

MERRYMOUNT FAMILY SUPPORT AND CRISIS CENTRE

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY AND PLAN

POLICY:

Merrymount is committed to treating all persons, including persons with disabilities, in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion and equal opportunity. Merrymount is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely and respectful manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and by accommodating disabilities under the *Human Rights Code of Ontario*.

PURPOSE:

This document describes Merrymount's commitments and plans to meet its goals and responsibilities under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) with respect to the General Requirements of the Regulation and the Standards for Information and Communications, Employment and Design of Public Spaces. Merrymount's policy and procedures with respect to the Customer Service Standard are set out in Policy 2-1-31, *Accessibility to Services*.

ACCESSIBLE EMERGENCY INFORMATION:

Emergency information (for example, fire and evacuation procedures) that is available to the public will be provided in alternative, accessible ways to clients and visitors upon their request.

Individualized emergency response information will be provided to an employee, placement student or volunteer who has a disability that requires such individualized information and where management is aware of the need for such accommodation due to the person's disability. With the individual's consent, this information will be shared with others who may provide assistance to him or her. This individualized information will be reviewed and updated as needed when the person changes work locations, or when the person's accommodation plan is reviewed or when emergency response policies or procedures change.

TRAINING

Training will be provided to all employees and volunteers with regard to the accessibility requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and the *Human Rights Code* requirements for accommodation of disabilities. The training will be geared to suit their job functions: all will be trained in the General Requirements of the IASR and the *Human Rights Code* pertaining to disability; management and other staff whose jobs are directly involved will also receive training with respect to the Information and Communications Standards, the Employment Standards and the Design of Public Spaces Standards.

All current employees and volunteers will be trained by January 1, 2015, and all new employees and volunteers thereafter will be trained during their orientation or as soon as practicable after they have joined Merrymount. The training may be done in team meetings or through self-study modules, depending on the work or volunteer schedule of the individual. Sign-in sheets recording the dates and topics of training and individuals trained will be submitted to HR and retained on file.

New training will be done for the persons affected when there are new or changed accessibility policies, practices or procedures related to their functions.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Merrymount is committed to making its feedback processes as available and accessible to persons with disabilities as to others.

Merrymount will ensure that the Client Complaint Procedure (Policy 2-1-50) and Client Satisfaction (Policy 2-8-20) process are accessible to persons with disabilities. This will be done by providing, on request, the information in those policies in accessible formats and/or with communication supports. Clients will be made aware of this in the Intake process. This is in addition to the feedback process provisions of Policy 2-1-31, Accessibility to Services.

By January 1, 2016, Merrymount will ensure that accessible formats and communications supports for persons with disabilities will be provided upon request, in a timely manner, for other types of information as required by the Regulation, and that the availability of accessible formats and communication supports is made known to clients and the public. This will include:

- identifying the types of information to be provided;
- making staff who may receive requests aware of these requirements and how to respond to them;
- making the responsible staff aware of different types of accessible formats and communications supports, and of resources for providing them.

In each case where a person requests accessible formats and/or communication supports, the person making the request will be consulted about what format and support would be suitable. Where the person is a child, the parent or caregiver also will be consulted.

There will be no fee charged for providing the information beyond what would be charged to other persons for the same type of information.

The Agency will work with the Merrymount website provider to take steps to make the current website and new web content compliant with WCAG 2.0 Level A, and to take the necessary steps to ensure they are compliant, where practicable, with WCAG Level AA before 2021.

EMPLOYMENT

Merrymount is committed to equality and inclusion in recruiting, hiring and employing staff. In addition to existing policies, procedures and practices for equal and inclusive employment and accommodation of employees with disabilities, the following measures will be implemented by January 1, 2016:

- All internal job postings and external job postings and advertisements will include a statement indicating the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruiting and hiring processes.
- At time of individual interviews or other individual selection processes, candidates will be informed that accommodations in the process are available on request for persons with disabilities.
- Candidates who request accommodation will be consulted about the type of accommodation that would be suitable to meet his or her accessibility needs in the selection process.
- In offers of employment, candidates will be informed about Merrymount's policies of accommodating disabilities.
- Employees will continue to be made aware of Agency policies pertaining to supporting persons with disabilities, including job accommodations, and will be made aware of changes in such policies.
- Where an employee with a disability so requests, information needed to perform his/her job and information generally available to employees will be provided in accessible formats and/or with

communication supports. This will include the performance review process, the internal job posting procedures and the lay-off and recall procedures. The employee will be consulted about the type of formats and supports that are suitable.

- Where an employee requests accommodation, an individual accommodations plan will be documented that includes the elements specified in the Regulation. A policy and procedure will be developed to set out in writing the individual accommodation planning process.
- The return to work policy will be reviewed and updated to meet the requirements in the Regulation and ensure accessibility needs are met for employees returning from absence due to disability.

PUBLIC SPACES

Merrymount is committed to making its premises as accessible as possible to everyone who has reason to be in them, including employees, students, volunteers, children and families, service providers and other members of the public. In addition to current measures to make the premises accessible, Merrymount will meet the Design of Public Spaces Standards when constructing or redeveloping the following types of public spaces:

- outdoor play spaces on Agency premises, such as the playgrounds at the main centre,
- outdoor functional paths of travel on Agency premises, including pedestrian sidewalks, walkways, ramps, curb ramps, depressed curbs and stairs,
- off-street parking areas that on are provided and maintained by Merrymount,
- service counters, such as reception desks, and waiting areas for families and visitors.

The following measures will be implemented by January 1, 2017:

- All management personnel and other employees who are responsible for working with contractors and other service providers in the design, construction of redevelopment of physical spaces will be trained in the requirements of the Design of Public Spaces Standards.
- When constructing or redeveloping outdoor play spaces on Agency premises, Merrymount will consult with the public and with persons with disabilities with respect to the plans.
- The Preventive Maintenance procedure chart will be reviewed and revised as necessary to include accessibility elements of public spaces, and an accessibility inspection procedure and checklist will be established for public spaces. The procedure will include measures for dealing with temporary disruptions, including notification to the public.

POSTING AND SIGN-OFF

This Policy and Plan will be posted on the Merrymount website.

The Accessibility Policy statement and a summary of the policy will be posted in each Merrymount location, in a public area in location where there is public access, along with information about how to obtain full copy of the Accessibility Policy and Plan.

The Accessibility Policy and Plan will be included in the annual review and sign-off process for staff and volunteers.

REVIEW

Management will review this Policy and Plan at least once a year, and will revise and update it as appropriate.

December 2014