirements and the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces when building or making major modifications to its public spaces. Agency public spaces include:

- sidewalks, ramps, and curb ramps,
- accessible off-street parking, and
- service counters and waiting areas.

Multiyear Accessibility Plan Review and Update

The plan will be reviewed by the Agency's Accessibility Committee at a minimum annually and forwarded to the Executive Director for approval and to the Board of Directors for information.

Distribution and Publication of the Multiyear Accessibility Plan

The Multiyear Accessibility Plan will be available in a timely manner by posting it on the Agency's website, both the public and employee sections, available in additional formats as requested and accessible formats as determined, within available Agency resources.

For more information on this Multiyear Accessibility Plan, please contact:

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Board of Directors Reviewed –December 4, 2024

Committee Reviewed – November 5, 2024

Board of Directors Reviewed – December 6, 2023

Committee Reviewed – November 13, 2023

Board of Directors Reviewed – December 7, 2022

Committee Reviewed and Revised – November 8, 2022

Board of Directors Reviewed – December 1, 2021

Committee Reviewed – October 19, 2021