

 <p>Operating Policies</p>		<p>Date Policy Issued: December 30, 2013</p> <p>Last Reviewed:</p> <p>Last Revised:</p>
<p>Accessibility Policy</p>		<p>Approved by:</p> <hr/> <p>Sue Gillespie Chief Executive Officer</p>

Statement of Commitment

Carizon Family and Community Services is committed to treating all people in a way that respects their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

- Carizon strives to give individuals with disabilities opportunity to access services and to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as others; unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable the person to access services.
- Carizon communicates with people in ways that take into account their disability.
- Carizon welcomes individuals accompanied by service animals and/or support workers.
- Carizon lets individuals know when accessible services are limited.
- Carizon establishes, implements, maintains and documents a multi-year Accessibility Plan, which outlines the ways to identify, prevent and removes barriers.
- Carizon makes emergency procedures, plans and/or safety information available in accessible formats upon request.
- Carizon incorporates accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.
- Carizon strives to continue to improve services for individuals with disabilities by inviting feedback. A feedback/complaint process is available.
- An accessibility committee meets regularly to review relevant issues.

Responsibilities:

- Each staff member and volunteer is responsible to:
 - Follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunities.
 - Be aware of barriers and eliminate barriers where possible.
 - Learn how to interact with individuals with disabilities including those who use an assistive device, service animal, or support person.

- Each manager is responsible to:
 - Ensure all staff and volunteers are trained in providing services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities.
 - Ensure accessibility is built into the planning and evaluation of services.
 - Respond to needs and opportunities to ensure accessibility.

- The accessibility committee is responsible to:
 - Ensure awareness and training is provided to all staff and volunteers.
 - Ensure regular feedback is gathered from individuals with disabilities in order to continue to improve the delivery of services.
 - Ensure complaints are handled according to the *kidsLINK Resolution of Client Concerns Policy/ Mosaic Client Rights Policy*.
 - Monitor changes in accessibility legislation and provide recommendations with respect to ensuring compliance.

- The CEO is responsible to:
 - Ensure an agency culture of respect and dignity for all, including individuals with disabilities
 - Ensure compliance with *the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Accessibility Procedure

Manager Responsible:	Date Issued: December 30, 2013
Signature:	Date Reviewed:
	Date Revised:

Procedures reflect the requirements set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

- Consider a person's disability when communicating with them
 - Use the recommendations in the AODA Toolkit located on Carizon's intranet (including ideas on how to interact and communicate with individuals with disabilities). Since every situation is different and depends on an individual's needs, staff and volunteers are encouraged to ask the individual directly about needs and communication preferences.
 - Communicate with customers/clients over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.
 - Offer alternative methods of communication for customers/clients that are suitable for their communication needs.
 - Carizon is committed to being compliant with the requirements under the information and communications standards by 2021. Carizon will ensure that any new web sites and web content complies with the World Wide Web Consortium.

- Allow assistive devices.
 - An assistive device is any piece of equipment a person with a disability uses to help them with daily living (eg wheelchair, walkers, oxygen tank, listening device, cane, screen reader).
 - Remove possible barriers to the use of assistive devices wherever possible.
 - Gain familiarity with assistive devices used by customers/clients with disabilities.

- Allow service animals
 - Service animals are welcome in all public areas of Carizon, except where animals are excluded by law (eg. the commercial kitchen).
 - Become familiar with how to interact with an accompanying service animal.

- Welcome support persons
 - Support workers are welcome in all public areas of the agency. A support worker may be a family member or friend as well as a paid support worker.
 - At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on our premises.

- No charge is made for support workers who accompany an individual with a disability to programs for which a fee is charged.
 - Support workers may be asked to complete a Confidentiality Agreement.
- Let individuals know when accessible services are limited
 - In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities, notice will be provided. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.
 - Before visiting a Carizon site, people are encouraged to call the Carizon program site to find out if there is a disruption of program or service, and what if any alternative options exist.
- Invite individuals to provide feedback
 - A good way to learn about barriers that exist is to ask individuals with disabilities how they experience services. Client Feedback processes include asking how clients with disabilities experienced accessibility.
 - The client complaint process, as outlined in the *kidsLINK Resolution of Client Concerns Policy/ Mosaic Client Rights Policy*, applies to resolving concerns that any client experiences, including accessibility.
 - As they interact with individuals with disabilities, staff and volunteers share what they have learned in order to improve services for individuals with disabilities. Staff are encouraged to share ideas and recommendations with their manager, and volunteers with the Volunteer Coordinator.
 - Feedback from clients can be provided in person, by telephone or in writing
 - Carizon's Risk Manager at:
 - Phone: 519 746-5437 x140
 - Email: AODA@carizon.ca or jnewman@carizon.ca
 - Address: 1855 Notre Dame Drive
 - P.O. Box 190,
 - St. Agatha, ON
 - N0B 2L0
- Focus on training
 - Train all staff, students and volunteers who work with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer/client service policies, practices, and procedures. This is documented in the individual's personal file.
 - This training will be provided within six (6) months after staff//volunteers commences their duties and will include:
 - The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer/client service standard.
 - 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.
 - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Carizon's goods and services.
 - Policies, practices, and procedures relating to the customer/client service standard and any changes.
- Create and Maintain Accessibility Plans
 - The plan sets directions to improve accessibility by developing and maintaining a multi-year accessibility plan. It outlines a phased in strategy to prevent and remove barriers and address current and future requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.
 - The Accessibility Plan is posted on the website and provides information related to the plan in alternative formats upon request.
 - The Plan reflects an ongoing commitment assess policies, practices, procedures, premises, access to goods and services and information and communication systems, to identify and remove barriers for people with disabilities.