

Accessibility Policy

STATE of POLICY and PROCEDURE			
Department	PEL	Policy No. (or n/a)	02.03
Policy Name	Accessibility Policy	Review Frequency	3 years
Approved By	Management	Replaces	02.02
Effective Date	January 22, 2026	Dated	October 26, 2021

Purpose

MakeWay is committed to providing an accessible experience for all persons with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

The purpose of this policy is to meet the needs of people with disabilities by identifying and removing barriers to accessibility, particularly relating to the *Customer Service Standard* and the *Information and Communication Standard* found in the *Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS) of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

Scope

This policy covers MakeWay Foundation and MakeWay Charitable Society, collectively referred to as MakeWay and applies to all employees, volunteers, board members and consultants.

For the purpose of this policy, we use “Person First” language (i.e., Persons with a Disability). However, we acknowledge the use or preference of “Identity First” language (i.e.: Disabled Person) and MakeWay will use the language each individual identifies as their preference.

MakeWay is committed to the principles of dignity, independence, interdependence, integration and equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in our workplace.

Dignity: Dignified interaction means not treating people with disabilities as an afterthought or forcing them to accept lesser quality or convenience. With dignified interactions the person with a disability maintains their self-respect and the respect of other people.

Independence: Independence is creating an environment in which people with disabilities are able to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Interdependence: Interdependence is creating a workplace in which all employees’ unique contributions are valued and drawn from to support greater goals, and in which needed accommodations to foster belonging and collaboration are supported and valued.

Integration: Integration is allowing people with disabilities to benefit from the same interactions in the same place and in the same or similar ways as people without disabilities.

Equal Opportunity: Equal opportunity means affording people with disabilities with the same changes, options and benefits as people without disabilities.

This Accessibility Policy is available to members of the public upon request and will be provided in an accessible format, as required.

Definitions

The following terms carry the noted meanings for purposes of this policy and any related procedures, guidelines and training.

Accessible Formats- may 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 used to maintain or improve functional abilities of persons with disabilities. A personal assistive device is typically a device that a person brings with them (such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank) that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

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; (“obstacle”).

Disability – includes:

- any degree of physical disability;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability;
- a mental disorder; or
 - an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under a provincial or territorial worker safety act; and
 - specifically includes any disability prescribed by a relevant provincial or territorial human rights legislation.

Guide Dog – a highly-trained working dog trained to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are visually impaired.

Service Animal – a dog or other animal, other than a guide dog for the visually impaired, when it is readily apparent to an average person that the animal is used by the person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is being used by the person for reasons relating to their disability, MakeWay may request verification from the person. Verification may include:

- a letter from a designated regulated health professional under the Integrated Accessibility Standard (IAS) confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability;

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

Customer Service Standard

Engaging with Persons with Disabilities

MakeWay will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, interdependence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all members of the public receive the same value and quality;
- allowing persons with a disability to do things in their own way and at their own pace when interacting with a MakeWay representative as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods of access when necessary to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same interactions, in the same place and in a similar manner; and
- providing on-going training and learning opportunities for all staff to enable and support a work environment free of ableism and discrimination; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices when interacting with an employee, volunteer or contractor of MakeWay..

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern, or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure a positive interaction with a MakeWay representative. For example, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires an assistive device for the purposes of mobility, the interaction could instead take place in a location that meets the needs of the person with the disability.

Guide Dogs and Service Animals

A person with a disability accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs and service animals.

Food Service Areas: A person with a disability accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

Exclusions: If a guide dog or service animal is excluded by law, MakeWay will offer reasonable alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to interact with MakeWay whenever possible. For example, the service animal may be secured in a safe location and guidance offered by the MakeWay representative.

Care and Control of the Animal: The person who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies: If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, MakeWay will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, MakeWay will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person.

If MakeWay is charging admission to an event, admission fees should not be charged for the support person.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the person with the disability prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

Training

Training will be provided to all MakeWay employees and volunteers based in Ontario and who provide service nationally. Training will cover the Integrated Accessibility Standards, accessible customer service and the Ontario Human Rights Code. MakeWay will keep a record for all employee training with the People, Engagement and Learning team (PEL).

Feedback

Feedback regarding the way MakeWay has interacted with a person with a disability is welcome and encouraged. If you have feedback regarding accessibility, you may email concerns@makeway.org. MakeWay will take all reasonable steps to address accessibility concerns, respond to feedback received, and work to prevent barriers from recurring.

Information and Communications Standard

Accessible Information and Communication

MakeWay will provide its Accessibility Policy, Accessibility Plan, and other publicly available information upon request in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports that take into account an individual's disability.

MakeWay will consult with the person making the request to determine the most appropriate accessible format or communication support and will provide the information in a timely manner.

Communication supports may include, but are not limited to, plain language, verbal explanation, or alternative communication methods, as appropriate to the individual's needs.

Requests for accessible formats or communication supports can be submitted to info@makeway.org

Notice of Disruptions in Availability

In the event of temporary disruptions affecting accessibility to a MakeWay office or event, all reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be communicated as appropriate for the circumstance, for example, placed on the relevant website, or, communicated directly to a disabled person with whom a meeting is

scheduled and in a manner appropriate for the disability. In some circumstances, such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

References

Integrated Accessibility Standards:

O. Reg. 191/11 INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS | ontario.ca