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Purpose:

The Employer recognizes the diverse needs of all its:

- Clients, and strives to provide services and programs that are accessible to everyone in the community. As a provider of services, GIL is committed to ensuring that its goods, services, programs and facilities are provided in an accessible manner.
- Employees, and strives to provide a workplace that is accessible to all of them. As an Employer, GIL is committed to ensuring its workplace is accessible.

This Accessibility Policy is to function as an umbrella policy for the requirements of the standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

Policy/Commitment:

Guelph Independent Living (GIL) is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its clients, employees, and volunteers, regardless of disabilities. To ensure equal access and participation for persons with disabilities GIL will:

- Ensure its policies, practices and procedures provide for dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity
- Identify, prevent, and remove barriers for persons with disabilities in accessing and using GIL goods, services, programs and facilities
- Accommodate the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities to ensure that they can obtain, use, or benefit from GIL goods, services, programs and facilities and they can do so in a timely manner
- Develop and train GIL employees on providing accessible goods, services, programs and facilities

This policy provides guidance on how GIL ensures all its goods, services, programs and facilities are provided in an inclusive manner that takes into the account the needs of persons with disabilities.

Principles:

GIL develops policies, practices and procedures which contribute to ensuring that goods, services, programs and facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities. The following principles will be met when developing policies, practices and procedures:

1. Accessibility Planning

GIL will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

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GIL will review and update the plan at least once every five years.

GIL Administration staff will prepare an annual status update report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan and will post the plan and the status update reports on GIL’s website. GIL employees will provide accessible formats of the plan and reports upon request.

2. Accessible Customer Service

GIL will make reasonable efforts to ensure the following:

- That goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- That the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and to others, are 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 goods and services
- That persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

Note: Equal opportunity may require an individual accommodation in addition to this policy.

3. Employee Training

GIL employees and volunteers, those who participate in developing GIL policies and procedures, and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of GIL will be trained in accordance with Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (HR Policy E-1) and the Integrated Accessibility Standards, as well as other regulations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.

GIL will log and retain records which will record the details for the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location and date the training was completed.

4. Alternate Formats

GIL will provide information that it produces or controls, in formats that take into account the disabilities of the person requesting the information. GIL will provide these alternate formats in a timely manner and at a cost no more than the cost of the original format of the information.

GIL material printed in-house or produced on behalf of GIL for the public should contain a note indicating “Alternative formats are available upon request in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*” and include relevant contact information.

GIL and the person with a disability requesting the document will agree upon the format to be used for the GIL document or information.

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The timeframe attached to the process to convert the GIL document to an alternative format may vary, depending on the media, the size, complexity, quality, and number of the source documents to be converted.

When it is not practicable to provide an alternate format, GIL will provide an explanation and a summary of the document in an accessible format.

5. Communication Supports

GIL will provide communication supports to members of the public, upon request. GIL will provide the support in a timely manner, and in consultation with the person to determine suitability of the communication support so that it takes his or her disability into account. GIL will not charge a cost that is more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

If GIL employees are unable to obtain the requested communication support, they will work with the requestor to determine a practicable and appropriate method for communication.

6. Feedback Process

GIL has established a process for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which the GIL provides goods and services to persons with disabilities. Information about this process is available to any person.

Should members of the public wish to provide feedback they can do so:

- In person to a GIL Coordinator, Manager, the Executive Director or the Communications and Privacy Officer
- By telephone, to the Communications and Privacy Officer at: 519.836.1812 ext 33 or TTY at: 519.836.5952
- In writing, to the attention of the Communications and Privacy Officer, Guelph Independent Living, 255 Woodlawn Road West, Suite 207, Guelph ON, N1H 8H1
- By using the form included in Appendix B or
- In an electronic format or by email: info@guelphindependentliving.org

Once feedback has been received, GIL will implement the following process:

- If the feedback is received by a GIL employee other than a Coordinator, Manager, the Executive Director or the Communications and Privacy Officer, the employee will forward the feedback from to his or her supervisor
- The Supervisor will forward the form to the Communications and Privacy Officer
- The Communications and Privacy Officer will consult with the Executive Director and together will take/direct the appropriate action in a timely manner with the assistance of other relevant employees as needed
- Whether the feedback is intended to be a helpful suggestion or a complaint, the Communications and Privacy Officer, Executive Director and other relevant employees,

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as needed, will assess current policies, practices and procedures to determine if any changes are required

- Employees will follow up with the person who submitted the feedback if more clarification is needed, or if the person has requested that follow up take place
- Employees will keep records of all steps taken, including any discussions with the person submitting the feedback and any actions taken
- All feedback will be provided to relevant GIL employees who will follow up as appropriate.

7. Service Disruptions

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from the GIL’s goods, services, programs or facilities, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of GIL, and if there is a temporary Facility or Service Disruption to those facilities or services, in whole or in part, GIL will give notice of the Facility or Service Disruption to the public. GIL employees responsible for posting such notices include Coordinators, Managers, the Executive Director and the Superintendent and Key Tenant(s) at 238 Willow Road, or their designates. Employees of Precision Property Management Inc. may also be responsible for posting such notices at 238 Willow Road.

Notice of the Facility or Service Disruption will include: information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipate duration and a description of the alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

GIL will give notice of the Facility or Service Disruption by posting the information in a conspicuous place on the relevant GIL premises and, whenever possible, by posting it on the GIL website and in the media as appropriate.

If GIL should expect a planned temporary Facility or Service Disruption, GIL will provide it on its website, if possible, advance notice, in keeping with the conditions of this section of this policy.

