
Accessibility & Accommodation

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Responsibility: Membership & Finance
Approved By: CEO
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Purpose of Policy:

CSMLS is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including members, volunteers, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who enter the premises, work for the company, access information provided by the company, or use the company's goods and services.

CSMLS will work to break down the barriers that prevent or limit persons with disabilities from employment, receipt of goods and services, the built environment, and information and communication through the implementation of accessibility standards.

CSMLS strives at all times to provide its goods, services and opportunities in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. CSMLS gives people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and opportunities in the same place and in a similar way as others.

Note that this policy may be revised as other standards are introduced under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Definitions

Accessible formats: Include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Assistive device: A technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities.

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: Captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Conversion-ready: An electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an acceptable format.

Disability:

a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,

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- 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 an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan

Service animal: An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or the person provides documentation from one of the regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support person: Another person who accompanies an individual with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods and services.

Building Accessibility

CSMLS will work to ensure that the built environment, including building interior and exterior, are designed to facilitate barrier-free access to goods or services for customers, volunteers and employees. If areas of the built environment are not accessible for certain individuals with disabilities, the company will work with the individual to provide an alternate means of access.

The CSMLS building at 33 Wellington Street North is access by appointment only regardless of visitor ability.

Customer Service

Access to Goods and Services

CSMLS will seek to provide barrier-free access to the company's goods and services for all customers. Where barriers cannot be removed, alternate means for accessing goods or services will be provided to the best of the company's ability.

Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. CSMLS will ensure our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

It is the responsibility of persons with disabilities to ensure that their assistive devices are operated in a safe and controlled manner. It is the responsibility of our staff charged to oversee a person with disabilities to ensure their health and safety in accordance with our Health and Safety Policy & Procedures while on property, and to make necessary measures of accommodation where possible.

We will also ensure that staff know how to use the following assistive devices available on our premises for members: elevator, accessible washroom & front door.

Support Persons and Service Animals

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, CSMLS will ensure that both persons may enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person. A customer with a disability accompanied by a service

animal will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

The company will waive admission fees to support persons, or when not possible, ensure the support person is notified of admission costs in advance. The company will attempt to accommodate the customer and support person to sit with one another. In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained before any potentially confidential information is mentioned in front of the support person.

Communication

CSMLS is committed to communicating with people with disabilities in ways that take into consideration their disability. CSMLS is responsible for training employees in how to interact and communicate with people with disabilities guided by the principles of dignity, independence and integration of equality.

CSMLS understands the importance of accessible digital and non-digital forms of communication and will do its best to provide accessible types of communication and information to all individuals with disabilities. Such accessible formats and communication support will be provided upon request, in a timely manner and at no additional cost.

Telephone services

We train staff personnel to communicate over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. When telephone communication is not suitable to communication needs or is not available, we offer to communicate with customers by email or other means.

Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers and will make every effort to provide alternative formats of invoices in a timely manner upon request.

Service Disruptions

Service disruptions may occur for reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of CSMLS. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice.

When disruptions occur the CSMLS website, staff email as well as telephone system will provide members with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities.

This notice will include:

- Post notices in the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption,
- The reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration,
- Description of alternative facilities or services if available,
- Who to contact for assistance, and
- Any other relevant information for accessing the facility or service

In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions or emergencies, advance notice may not be possible.

Emergency Notifications

CSMLS will provide emergency and public safety information, plans and procedures, maps and warning signs at evacuation points, and any other emergency alert information, in accessible formats or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

The company will:

- Work with any individuals requesting information and to see how to best meet their needs;
- Ensure emergency information can be seen, read, and heard by anyone, including people with disabilities; and
- If a person with a disability requires assistance from a support person in case of an emergency, make sure an employee is available to act as such.

Training for Employees & Volunteers.

CSMLS will provide training to all employees, volunteers and anyone involved in the development and approvals of member service policies, practices and procedures.

This training will be provided:

- in the first week of staff commencing their duties with CSMLS
- during volunteer orientation
- during project orientation for contractors and third parties

Staff and volunteers will also receive annual refresher training and updates when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the integrated 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
- CSMLS's policies, practices and procedures relating to the integrated standards

Upon completion of the AODA Awareness Quiz, employees, volunteers and other third parties will be considered trained on this policy.

Customer Feedback

Customer feedback can lead to improved service, increased clientele, and a reduction in complaints. CSMLS will ensure that feedback can be provided by customers with disabilities through a variety of mechanisms, such as in person, by phone, e-mail, text message, or social media. Feedback forms, along with alternate methods of providing feedback verbally (in person or by telephone) or written (handwritten, delivered, website, or e-mail), will be available upon request.

