

Victoria Gardens LTC Human Resources Manual

Subject: Accessibility Policy	Policy ID: HR-04-01-05
Section: Tab 4- Staff Development	Page: 1 of 13
Next review date: August 10, 2026	Last Reviewed Date: August 10, 2025
<i>A printed copy may not reflect the current policy. Refer to the electronic version on the Surge Learning, Policy Professional platform.</i>	

OVERVIEW

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was passed into law in 2005. The purpose of this Act is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities through the development, implementation, and enforcement of accessibility standards. All organizations and businesses that provide goods and services in Ontario are obligated to comply with the Act and Regulations associated with AODA.

PURPOSE

To outline the Home's responsibilities for providing accessible goods and services to persons with disabilities as required by regulatory requirements. This applies to all employees, consultants, and contractors to the Home.

STATEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

Victoria Gardens is committed to excellence by ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities, including staff, residents, and visitors. Victoria Gardens is committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain dignity and independence.

Victoria Gardens is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. The Home will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting its accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

Victoria Gardens' core values of respect, honesty, teamwork, integrity, and trust are mirrored in the Home's commitment to accessibility.

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing the Home's goods, services, or facilities. In any case where the assistive device presents a health or safety concern, the Home will ensure that other measures are put into place to ensure the person with a disability can access the Home's goods, services, or facilities.

Victoria Gardens will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that are on site or that can be provided to assist residents with disabilities while accessing services, goods, or the facility.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Victoria Gardens will welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service

animals will be allowed in all parts of the Home that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Home shall ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from the Home's goods, services, or facilities.

If the service animal affects the health and safety of other persons in the Home, the Home shall make every effort to meet the needs of both parties.

If the Home cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, staff may ask for documentation that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons related to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks. The person accompanied by a service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

SUPPORT PERSONS

A support person is a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to goods and services.

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them to the Home. Access to the support person will not be prevented. Fees will not be charged for support persons to attend paid events. In situations where confidential information will be discussed, consent will be obtained from the person prior to any conversation where confidential information is discussed.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or areas of the Home for people with disabilities (such as the elevator), the Home will provide notification promptly. Notices may be placed at entrances to the Home or provided via e-mail if noted in advance. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, as available. However, there may be situations where advance notice is not possible.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Victoria Gardens will provide the opportunity for training and education for staff, support staff, and volunteers regarding accessible customer service and accessibility standards. Training is also provided to those who participate in developing the Home's policies and procedures, which includes management, and administration. This education is mandatory for all upon hire. Training is provided via Surge Learning. Records of training will be maintained via Surge Learning.

Training will include the following topics, at a minimum:

- Review of the purpose of the Act and Regulations
- How to interact and communicate with persons with disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, service animals, or support persons
- How to use equipment or devices available within the Home
- What to do if a person with a disability has difficulty accessing goods, services, or facilities

Education and training will also be provided as needed when changes are made to the policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

An Accessibility Services Information Handbook has been created by the Home and is part of every new employee's orientation package and every new resident's admission package. The Handbook is also available in the Home.

COMMUNICATION

Victoria Gardens is committed to communicating with persons with disabilities in a respectful manner that considers their disability, thereby enabling them to access the goods, services, and facilities provided by the Home.

The Home will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. This includes a variety of formats, such as telephone, email, in person, graphic signage, written signage, or large print. The Home will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

Upon request, the Home will provide or arrange information in alternative formats, whenever possible, in accessible formats or with communication supports for persons with disabilities. This will occur in a timely manner that considers the person's accessibility needs.

If the Home is unable to meet the person's request for an accessible format or communication support, the Home shall provide an explanation as to why the information is not available and provide a summary of the information to the person.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

Victoria Gardens welcomes feedback on how the Home provides accessible customer service. The Home encourages individuals with disabilities to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

Victoria Gardens has a process for receiving and responding to feedback and this process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

This process follows the Home's policy as outlined in OM-02-01-30: Resident and Community Complaint Process.

SELF SERVICE KIOSKS

A “kiosk” means an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products.

Victoria Gardens has no plan to design, procure, or acquire self-service kiosks, as this may not serve the need of our resident population. All information and services are provided by staff who strive to ensure that information and service needs are met in a manner required by each individual.

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

Victoria Gardens meets Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario’s accessibility laws.

PROCURING OR ACQUIRING GOODS, SERVICES, OR FACILITIES

Victoria Gardens will ensure that spaces used for resident service delivery are accessible to individuals with disabilities. The Home shall incorporate accessibility design, criteria, and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services, or facilities, except when not practical to do so.

Goods, services, and facilities are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. The provision of goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities is integrated with the provision to others in the Home.

CHANGES TO EXISTING POLICIES

Victoria Gardens’ policies have been modified or removed if they did not respect or promote the dignity, independence, and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY

Victoria Gardens will ensure that this policy is available to the public via the Home’s website as well as through a posting of the policy within the Home. A printed copy may also be available upon request.

The Home will also provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support upon request. The Home will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support.

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

The Home shall develop, implement, maintain, and document an Accessibility Plan outlining the Home’s strategy to prevent and remove barriers and improve opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Accessibility Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least every five years and be posted in the Home in an area that is easily accessible.

RECRUITMENT

Victoria Gardens shall provide accommodation for any job applicant with a disability

during the recruitment process. This is included in the Home's job postings, both internally and externally.

EMPLOYMENT

Victoria Gardens is an equal opportunity employer and will accommodate employees with disabilities, provided the individual is able to perform the duties of the position. Employees with disabilities will be informed of the supports available and an individual accommodation plan will be developed for each employee with an identified disability.

The Home will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that considers the accessibility needs of the person due to disability.

