



# Cultivate Community Non-Profit Services Accessibility Policy

## 1. Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

Cultivate Community Non-Profit Services ("Cultivate Community" or "Cultivate") is committed to treating all people in a way that enables them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity for all Cultivate visitors, employees, and volunteers. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and providing equal access to our programs, services, goods, and opportunities, wherever possible. We will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and by meeting accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this Accessibility Policy is to help guide Cultivate employees, volunteers, and representatives in providing equitable programs and services. Cultivate seeks to develop and maintain policies and procedures that promote the dignity, independence, integration, and safety of persons with disabilities.

This document also helps fulfill the requirements set out in Regulation 429/07 of the AODA to govern how Cultivate provides access to its services and employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

## 3. Scope

This Accessibility Policy applies to every employee, volunteer, board member and anyone who provides goods or services on behalf of Cultivate.

## 4. Responsibility

As part of the Cultivate onboarding process and refresher training as required, all Cultivate employees and volunteers are required to review and apply the principles and procedures described in this Accessibility Policy.

It is the responsibility of Cultivate management to ensure that all employees and volunteers follow the guidelines set out in this policy.

The Cultivate Executive Director and members of the IDEA Squad (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, Accessibility team) are responsible for reviewing this policy annually. The goal of this annual review is to ensure ongoing compliance with legislated requirements and alignment and progress with Cultivate commitments.

## 5. Definitions

**Accessible Format:** Accessible and alternate formats may include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and video and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Assistive Device:** A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services and facilities. Assistive devices may include but are not limited to wheelchairs, walkers, canes, oxygen tanks, and electronic communication devices.

**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 informational or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

**Disability:**

- a) Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes: diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other service animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) A mental disorder; or
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997.

**Guide Dog:** Guide dog is defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons' Rights Act* and means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the Act.

**Kiosk:** An interactive electronic terminal, including a point-of-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access services or products or both.

**Service Animals:** Working animals that have completed training qualifications to assist a Deaf, disabled, or neurodivergent person to address needs related to their disability or condition. Under the AODA, service animals can be readily identified by appropriate vests or harnesses worn by the animal or through documentation provided by one of the regulated health professionals noted in the AODA, confirming that the animal is required for reasons relating to a person's disability.

**Support Person:** In relation to a person with a disability, a support person accompanies them to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods and services.

## 6. Customer Service Procedures

### 6.1 Accessible Communication

When communicating with others, Cultivate team members will do so in ways that take into account a person's disabilities and requested communication formats.

Training will be provided to employees and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. We will make every effort to provide communication in accessible formats and with communication supports in a timely manner whenever possible.

### 6.2 Notification of Accessible Formats

Cultivate will notify the public that information and communication are available in accessible and alternate formats, upon request and where possible. Accessible formats may include electronic files, plain text, large print formats, or audio format.

Cultivate will address accessible communication and format requests and provide the same or similar information (for example, a summary or description of requested information) at no additional cost.

To request Cultivate information or communications in an alternate format, contact us:

- [info@cultivatefestival.ca](mailto:info@cultivatefestival.ca)
- 647-631-7117
- Jeffrey Bray, Executive Director  
Cultivate Community Non-Profit Services  
5 Bramley St. North, Port Hope, ON, L1A 3K7

### 6.3 Telephone Services

Cultivate is committed to providing fully accessible telephone services. We will train all employees, volunteers, and others to communicate over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

### 6.4 Accessible Websites and Web Content

Cultivate will ensure that its public website and any web content controlled or managed by Cultivate will meet or exceed the AODA requirements (for example, Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level AA or higher).

### 6.5 Accessible Emergency Information

Cultivate is committed to providing visitors with publicly available emergency information in an accessible way. We will also provide employees with disabilities with individualized emergency response information and, when requested, support during emergencies and evacuations.

## 6.6 Kiosks

Cultivate will consider the needs of people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

## 6.7 Feedback

Cultivate is committed to providing high quality and accessible facilities, goods, and services. Feedback from the public is welcomed, as it helps identify accessibility barriers and areas that may require changes as we work towards ongoing service improvements.

Feedback can be provided by any Cultivate visitor, employee, volunteer, or any member of the public. Feedback can be provided in person, online, or by phone:

- Online form (feedback can be submitted anonymously or with contact information) at the Cultivate [Accessibility page](#)
- [info@cultivatefestival.ca](mailto:info@cultivatefestival.ca)
- 647-631-7117
- Jeffrey Bray, Executive Director  
Cultivate Community Non-Profit Services  
5 Bramley St. North, Port Hope, ON, L1A 3K7

Cultivate employees and volunteers will be trained on addressing feedback, comments, queries, and complaints directly, where possible. All employees and volunteers are trained on our accessibility feedback policy and procedure during onboarding and when refresher accessibility training is provided.

All formal feedback will be directed to the Cultivate Executive Director. Where feedback is accompanied by contact information and a request for a response, persons providing feedback can expect an acknowledgment of their message within five (5) business days. Additional follow-up, if necessary, will be provided within thirty (30) days in the format that feedback was provided or in the accessible format requested.

If an action is required resulting from submitted feedback, the Cultivate Executive Director will communicate and work with the person providing feedback to determine appropriate next steps. If an initial attempt to resolve the complaint fails, then the complaint will be shared with Cultivate board members.

