



**EVA'S INITIATIVES FOR HOMELESS YOUTH**

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**2021**

## Message from the Interim Executive Director

At Eva's, we believe in providing equity and integration for all young people, staff members and volunteers. We are committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities obtain equal opportunities and support in a timely manner. Eva's will continue to work to remove any accessibility barriers that may occur by following and meeting the requirements presented in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and Ontario Human Rights Code, in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Our commitment to accessibility extends beyond the walls of our organization and into the community, through partnering with our funding agencies and other partners who work to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

## Statement of Commitment

Eva's Initiatives is committed to creating a barrier free environment that is accessible to all stakeholders including our young people, employees, suppliers, and any visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services and that treats all members of the community with respect and dignity. As such, and in keeping with the accessibility requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code, Eva's will strive to continuously improve the way in which we recognize and meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in our community, with a focus on independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity so individuals may benefit from improved access to our services.

We are committed to ensuring our organization's compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training, and best practices. We will review these policies and practices annually, as organizational changes occur, or in anticipation of compliance deadlines.

Eva's Initiative is committed to develop, implement and maintain policies that govern how the organization achieves or will achieve accessibility through meeting this Regulation. To facilitate this commitment, Eva's Initiative has established, maintained and documented a multi-year accessibility plan, that is reviewed and updated at least once every five years to identify progress made in addressing barriers and will be posted on Eva's website.

Eva's plans to review the Accessibility plan with the Board of Directors and distribute the plan throughout the organization by January 10, 2023.

Following distribution, Eva's will post the Accessibility plan to our website with information such as an email or link that allows for client and staff feedback.

## Standards of Accessibility under AODA:

### General Requirements

#### 1. Accessible Emergency Information

Eva's Initiative is committed to providing our young people, employees and volunteers with publicly available emergency information, plans or public safety information in an accessible way upon request. This information will also be available to the public.

Eva's Initiative has provided and will continue to provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information when necessary, and as soon as practically possible. If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance, with the employee's consent the workplace emergency response information will be given to the designated employee.

#### 2. Training

Accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities is a core value for Eva's and for that reason, Eva's Initiative provides training to employees and volunteers on Accessibility Standards and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training is provided in a way that best suits the duties and needs of employees and volunteers.

Eva's will train all staff, volunteers, students, and contracted agents within the first two months of commencement of duties, so that they may understand the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This training will include an overview of any applicable procedures as well as Accessible Customer Service Tips which will provide guidance on:

- How to interact and communicate with persons with several types of disabilities
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person
- How to use any Eva's equipment, services, or devices that the organization may acquire that would assist people with disabilities to be able to better access our services
- What to do in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities
- Ensure that staff understand that this training is mandatory.

- Eva's will keep and maintain a record of the training provided, including the date the training was completed. Eva's will ensure training is provided on any changes to the prescribed policies on an ongoing basis.

### 3. Customer Service Standard

Eva's Initiatives uses reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- Services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision services to persons with disabilities, and others, is integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services.
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from our services.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of our services.
- Persons with disabilities and their service animals are accommodated in all aspects of service provision unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
- Eva's Initiative employees, when communicating with a person with a disability, will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act has mandated accessibility standards to remove barriers in critical areas of everyday living for persons with disability. The vision behind the act is to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disability by 2025. The Customer Service standard is the first standard developed under the Act. Other standards are expected to cover transportation, information, communication, employment, and the built environment, which will be introduced over the next several years.

**Client, Consumer, Customer:** A person who inquiries about our services, accesses our services, or does business with us.

**Barrier:** Anything that prevents a person with 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, an economic, a policy or practice.

**Assistive Device:** Any devices that persons bring with them such as white canes, walkers, vision aids such as binocular or monocular, magnifiers or oxygen tanks.

**Assistive Communication Devices:** Aids or software that is used to help persons with disability communicate. Examples of assistive communications devices are text readers, amplifiers, screen magnifiers, captioning and interpretation.

**Guide Dog:** A highly trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons' Rights Act, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

**Service Dog:** As reflected in Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562, a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

**Service Animal:** As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability; or
- The person provides a letter from physician or nurse confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person:** As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, a support person is a person who accompanies a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

**The following measures will be implemented by Eva's Initiative:**

- In-person training on "Creating a Respectful Workplace" and "Sensitivity Awareness" will be offered to employees. Both trainings address areas with regard to how to better interact with, and/or accommodate persons with disabilities. Employees will gain understanding of their responsibilities in creating an inclusive and accessible environment, accepting and respectful of the differences between people.

- Online courses on “Diversity in the Workplace,” and “Developing Diverse Teams” will be available to all employees.
- Completion of training of all employees is tracked and recorded.
- Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or by a service animal will be allowed to ensure Eva’s premises with their support person and service animal. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or service animal be prevented from having access to their support person and/or service animal while on our premises.