Customers who provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

Format of Documents

When CSMLS is required to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the CSMLS will, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of the document, or the information contained in the document, to the person in an accessible format or with communication support, in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. CSMLS will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Employment

CSMLS will make every effort to identify, remove, and prevent barriers by developing inclusive employment procedures that support persons with disabilities with accommodations during the recruitment and selection stages, and throughout the employment life cycle.

Recruitment and Hiring

CSMLS understands that improving workplace accessibility and ensuring an accessible recruitment and selection process for applicants with disabilities can expand the pool of talented candidates. Upon request, the company will provide candidates with reasonable accommodations during the interview and selection process. Where an accommodation is requested, the company will consult with the applicant to arrange suitable accommodations, such as providing the application in an alternate or accessible format.

The company interview process will focus on experience and skills and will not discriminate against candidates who have a disability or require an accommodation. CSMLS is committed to hiring decisions that are unbiased and based on qualifications and past experience. Successful candidates will be made aware of policies and supports for accommodations upon completion of the recruitment process.

Training and Development

CSMLS will take into the account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities as well as individual accommodation plans when using performance management, career development and advancement and redeployment practices.

Communication

CSMLS will provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for employees, upon request. The company will consult with the employee to determine the specific barrier and the best way to provide support. Such accessible formats and communication supports are conversion-ready and will be 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 company will ensure that all communication with the individual is completed in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability. Where an assistive device is used, the company will reasonably accommodate the use of the device.

Workplace Information

Employees with disabilities may make requests to their supervisor or to Human Resources regarding access to workplace information in alternate accessible formats. Information needed to perform their jobs (job descriptions and manuals) as well as general information that is available to all employees at work (company intranet information, bulletins about policies and health and safety information) will be made available upon request in a format that meets the employee's needs.

Emergency Response

CSMLS has an Evacuation Procedure in place. If necessary, or if requested, CSMLS will create individualized workplace emergency response plans for employees with disabilities. The emergency response plan will consider the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and will be created in consultation with the employee. If an employee with a disability requires assistance from a

support person during an emergency, the company will designate a fellow employee to act as such.

Customized emergency response plans will be reviewed when:

- The employee moves to a different physical location in the organization;
- The employee's overall accommodation needs, or plans are reviewed; or
- The company reviews general emergency response policies.

Accommodation

The duty to accommodate is required of all employers, in all jurisdictions in Canada, and encompasses providing respect and dignity, individualized accommodation, integration and participation, and barrier-free designs. CSMLS will provide individual accommodations to support the needs of employees with disabilities. Personalized accommodation plans will be 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 will take a consultative approach and is a shared obligation of the company, the employee, and any applicable health professionals required to assist the employee throughout the process. CSMLS will provide workplace accommodation up to the point of undue hardship. More information can be found in the Employee Accommodation Procedure.

Return to Work

CSMLS has a Return to Work Procedure, which is located on the Employee Handbook. This procedure outlines the steps that CSMLS takes to facilitate the return to work of employees who were absent due illness or injury. The Return to Work procedure outlines the ways in which accommodations are provided to employees, where necessary, and creates a suitable return to work plan that meets the needs of the employee. This policy may be used in conjunction with, or with reference to, the Employee Accommodation Procedure.

Transportation Standards

CSMLS will arrange for accessible transportation (upon request), if and when, transportation services are to be provided by CSMLS. CSMLS will notify the public and/or employees when making transportation arrangements.

Modifications to this or other policies

We are committed to developing policies and procedures that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of CSMLS that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Scope:

This policy will extend from interactions with members and/or members of the public in our office, on the phone and to include interactions at conferences or meetings as well.

This Policy applies to: CSMLS Staff, Board of Directors visitors and volunteers as well as contractors and third parties engaged by the CSMLS.

Responsibility:

- All staff & volunteers: participate in training, commit to providing excellent service to everyone including people with disabilities, recommend ways to improve accessibility, adhere to this policy in full

- All Supervisors: participate in training, ensure staff have the tools, resources and information required
- HR: conduct training for all staff & supervisors, make updates to policy as needed

Associated Policies and Procedures:

HR – Recruitment – Policy

HR – Recruitment - Procedure

HR – Evacuation - Procedure

HR - Accommodation – Procedure

CEXM-048-PL CERT – Exam Accommodations – Policy

CEXM-048-PR CERT – Exam Accommodations – Procedure

Associated Documents:

CSMLS Accessibility for Ontarians Policy - Training Document

CEXM-049-C1 Exam Accommodations Policy Information

CEXM-049-C1f Exam Accommodations Policy Information-French

CEXM-097-F1 Exam Accommodation Request

CEXM-097-F1f Exam Accommodation Request – French

CEXM-097-F2 Medical Verification – Exam Accommodation

CEXM-097-F2f Medical Verification – Exam Accommodation – French

CEXM-097-F3 Exam Accommodation Request Evaluation Form