8. Support Persons

GIL will allow a person with a disability to be accompanied by a Support Person in all GIL owned and operated public facilities. GIL reserves the right to request that person with a disability by accompanied by a Support Person, in the vent that GIL considers such accompaniment as necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or others on the premises.

GIL will provide notification of any applicable admission fees or fares that apply to Support Persons by posting such admission fees or fares where all other fees or fares are posted.

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9. Service Animals

GIL welcomes Service Animals into all GIL-owned or operated facilities where the public is allowed. The person requiring the Service Animal may keep it with him or her unless it is otherwise excluded by law.

If a Service Animal is excluded from the premises by law, which could include, but is not limited to, GIL policy, City of Guelph policy, bylaw, Federal or Provincial Public Health law, or government policy or guideline, GIL will, upon request, use reasonable efforts to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the GIL program, service or facility. Appropriate “other measures” will be addressed on a case by case basis.

The concept of Service Animals may be new to some people. As a result there is a potential for misunderstandings, and persons with disabilities who use Service Animals often find themselves providing education about the use of Service Animals to those they meet. If a person accessing GIL services experiences difficulty from another person regarding the treatment of the Service Animal or himself/herself, the following could take place:

The person with the Service Animal could:

1. Mention to the other person that his/her animal is a Service Animal and / or
2. Request assistance from GIL employees. GIL employees will, upon request, assist in a professional manner within their capacity.

A person with a disability with a Service Animal is responsible of the control of that animal at all times. As well, he or she must comply with all applicable legislation, which includes, but is not limited to, GIL policies, procedures and practices, the *Dog Owner’s Liability Act* and City of Guelph by-laws (such as the Animal Control By-law, Stoop and Scoop By-law and Exotic and Non-Domestic Animals By-law).

If the Service Animal is not kept under control, GIL employees may use their discretion to request that the Service Animal, accompanied by a person, leave the premises until the Service Animal is under control. If the Service Animal has bitten another person, or animal, or is a menace to the safety of other persons or animals, the Service Animal, accompanied by a person, may be required to leave the premises. If this occurs, the person would be permitted to continue to access GIL goods or services without the Service Animal present. In addition, GIL employees will, upon request, consider alternate accommodations of the person in such circumstances. GIL may refuse to permit the Service Animal to accompany the person until such time as the person has demonstrated to GIL that the issue has been resolved and steps have been taken to correct the situation. The person could present GIL with a letter from a veterinarian and physician or nurse that explains how the issue has been resolved and the steps taken to correct the situation. If the person plans on using GIL facilities, programs or services with the Service Animal, GIL expects that the person would make every effort to ensure the issue would be resolved within a reasonable period of time as alternate accommodations provided by GIL may be discontinued

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after a limited amount of time. GIL employees may take further action as described in the laws noted above, or under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

If a conflict should arise concerning a Service Animal, employees will attempt to balance the needs of all persons involved by following the strategies in Human Resources Policy C-3.1, Conflict and Complaint Resolution. These strategies will include collecting appropriate information from all persons involved and observing the rights of all individuals involved according to the *Human Rights Code* and the *Canadian Human Rights Act, 1985*

10. Use of Assistive Devices

GIL will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by GIL.

Should a person with a disability be unable to access GIL's services through the use of his or her own personal assistive device, GIL will assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.

11. Accessible Workplace

GIL will establish policies, practices and procedures that ensure that GIL remains an inclusive workplace for persons with disabilities. These policies, practices and procedures will:

- Ensure that the recruitment process is inclusive of persons with disabilities
- Inform employees of supports available for employees with disabilities
- Appropriately accommodate employees and volunteers with disabilities in the areas of:
 - Workplace emergency response information
 - Information and communications needed to perform jobs or that are generally available to employees in the workplace, and
 - Any other accommodations required
- Take into account employee accommodations in:
 - Performance management
 - Career development and advancement, and
 - Redeployment
- Develop and implement a return to work process for employees who have been absent from work due to disability and require disability related accommodations in order to return to work.

12. Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment

GIL is committed to providing a universally accessible built environment at its facilities. As necessary, for a guiding standard, GIL will ensure that all relevant legislation is consulted so that renovations and newly constructed buildings meet or exceed the Ontario Building Code and the Design of Public Spaces regulation O. Reg. 413/12.

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Review Period:

This policy shall be reviewed any time the Multi-Year Plan is reviewed and/or as accessibility legislation changes.

Contact Information:

For more information about this policy, or questions related to accessibility at GIL, please contact:

Communications and Privacy Officer
Guelph Independent Living
255 Woodlawn Road West
Suite 207
Guelph, ON
N1H 8H1

Ph: 519.836.1812
Fax: 519.836.7918
TTY:519.836.5952

Email: Carla@guelphindependentliving.org

Relevant GIL Documents:

- Notice of Disruption
- Accessible Services for Persons with Disabilities Feedback Form
- Request for Documentation in an Alternative Format
- Workplace Emergency Response Plan

Please note that this policy has been designed to complement the City of Guelph, Corporate Accessibility Policy, January 1, 2013

Resources and Links:

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)
- [Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07](#)
- [Integrated Accessibility Standard](#)
- [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Dog Owners Liability Act \(Provincial Act\)](#)
- [Blind Persons' Right Act \(Provincial Act\)](#)
- City of Guelph documents related to Service Animals and Guide Dogs:
 - [Animal Control Bi-Law PDF](#)
 - [Stoop and Scoop Bi-Law PDF](#)
 - [Exotic and Non-Domestic Animals Bi-Law PDF](#)
- [City of Guelph Corporate Accessibility Policy](#)