Employees and volunteers will be trained on the Cultivate accessibility feedback procedure during onboarding and when refresher accessibility training is provided.

## 6.8 Notice of Disruption of Accessible Services

Cultivate is aware that consistent and reliable operation and access to its services, programs, events, and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in Cultivate's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within Cultivate's control or knowledge.

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption of facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities (for example, accessible ramps, parking, washrooms, etc.), Cultivate will notify the public in advance and at the point of disruption. Notice to the public will include:

- Information about the service or facility with disrupted access;
- Reason for the disruption;
- Anticipated duration of the disruption;
- A description of alternate accessible facilities or services, if any, that are available; and
- Contact information for immediate questions, additional information, or feedback.

In cases where a disruption to facilities or services is unplanned, Cultivate will provide public notice as soon as possible.

Public notice may be provided in various appropriate formats, including posting information in relevant visible locations (for example, at the entrance to an event, parking area, or washroom), on Cultivate social media channels, on the [Cultivate website](#) and by other methods that are reasonable under the circumstances.

## **6.9 Assistive Devices**

A person with a disability may use their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using, or benefiting from Cultivate events, programs, services, goods, or facilities.

It is the responsibility of the person with a disability and, if applicable, their support person to ensure that assistive devices are operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

For assistive devices provided for use by Cultivate (for example, noise-cancelling headphones), IDEA team members will be trained and familiar with these assistive devices and procedures for use.

## **6.10 Support Persons**

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is welcome to enter Cultivate premises and public sites and to be accompanied by their support person at all times while accessing public sites owned or operated by Cultivate.

Where an admission fee is charged to gain access to an event, facility, or service, and the revenue from the fee is payable directly to Cultivate, the support person is permitted to attend at no cost, upon request.

Information regarding events will also indicate any necessary arrangements or accommodation requests that may be required on an individual basis with the event organizers in advance of the event. For example, to accommodate a person with a disability and their support person at an event where attendance is by pre-arranged seating, advance booking may be required.

## 6.11 Service Animals

Cultivate will ensure that persons with a disability who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal are permitted to enter public areas owned, operated, or managed by Cultivate. Persons using service animals may keep the service animal with them unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law (for example, where food is being prepared commercially).

If the service animal is excluded by law, Cultivate will make every effort to enable the person with disability to obtain, use or benefit from the same or similar Cultivate goods and services.

Cultivate will ensure that all employees, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

If an animal accompanying a person cannot be identified easily as a service animal, Cultivate team members may ask the person to provide service animal certification (for example, documentation from a regulated health professional). Documentation from a regulated health professional needs to verify the need for a service animal and a description of the service animal for the person accompanied by the animal; documentation is not required to describe the person's disability or the specific purpose of the animal.

It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to ensure their service animal is in their care and control at all times.

## 7. Training

Cultivate will ensure that all employees and volunteers are trained on the AODA and applicable Cultivate accessibility policies and procedures.

AODA and accessibility training content will include:

- A review of the purposes and principles of the AODA;
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07);
- Instruction on Cultivate policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Cultivate events, programs, goods or services;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal;
- Information about the equipment, facilities, services, or devices available at Cultivate events or programs that may help with the provision of services to persons with disabilities; and
- Cultivate accessibility policies and procedures relevant to their role and responsibilities.

New employees and volunteers will be trained prior to beginning their work or volunteer role.

Additional training on the AODA and accessibility policies and procedures will be provided when applicable legislation changes, when an employee's or volunteer's role and responsibilities change, and when Cultivate accessibility policies or procedures change.

The Cultivate Executive Director will keep records of training delivered to employees and volunteers, including the date on which training is provided, the names of individuals who participated, and the nature of the training that is provided.

## 8. Accessible Recruitment and Employment Procedures

Cultivate is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

### 8.1 Recruitment

Cultivate will share information about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities throughout its recruitment process.

When open positions are posted, appropriate messaging and contact information to request accommodations will be provided.

When interviews are scheduled, the interview process will be described briefly and interviewees will be asked if any accommodations are required in order to participate in the process.

Successful applicants will be notified about Cultivate's accessible employment and accommodation policies as part of their offer of employment.

### 8.2 Employee Workplace and Emergency Supports

Upon an employee's request, Cultivate will consult with the employee to assist in identifying accessible formats and communication supports for:

- information that is needed to perform the employee's job; and
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

All employees will be asked during onboarding and during performance management reviews if individual workplace emergency response support is necessary. If an employee indicates that support is required during an emergency or evacuation, this information will be reviewed with the employee and Cultivate will make every effort to provide appropriate and reasonable supports.

## 9. Built Environment and Design of Public Spaces

Cultivate will make every effort to ensure that the facilities it uses to host its programs and events are accessible.

Information on accessible parking, washrooms, and other facilities will be provided at Cultivate events through appropriate and accessible signage and wayfinding information. Cultivate employees and volunteers will also be trained on how to provide information and access to these areas.

## 10. Availability of Accessibility Policies and Procedures

The Cultivate Accessibility Policy and related accessibility information are available on the Cultivate website and upon request. Documents and information are available in alternate formats, upon request.

## 11. Policy History

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| Created On            | September 2025               |
| Last Reviewed On      | September 2025               |
| Approved By           | Cultivate Executive Director |
| Next Review Scheduled | August 2026                  |