

OCTOBER 2018



ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

N.E.E.D.S Inc. commits to perpetually revise and update this policy in order to accommodate any individual needs and requirements outlined in the Accessibility for Manitoba Act to allow equal access for everyone.

Accessibility Plan (October 2018)

Name of Organization: Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services (N.E.E.D.S.) Inc.

Part 1. Baseline Report

Overview of Programs and Services

Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services (N.E.E.D.S.) Inc. is a non-profit, charitable organization. We provide accessible services and support to immigrant and refugee children and youth and their families. Our goal is to enhance the integration of newcomers into Canadian society by providing employment, mentorship, education and social recreational programs as a means assisting in the development of life skills, confidence and positive social support networks. All of our programs are supported by psychosocial educators to ensure the success of our participants. N.E.E.D.S. Inc. is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion and embracing all scopes of diversity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers by identifying, removing and preventing these barriers and by meeting requirements of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act.

Accessibility Achievements

As a reflection of our commitment to work hard in meeting the diversity of needs amongst our clients and to continue to provide them with accessible services, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. has achieved the following:

ACHIEVEMENTS

- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. currently has wheelchair accessible washroom(s) on the main floor of the buildings at 251 Notre Dame Ave and 228 Notre Dame Ave.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. is able to provide service in over 20 languages including basic American Sign Language.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. provides psychosocial support and therapy services to clients who may be experiencing mental health challenges.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. provides transportation to clients via passenger van or bus tickets in order for clients to access our services.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. partners with *Society for Manitobans with Disabilities (SMD) Foundation* to provide volunteer work placement experience for individuals living with cognitive challenges.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. partners with *E-Quality Employment Services (REES)* to provide additional services to individuals with physical disabilities and/or health conditions.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. has a 'No Discrimination' policy which includes against those living with a disability.

- As stated in the N.E.E.D.S. Inc. policy manual, we are committed to following the *Manitoba Human Rights Act*.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. is able to relay information in-person, over the phone, and in-print to clients in languages other than English and French.
- When necessary, N.E.E.D.S. Inc. is able to relay information via visitation to clients' homes.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. is able to communicate and provide access to information via social media (website, Facebook, Twitter etc.).
- Service animals are welcome on N.E.E.D.S. Inc. premises.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. provides magnifying glass to support visually impaired individuals.
- All of our administrative staff including receptionists have completed certified training on accessible customer service.

Barriers to Accessibility

One of the biggest barriers N.E.E.D.S. Inc. faces is the cost to remove barriers which would require significant change to the building such as installing a wheelchair lift or elevator.

BARRIERS

- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. currently only has wheelchair accessibility on the main floor and not on the second floor which houses many of N.E.E.D.S. Inc.'s offices and programming.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. does not have a readily available wheelchair accessible mode of transportation in order to transport clients to and from programming.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. does not have resources to assist visually impaired clients in programming.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. buildings are not equipped with automatic door or automatic operator push buttons.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. does not offer transcriptions in braille.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. does not provide Message Relay Services, including teletypewriter (TTY) relay service and Internet protocol (IP) relay service.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. website is not specifically designed to be accessible to people with various disabilities as it does not include descriptions for images, text resizing feature, etc.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. does not provide parking for visitors as well as accessible parking spots for staff.
- Some doors and hallways at both N.E.E.D.S. Inc. premises are too narrow to accommodate wheelchair access.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. does not have a smoke detector with strobe light.
- Doorbells at both N.E.E.D.S. Inc. premises may be out of reach for some people, particularly those in wheelchairs.

Part 2. Accessibility Plan:

Statement of Commitment

Newcomers Employment and Education Development Services (N.E.E.D.S.) Inc. is committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Our policies, practices and measures reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities. If a barrier to accessing our services cannot be removed, we seek to provide alternate ways to access the goods or services. The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service. This policy applies to all employees, volunteers and management.

Policies

1: MEET COMMUNICATION NEEDS

POLICY STATEMENT:

We meet the communication needs of our clients.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- To meet communication needs, we are able to communicate in over 20 languages and offer to communicate using a variety of methods including: verbally, written, using pictures and images and online.
- We also:
 - keep paper and pens available to write things down
 - offer a chair when longer conversations are needed
 - offer a quieter space
 - sit down to engage with someone using a wheelchair
 - are able to provide service in basic American Sign Language
- Signs and documents intended for our clients are written in plain language.
- All of our publications and documents can be interpreted or translated upon request.
- All of our publications and documents can be made available in larger print upon request.
- In partnership with several organizations for people with disabilities, we will make every effort to accommodate specific needs upon request as long as it does not cause undue hardship.
- Whenever we invite a client to N.E.E.D.S Inc. premises or host a public event off-site from N.E.E.D.S. Inc. premises, we ensure their accessibility accommodations are met.

2: ACCOMMODATE THE USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES

POLICY STATEMENT:

We accommodate the use of assistive devices when clients are accessing our services or facilities.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- We do not touch or move clients' assistive devices without permission.
- In cases where N.E.E.D.S. Inc. is unable to accommodate a client's assistive device we commit to referring that client to other knowledgeable service providers who are able to accommodate the client's needs.

