

Overview

EDCL is committed to conform to all aspects of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Human Rights Code and strives to ensure that all locations owned or operated by EDCL provide barrier free services, supports and employment. EDCL recognizes that key principals of accessibility are independence, dignity, integration and equality.

Please refer to the Accessibility Policy (# 7.04) for more information.

The purpose of the Accessibility Plan is to identify and address accessibility issues at locations owned/leased/operated by Elmira District Community Living, as well as in the community. EDCL is dedicated to identifying and removing barriers that limit and restrict the ability of the individuals that we support, from fully accessing any of EDCL locations and the communities in our catchment area. This plan identifies the following:

- Barriers that were addressed or removed by EDCL over the past year
- Barriers that have been identified and EDCL intends to address as well as any new ones brought to the agency's attention. Completion deadlines may or may not be in place
- Barriers that have been identified but EDCL is unable to address at this time

Types of Barriers

Architectural – any physical factor that makes accessibility difficult for an individual. Examples include; narrow doorways and hallways, stairways, bathrooms that are not physically accessible for all, arrangement of furniture which may restrict easy movement, poor lighting for visually impaired individuals, alarms which hearing impaired individuals may not hear.

Environmental - an item which affects the area an individual spends time in. Examples include; excessive noise, flickering lighting, fragrances which may cause an allergic reaction.

Attitudinal- a negative attitude towards the individuals we support. Examples include; negative attitudes of neighbors or other members of the community, a lack of acceptance or inclusion, negative language or “labels.”

Financial – anything that may mean, at an organizational level, that a service is restricted or eliminated because of a lack of sufficient finances.

Employment – a workplace that does not provide sufficient flexibility, training or equipment to ensure a productive and satisfying workplace for employees

Transportation – individuals are unable to reach or participate fully in services, activities etc. due to the lack of available and suitable transportation.

Community Integration – limits an individual's ability to access their community

Technology – limits the ability to navigate websites that are not clear or user friendly

Identification of Barriers

In order to identify any accessibility barriers in the agency, the following methods are implemented:

- A Barrier Identification form is distributed annually to all homes and programs operated by EDCL, for feedback from employees, individuals supported and volunteers.
- Physical barriers identified are reported to the Managers/Supervisors who then report them to Maintenance. If Maintenance is unable to address or remove the barrier, an outside company is employed to resolve the issue.
- Training is offered in a flexible manner so that as many people are able to participate around their own schedules.
- Accommodations are available to employees who require altered working conditions
- Accessibility Policy is reviewed annually by all employees and Board members. New employees/volunteers/student placements are given a copy upon hire.
- Elmira has been connected to Waterloo by the Grand River Transportation System allowing individuals to be able to access the bus into the city. Training on how to safely ride the bus is provided to individuals who have expressed an interest in riding independently.
- The Joint Health and Safety Committee conduct regular inspections of all agency locations to identify any other ongoing or potential concerns. Maintenance is consulted again to address any concerns.
- The EDCL website meets or exceeds the Level A compliance standard as deemed necessary under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and is reviewed and monitored by the website creator.
- The EDCL website has a link to our Accessibility Feedback Form (see following page)
- Review annually

EDCL Board of Directors and Staff are committed to:

- √ The continual improvement of access to facilities, policies, programs, practices and services for people we serve, their family members, staff, volunteers and visitors



- √ The participation of people we serve in the development and ongoing review of the Accessibility Plan
- √ Ensuring the agency by-laws and policies/procedures are consistent with the principles of accessibility

Communicating the Accessibility Plan

A copy of the plan is located in all agency locations and is available on the website:

Elmiradcl.com

Please inform your Manager if you have specific needs and require this Plan in a different format.