If an employee requests, the Home shall consult with them to provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication support for information that is needed for the employee to perform the job and for information that is generally available to all employees. This includes information related to the Home's emergency procedures and plans.

The Home has written policies related to the process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require accommodations in order to return to work.

RESPONSIBILITY

All employees, service providers, students, and volunteers within the Home who deliver goods, services, or facilities to persons with disabilities are responsible for complying with this policy.

Administrator:

- Accountable and responsible for the overall coordination, implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of established policies and procedures related to accessibility.
- Responsible for developing and implementing the Accessibility Plan in collaboration with the management team.
- Responsible for communicating required information in a timely manner.

All Staff:

- Be aware of accessibility legislation, compliance with established policies and procedures, meeting these requirements in their daily work, and ensuring that accessible customer service is provided.
- Participate and complete any required education.
- Review and be familiar with the information outlined in the Accessibility Services

Information Handbook.

ACCESSIBILITY AUDIT

To identify areas of improvement needed to increase accessibility within the Home, an annual accessibility audit shall be completed. This shall be completed by the Administrator or by staff as assigned. A visual inspection of the Home shall be completed and any areas for improvement or modification shall be determined. An action plan can then be created and completed to correct these findings.

See attached audit template.

DEFINITIONS

Accessible Formats: May include large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Assistive Devices: Technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids that are used to increase, maintain, or improve how a person with a disability can function. Examples include wheelchair, walker, magnifiers, recording machines, and assistive listening devices.

Barrier: Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy, or a practice.

Communication Supports: May include captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

Disability: Means:

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation, or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- d) A mental disorder, or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

REFERENCE

Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility

CROSS REFERENCE

SF-05-02: Safe Return to Work Program

HR-06-01-01: Performance Appraisal System

HR-04-01-02: Staff Development Provision

OM-02-01-30: Resident and Community Complaint Process

HR-02-01-01: Hiring Criteria and Pre-Employment Reference Check

HR-04-01-06: Accommodation Plans

Accessibility Audit (attached)

Accessibility Services Information Handbook



Accessibility Audit

Completed By: _____

Date: _____

Instructions: Inspect each area and access if accessibility needs are met. Mark area with a check mark if compliance is met. If an area is not in compliance, explain and make specific notes on each item not meeting compliance. Indicate if there are any barriers that might cause problems or any physical obstructions that could impede the use of walkers or wheelchairs. Indicate in the summary report at the end of the audit, all the areas that are not in compliance. The Administrator shall then follow up with all areas of noncompliance.

Particulars (inspect all areas listed, including common areas and rooms)	Disability (accessible for physical, visual, hearing, speech, and mental disabilities)	Location (only indicate for areas of noncompliance)	Notes / Comments (explain and make notes for each item not meeting compliance)
EXTERIOR			
Designated Handicap Parking (signage appropriate)			
Drop-Off (accessible transportation)			
Walkways / Ramps (free of tripping hazards)			
Ramps Required			
Adequate Lighting			
Directional Signage (easy to read signs)			
Automatic Doors (easy access)			
Patio Furniture (appropriate for limitations, spaced appropriately, easy to get in and out of)			

Particulars (inspect all areas listed, including common areas and rooms)	Disability (accessible for physical, visual, hearing, speech, and mental disabilities)	Location (only indicate for areas of noncompliance)	Notes / Comments (explain and make notes for each item not meeting compliance)
INTERIOR			
Main Vestibule			
Lobby (adequate lighting, wheelchair accessible)			
Directional Signage (easy to read)			
Business Office			
Administrator's Office			
Director of Care's Office			
Dietary Office			
Program Manager Office			
Nursing Stations x 3 (adequate lighting, desk height accessible, seating accessible)			
Dining Rooms x 3 (adequate lighting, wheelchair accessible, seating accessible)			
Activity Room (adequate lighting, wheelchair accessible, seating accessible)			

Particulars (inspect all areas listed, including common areas and rooms)	Disability (accessible for physical, visual, hearing, speech, and mental disabilities)	Location (only indicate for areas of noncompliance)	Notes / Comments (explain and make notes for each item not meeting compliance)
INTERIOR			
Televisions (easily accessible, visual/hearing accessories)			
Lounge / TV Rooms x 3 (adequate lighting, wheelchair accessible, seating accessible)			
Corridors (handrails adequate, unobstructed, adequate lighting)			
Doorknobs (easy to open)			
Hair Salon			
Physiotherapy Room			
Storage Areas			
Tub Rooms x 3			
Soiled Utility Rooms x 3			
Clean Utility Rooms x 3			

Particulars (inspect all areas listed, including common areas and rooms)	Disability (accessible for physical, visual, hearing, speech, and mental disabilities)	Location (only indicate for areas of noncompliance)	Notes / Comments (explain and make notes for each item not meeting compliance)
INTERIOR			
Secondary Entrances (side and back door)			
Public Washrooms (easy access, access to sink/toilet unobstructed, adequate lighting, grab bars, accessible soap, and paper towels)			
Resident Rooms (access lighting, wheelchair access to bed and bathroom, light switches, grab bars)			
Kitchen			
Laundry Room			
Mechanical Room			
Staff Break Rooms x 2			

Particulars (inspect all areas listed, including common areas and rooms)	Disability (accessible for physical, visual, hearing, speech, and mental disabilities)	Location (only indicate for areas of noncompliance)	Notes / Comments (explain and make notes for each item not meeting compliance)
INTERIOR			
Other:			
EQUIPMENT			
Elevator (controls at appropriate height, lettering in brail)			
Call Bell Systems			
Fire Alarm			
Telephones (easily accessible)			
Other:			

Accessibility Audit – Summary Report and Action Plan

#	Finding	Plan of Action	Responsible Party	Target Date
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				

Reviewed By: _____

Date: _____