3: WELCOME SUPPORT PERSONS

POLICY STATEMENT:

We welcome support persons who are there to assist our clients, volunteers, practicum students.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- We address the client, not the support person, unless requested by the client to do otherwise.
- We make space for support persons on-site and ensure clients have access to their support persons at all times.
- If programming is happening in place which requires a fee to be paid (museum, zoo etc.) N.E.E.D.S. Inc. will cover the cost for the support person.
- If for whatever reason N.E.E.D.S. Inc. is unable to cover the cost of the support person, the support person and client are both notified in advance.

4: ALLOW SERVICE ANIMALS

POLICY STATEMENT:

We allow service animals on our premises.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- We:
 - treat a service animal as a working animal
 - do not distract a service animal from its job by petting, feeding or playing with it, unless given permission by the person with the service animal to do so
 - know how to identify a service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing
- If we have concerns, we may ask if the animal has been trained to help-with their disability.
- We do not inquire about the disability.
- We expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.
- If the service animal is showing signs of not being controlled (i.e., by barking, whining or wandering), we may provide a warning to the handler to control the animal.
- If the service animal continues to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.
- If another law prohibits service animals such as our food preparation area, we explain why the animal cannot enter the space and discuss with the person another way of providing services.

5: MAINTAIN ACCESSIBILITY FEATURES

POLICY STATEMENT:

To ensure barrier-free access to our services and facilities, we maintain our accessibility features so they can be used as intended.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- Whenever possible, we strive to organize our space so that there is room for people with wheelchairs, electric scooters and walkers.
- Our seating accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
- We keep hallways, aisles, entrance and reception areas, waiting rooms and meeting rooms clear of clutter.
- We keep our entrance area clear of ice and snow.
- We place standing signs out of the way to avoid tripping hazards.
- We use both verbal and visual cues to inform clients when it is their turn to be served.
- When necessary and appropriate, we can provide services to the client in an alternate space when our premises is not accessible.
- Our accessibility features affected by this policy include: hallways, aisles, entrance and reception areas, accessible washrooms, doorbells.

6. LET THE PUBLIC KNOW WHEN AND WHY AN ACCESSIBILITY FEATURE IS UNAVAILABLE

POLICY STATEMENT:

We let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is temporarily unavailable, how long it will be unavailable, and other ways to access our services.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- If one of our accessibility features becomes temporarily unavailable, we prepare and post a notice and/or announcement about the disruption, the reason for the disruption, how long it will last, and whether there are other ways we can provide access to our services (e.g., by using an alternate entrance).
- If requested, we work with the customer to find other ways to provide services.
- We let the public know about disruptions in the following ways [list ways that are specific to our organization]:
 - posted on website, on social media, and/or in newsletters
 - posted at our building entrance or reception desk
 - through employees, volunteers or management (in person, by phone or through recorded greetings)

7. WELCOME AND RESPOND PROMPTLY TO FEEDBACK

POLICY STATEMENTS:

We welcome and respond promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our services. We document the actions we take to respond to the feedback we receive, and that information is available on request in a format that meets the individual's communication needs.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- We invite feedback in the following ways:
 - Visit our reception or service desk, or contact us by phone, email, website or feedback form
- All feedback is directed to our Administration department, who determines what action, if any, should occur.
- If the feedback requires us to follow-up, the client is notified that the request is being reviewed and when they can expect a response.
- We let the client know what action we will take to address their feedback, if any.
- We respond to feedback in a way that meets the communication needs of the individual.

8: PROVIDE THE REQUIRED TRAINING TO EMPLOYEES, VOLUNTEERS AND MANAGEMENT

POLICY STATEMENTS:

We provide the required training on accessible customer service to employees, volunteers and management. We are trained on:

- How to interact and communicate with people who face barriers to accessing services, use assistive devices, are assisted by a support person and/or are assisted by a service animal.
- How to use any equipment or assistive devices that are available on-site.
- An overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), and the Customer Service Standard.
- Our organizational policies, practices and measures, including updates or changes.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- We train new employees, volunteers and management within one month after hiring.
- N.E.E.D.S. Inc. has a plan in place to train all employees on accessible customer service within the first 3 months of the implementation of Manitoba's Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (November 1, 2018).
- Our Administration Department record who has taken training and when.
- Feedback on the accessibility of our services is addressed in regular staff meetings.

9: KEEP A WRITTEN RECORD OF ACCESSIBILITY AND TRAINING POLICIES

POLICY STATEMENTS:

We keep a written record of our accessibility and training policies.

Our written documents include a summary of our training material and when training is offered.

We let the public know that our written policies are available on request.

PRACTICES AND MEASURES:

- We let the public know that our accessibility and training policies are available in the following ways:
 - posted on website, on social media, and/or in newsletters
 - posted at our service reception desk
 - through employees, volunteers or management (in person, by phone or through recorded greetings)
- We provide our policies within a reasonable timeframe, at no cost, and in a format that meets the needs of the individual.