

RENFREW COUNTY AND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

POLICY AND PROCEDURES – ACCESSIBILITY FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this document is to ensure client-centered, accessible service to all, in compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards. It applies to all employees, students, volunteers, and contractors providing programs, services, or facilities on behalf of Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU).

STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

RCDHU protects and promotes the health and well-being of all residents and is committed to working towards optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District. In keeping with its Mission, Vision, Values and Strategic Directions and Goals, RCDHU is committed to the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equal opportunity as described in the AODA.

GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT:

RCDHU has developed an accessibility policy, procedures, customer service plan and a multi-year accessibility plan to facilitate full implementation of its responsibilities under the AODA and its Standards.

SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES:

RCDHU aims to meet the needs of RCDHU clients with disabilities through the implementation of this policy. To this end RCDHU will provide:

- equal access and participation for people with disabilities
- programs and services that are accessible to all
- processes to ensure that all employees, students, volunteers, and contractors providing programs, services, or facilities on behalf of RCDHU have appropriate training on the AODA and its Standards
- information and communications to persons with disabilities in a timely manner in accordance with the AODA and its Standards
- employment practices that accommodate job applicants and employees with disabilities

RCDHU will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its practices are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal

opportunity as expressed in the AODA by:

- valuing all clients as deserving of effective and full service
- considering how people with disabilities can effectively access and use RCDHU programs and services
- allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing programs and services as long as this does not present a safety risk
- providing integrated services that allow people with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same places and in the same or similar ways as other clients, and providing alternative measures where necessary to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- considering individual needs when providing programs and services to ensure that people with disabilities have opportunities equal to those given others to obtain, use and benefit from RCDHU programs and services and do not experience barriers to access or participation
- upon request, communicating with people who have disabilities in ways that consider their disability

Notice of Disruption in Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to on-site services or facilities for clients with disabilities, RCDHU will collaborate with landlords as necessary to notify clients promptly. A clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Assistive Devices

RCDHU will ensure that employees, students, volunteers, and contractors providing programs, services, or facilities on behalf of the RCDHU are trained and familiar with any assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our programs or services.

Service Animals

RCDHU welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Support persons are exempt from any costs that would normally be charged to RCDHU clients, unless that support person is also receiving their own services.

Feedback Process

Feedback is always welcomed, and clients can contact us in the following ways:

Email: contact@rcdhu.com

Telephone: 613-732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097

In writing: Renfrew County and District Health Unit, 141 Lake Street, Suite 100, Pembroke, ON, K8A 5L8

Client Satisfaction Survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/FFiv7943ym>

Clients can expect to hear back in accordance with our [Client Service Standards](#).

If you require help when providing feedback, RCDHU staff will assist.

Forms and surveys that gather feedback will include a statement such as the following: "Please ask us if you need this form in an accessible format, or if you would like help with completing it."

Training

RCDHU 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.

- The health unit will provide training on Accessible Customer Service, the relevant Integrated Accessibility Standards, and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.
- All employees, including students and contractors providing programs or services on behalf of RCDHU will be trained as soon as practicable after starting at RCDHU, as part of their orientation. Training will also be provided when changes are made to the organization's accessibility policies, practices, and procedures.

Information and Communication

RCDHU is committed to making information and communications accessible to persons with disabilities.

- RCDHU will provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities that consider a person's accessibility needs.
- RCDHU will notify the public on its website and in the reception area of the Pembroke office about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.
- RCDHU's website and web content conform to Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 at Level AA.
- As needed, RCDHU will provide emergency procedures, plans and public safety information that is accessible to people with disabilities.

Employment

RCDHU is committed to fair employment practices and collaborates with persons with disabilities in developing accommodation solutions by:

- Ensuring accommodation of persons with disabilities during employment recruitment and assessment processes and when persons with disabilities are hired.
- Consulting with applicants who have disabilities and arrange for an interview format and process that meets their specific needs. As well, job postings will include a statement that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities.
- Including RCDHU's Policy and Procedures Regarding Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in the orientation material for new employees.
- Ensuring individual accommodation plans and return to work plans are developed with persons with disabilities.
- Providing employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information, once aware of the existence of an employee's disability.
- Ensuring that the needs of persons with disabilities are considered as part of career development, performance management and redeployment processes.
- Consulting with employees with disabilities to understand his/her needs and provide information needed to perform the employee's job and information that is generally available to employees in an accessible format or with communication supports.

PROCEDURES:

General

RCDHU will make all accessibility policies, procedures and plans publicly available by posting them on RCDHU's website. All policies, procedures, and plans will be provided in accessible formats and/or with communication supports

as required and in collaboration with clients.

The accessibility plan will be updated at least once every five years and the accessibility policies and procedures will be updated every two years at a minimum.

Notice of Disruption

Notices about disruption in service will be prepared by the most relevant Program Manager and will be posted at RCDHU offices and on RCDHU's website and social media platforms where appropriate.

If the disruption is anticipated, RCDHU will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

Training

Program Managers and Directors will ensure that all employees, including students and contractors, who provide programs or services on behalf of RCDHU receive training and will ensure a record of training (dates of training, names of persons trained) is maintained.

Accessibility training will include the following:

- An overview of the AODA 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and the relevant sections of Ontario Regulation 191/11 Integrated Accessibility Standards
- The Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities
- AODA Customer Service Standards
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site that may help with providing programs or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing RCDHU's programs and services
- Requirements for each of the Integrated Accessibility Standards that apply to RCDHU
- RCDHU's accessibility policies, procedures, and multi-year accessibility plan

Information and Communication

Upon receiving a request for accessible formats or communication supports, RCDHU will:

- Consult with the person making the request to understand how we can

- meet his/her needs, as soon as possible.
- Provide the information in an accessible format or provide communication support as soon as possible.
 - If the information or communication cannot be converted (i.e., it is not technically feasible to convert the information or communication, or the technology to convert it is not readily available), then the RCDHU will provide an explanation of why the information or communication is unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information.

Appendix A provides further information and examples of ways to make information and communication accessible.

Employment

- Human resources will inform applicants through the recruitment and selection process that RCDHU will provide accommodations upon request for persons with disabilities.
- Human resources will ensure processes are in place to determine the accommodation needs of employees and that the responsible manager of the employee is informed of these accommodation needs.
- Special circumstances for employees with disabilities will be considered during return to work plans/processes.

APPENDIX A: Guide to Providing Accessible Information and Communication

There are two main ways to make information and communications accessible:

- 1) Provide the information in an accessible format (often an alternative to standard print).
- 2) Provide communication supports to enable the person to understand and use information in the existing format.

When requested to provide information in an accessible format or communication support, always ask about the person's needs and what format or support would best meet their needs.

Examples of providing accessible formats

- For people with vision loss, print documents in a larger font (ask the person what their preferred font type and size is) or increase the contrast between text and background colours.
- For people with hearing loss, provide a script or add captions to videos.
- For people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, use clear language and simple sentence structure in print materials or when verbally communicating information.

Examples of using communication supports

- For people with vision loss, read documents out loud and answer any questions.
- For people with hearing loss, use written notes when communicating in person.
- For people with intellectual or developmental disabilities, take the time to explain, demonstrate and check for understanding.

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