#### 4. Information and Communications Standards

Eva’s is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs. We want to achieve the most effective and efficient access to information for all users.

Eva’s will incorporate new accessibility requirements under the AODA information and communication standards. In accordance with these standards, we will ensure that information and communications systems and platforms are accessible and provided in accessible formats that meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

Eva’s Initiatives has undertaken the following plans to ensure compliance with this standard:

- Ensuring information is in accessible formats and with communication supports, upon request
- Taking steps to make websites conform to WCAG 2.0, level AA
- Ensuring public emergency information is in accessible formats, upon request
- Providing accessibility training for educators (in the case of Eva’s, this would include child and youth workers, support staff and administrative staff)
- Providing accessible education resources
- Ensuring that existing and new processes for receiving feedback are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request and in a timely manner.
- Eva’s will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support.

## 5. Employment Standard

Eva's Initiative is committed to inclusive and accessible employment practices that attract and retain individuals with disabilities. We have taken the following steps to notify the public and employees that, when requested, Eva's Initiative will accommodate people with disabilities throughout the recruitment and onboarding process.

Eva's Initiative has taken the following steps to ensure compliance with this standard:

### *Recruitment*

Eva's Initiative is committed to ensure that our recruitment and assessment processes are fair and accessible. The following steps to ensure compliance with this standard:

- Specify that accommodation is available for applicants with disabilities in recruitment material, and with regards to interviews and assessments
- When making offers of employment, notify successful applicant of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities
- Inform employees of policies supporting employees with disabilities. Provide this information to new employees as soon as practicable after hiring
- Provide updated information on accommodations policies to employees when changes occur.
- Consult with employee to determine suitability of format or support.

### *Performance Management, Career Development & Redeployment*

Eva's Initiative is committed to ensuring the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities needs are taken into account with regards to performance management, career development and redeployment processes.

Eva's Initiative will reviewed and updated the Human Resources policies and procedures to include the following elements:

- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account when using performance management processes
- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account when providing career development and advancement opportunities.

- Accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans are taken into account when redeploying employees with disabilities.

### *Documented Individual Accommodation Plans*

Eva's Initiative is committed to producing and providing documented individual accommodation that includes the following:

- Participation of the employee requiring the individual accommodation plan.
- Ability to request outside medical evaluation to determine if accommodation can be achieved and how.
- High level of privacy.
- Regular review and updates.
- Reason for denial if applicable.
- The means of providing Individual Accommodation Plans in a format that takes into account the needs of the employee.

Eva's has taken the following steps to prevent and remove other accessibility barriers identified:

- Assess accessibility policies and the multi-year accessibility plan on an annual basis.
- Incorporate any feedback into the revision of these policies/plans.

### **Accessible format on request**

As mentioned, Eva's provides accessible formatting when needed for individuals with disabilities.

### **Progress**

To measure the success of the accessibility plan, Eva's will revisit the Accessibility plan every 12 months to ensure policies are effective and relevant to the needs of clients and staff with disabilities.

### **Plan Review**

Eva's plans to review accessibility plan every 12 months and update the accessibility plan every 5 years.

### **Definitions**

**Disability:** The term disability as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code, refers to:



1. 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 co-ordination, 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;
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability.
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
4. a mental disorder; or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

### **Transportation Standard**

Eva's Initiative is committed to maintaining policies, planning for accessibility and training staff to comply with the accessibility standards related to the Transportation Standards outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. All staff that are involved in transporting our young people –will complete an Accessibility Standards online course. Records will be kept of the training provided.

### **Feedback**

Eva's welcomes feedback about how accessible our customer service approaches are in meeting the needs people living with several types of disabilities. Any feedback on how to improve the accessibility of our customer services is important to us. This feedback may be provided in the following ways:

- By regular mail addressed to the Senior Director of People & Culture
- By telephone: 416-977-4497
- By email: [hr@evas.ca](mailto:hr@evas.ca)

Responses will be provided within seven (7) business days upon receipt of the feedback.

### **Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers:**

#### *Eva's Place*

- Apr 6, 2021: Accessible parking spot added to parking lot.
- Jan 2, 2020: Lock replaced on accessible washroom door.
- Nov 6, 2019: A new handle and lock was installed in the accessible washroom.
- Nov 27, 2019: Pull cords fixed in Accessible washroom.

### *Eva's Satellite*

- Feb 11, 2020: Accessible entrance button fixed in main floor washroom.
- Dec 3, 2020: Accessible button fixed at main entrance.
- Feb 7, 2019: Wheelchair retrieved from basement for client use.

### *Eva's Phoenix*

- No repairs for accessibility from 2021-2019
- Apr 13, 2018: Accessible button made operational at front entrance.
- Mar 27, 2017: Broken chairs replaced in front entrance.

### *Eva's Admin Office*

- Our Urban space building manages the building and ensures that the building is accessible which includes (elevators, seating areas, accessible washrooms and more).
- Sept 1, 2019: Service counter installed in the front entrance.