POLICY STATEMENT

Community Living Windsor is committed to being responsive to the diverse needs of all by providing to the best of its ability barrier free access to services, supports and employment. In the most accessible environment possible and based on the key principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity, the agency will comply with the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, (AODA), the Ontario Human Rights Code and other legislative requirements.

Approved by: **Community Living Windsor Board of Directors**	Date**: January 9, 2014**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and subsequent regulations establish standards to create an accessible environment to accommodate all disabilities. The standards include: Customer Service, Information and Communications, Built Environment, Employment and Transportation.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Accessibility:** The opportunity for a person who has a disability to obtain, use and benefit from services or goods.

2. **Assistive Device:** An item or device that helps a person accomplish day to day activities (i.e. wheelchair, hearing aids, special eating utensils).

3. **Communication:** The process or method used to transfer information from one person to another.

4. **Disability:** The Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA defines disability as:
   (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 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.

5. **Service Animals:** Any animal that has been trained to perform tasks that assist people who have a disability. The international assistance animal community has categorized three types:
    - Guide Animal - to guide the blind.
    - Hearing Animal - to signal the hearing impaired.
    - Service Animal - to do work for persons with disabilities other than blindness or deafness.

6. **Direct Support Professional:** A person who accompanies a person who has a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, access to goods and services, etc.

PROCEDURES

1. The agency's overall goal is to provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities by enabling a person who has a disability equal opportunity and benefit as people who do not have a disability, in accordance with "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service".

2. Helpful strategies and information to provide an accessible and welcoming environment are attached to this policy - "Best Practices - Accessible and Welcoming Service to All People Who Have a Disability".

3. The agency will continue to ensure consideration of the impact on people with disabilities when planning any new initiatives, purchasing equipment, advancing technology or undergoing facility repairs and renovations.

4. Employees shall inform their manager of any physical, technical, communication methods, policy or practice that appears to pose a barrier for a person who has a disability.

A. Use of Assistive Devices

The agency is aware that people may use assistive devices in order to access services and will support a person's use of these devices to obtain or receive services.

B. Communication

The agency will communicate in a manner that is individualized and appropriate considering the person's disability. The agency and person will agree upon the alternative format for documents taking into consideration available agency resources. If requested, support will be provided to help the person understand and use agency documents.

C. Service Animals

People who have a disability and are accompanied by a service animal are welcome on agency premises open to the public. If the service animal is excluded by law or it is deemed unsafe for the animal to be allowed in agency premises, then other measures available will be used to ensure the person has access to services. The person must maintain care and control of the animal at all times. For additional procedures see CLW Pet Procedure.

D. Direct Support Professional

The agency welcomes and understands the important role of a direct support professional for a person with a disability.

To ensure the health and safety of all, the agency may request, depending on the needs of the person, that a person's direct support professional is with them when visiting the agency.

If the agency is hosting an event or function and there is a charge to attend, then advance notice will be given if a person's direct support professional would also be required to pay the charge.

To protect the privacy of a person supported by the agency, the direct support professional may be requested to agree to the provisions of the agency's Confidentiality Policy and sign an Oath of Confidentiality.

E. Temporary Disruption of Services

If there is a planned or unexpected, partial or complete disruption in agency service normally available to the public, a notice will be posted in a prominent place on the physical premises, posted on the agency's website or by any other reasonable means considering the circumstances. The notice of the temporary disruption must include:

- the reason;
- the anticipated length of time;
- if any alternative services are available.

F. Training

The agency will ensure that employees or persons trusted to carry out service on behalf of the agency are trained in these policies and procedures, including:

- the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005;
- Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- how to interact and communicate with persons who have a disability including people who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- how to use any equipment or devices available at the agency that may help with the provision of services to a person with disability;
- what to do if having difficulty accessing the agency's services.

Training will be completed as soon as practical and for new employee's within their probationary period. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis when changes to this policy or the policies, practices and procedures governed by the AODA and its Standards occur. Human Resources will maintain a record of the employees trained and the date.

G. Feedback/Comments/Complaints

The agency strives to meet and exceed stakeholders' expectations while serving people who have a disability. Comments are welcome and considered very important in measuring how well expectations are being met. Feedback can be given to any employee and may be provided in person, by telephone, in writing, by email, electronic text or via the agency's website or by completing the CLW Feedback Form.

Any concern or complaint brought forward by member of the public will be addressed by the Executive Director, or designate.

H. Notice of Availability of Documents in compliance with the AODA

The agency is committed to raising awareness to break down barriers for people who have a disability. The public will be notified of this policy and the Multiyear Accessibility Plan by posting it on the agency's website. Copies will be provided upon request.

I. Multiyear Accessibility Plan

The purpose of the Multiyear Accessibility Plan is to identify and address accessibility issues throughout our community and at locations owned/leased/operated by Community Living Windsor. The agency is dedicated to identifying and removing barriers that limit and restrict the ability of people from fully accessing their community and our locations. The plan is reviewed annually and identifies the following:

- Barriers that were addressed or removed by the agency over the past year;
- Barriers that have been identified and the agency intends to address as well as any new ones brought to the agency's attention;
- Barriers that have been identified but the agency is unable to address at this time.

J. Accessibility Committee

An Accessibility Committee has been established by the agency to act as an objective resource in all matters concerning accessibility. This Committee will review and make recommendations to the agency regarding the Multiyear Accessibility Plan, accessibility successes and challenges, feedback, comments or complaints received by the agency and new trends and technology.