



Figure 1: This Figure features Willowgrove's logo. At the bottom, the logo reads "Willowgrove," while above it is included three separated shapes. Each shape depicts rolling hills, and a figure participating in activities.

Multi-Year Accessibility Plan

This 2023-2028 accessibility plan outlines the actions that Willowgrove has, and is committed to putting in place for the future, in order to improve accessibility and remove barriers for individuals with disabilities. Willowgrove will review and update this accessibility plan once every five (5) years.

Message from Executive Director

"One of Willowgrove's core values is *Welcoming Community*, which provides an excellent guide when looking at the goal of accessibility. As an organization, this value reminds us to always work towards creating environments that foster a sense of belonging. This is what allows for unique perspectives and talents to come together and to create strong, diverse communities. Therefore, if *Welcoming Community* is our goal, then we must remain committed to intentionally removing barriers wherever, and whenever possible."

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johnny Wideman".

Johnny Wideman
Executive Director
Willowgrove

Statement of Commitment

Willowgrove is committed to treating all people with dignity, respect, and independence. Integral to our Mission, we believe in integration and equal opportunities for all.

Willowgrove is committed to supporting the goals of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). Willowgrove will establish policies, practices and procedures which are consistent with the accessibility standards established under the AODA, to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

Willowgrove will ensure that both the regulations and principles of the AODA are adhered to for the following standards:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communications
- Employment
- Built Environment (when possible)
- Transportation (as applicable)

To facilitate this commitment, Willowgrove will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. Accessibility plans will be made available in an accessible format, upon request, and will be posted on our website.

Should you require an alternative format of a this or another document, a copy of Willowgrove's AODA documentation, more information, or if you wish to provide feedback, please contact:

Willowgrove's Executive Director: Johnny Wideman

Phone: (905) 640-2127

Email: johnny@willowgrove.ca

This document can be made available in an alternate format upon request.

Accessibility Addition for an Emergency Response Plan

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) mandates that organizations in Ontario must provide and make available in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, information about emergency response plans or public safety to customers and employees with disabilities.

Willowgrove is committed to ensuring that all people have access to information and communication. Willowgrove will provide our Emergency Response Plan in a format that takes into consideration individual needs. Should you require:

- An alternative format of this document or any other document or appendix associated with our Emergency Response Plan;

- Clarification of the content or instructions regarding the Emergency Response Plan; or if you have a question, please contact Willowgrove’s Executive Director, Johnny Wideman, by phone at **(905) 640-2127** or by email at **johnny@willowgrove.ca**

In addition, as per the requirement set out by the AODA, Willowgrove has created Individualized Employee Emergency Response Information Forms, as well as a Worksheet for Individual Emergency Response Plans to be provided to employees with disabilities. This information will take into account the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and will be created in consultation with the employee.

Training

Willowgrove will provide training to employees, volunteers, and other staff members on Ontario’s accessibility laws and on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities. Training will be provided in a way that best suits the duties of employees, volunteers, and other staff members.

Willowgrove has taken the following steps to ensure employees are provided with the training needed to meet Ontario’s accessible laws:

- Provide an overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- Information on the Human Rights Code as it relates to people with disabilities.
- Willowgrove’s plan related to the customer service standards.
- How to interact with and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require assistance of a service animal or support person.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Willowgrove’s services.
- Using golf carts and other vehicles to assist customers with decreased mobility.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to the plan.

ATTITUDINAL BARRIERS	POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS AT WILLOWGROVE
Thinking that people with intellectual disabilities are not able to make decisions.	Talk to customers and staff. Never assume what someone with a disability can/cannot do.

Assuming that someone with a speech impairment or limited English cannot understand you.	Speak clearly and allow for lip reading. Confirm that the person you're communicating with understands.
Avoiding a person with a disability in fear of saying the wrong word or offending them.	Welcome everyone politely and respectfully. They may not make eye contact, or respond, but that's OK. Ask questions to clarify and learn.
Assuming that someone cannot enjoy a program due to limited vision or hearing.	Designing programs to utilize multi-sensory aspects. If present, ask how to better accommodate assistive devices.
Informational and Communication Barriers	Possible Solutions at Willowgrove
Print is too small to read on educational materials, advertising, or signs, or messages are unclear.	Ensuring that everyday documents, materials, and signs, with large, legible print. Using a mix of plain language, symbols, and pictures to get your message across.
Presentation materials for meetings, such as slide decks and videos, are not accessible to employees with low vision or who have hearing loss.	Develop a template for slide decks using large fonts, high contrast colours, and clean layout.
Videos don't have captions and are not accessible to people who have hearing loss.	Provide captions for videos and, when this is not possible, provide a text transcript of the video.
Social Media/Website pictures are not described and are not accessible to people who rely on assistive technology.	Provide descriptions or alt tags for pictures for people who rely on assistive technology.
Complicated, busy or confusing signs.	Keep signs clean and clear. Make information available in another form, such as a chart or pictogram.
Seating arrangements make it difficult for people who have hearing loss to fully participate in meetings.	Arrange seating at a round table to facilitate lip reading. Use assistive listening or amplification devices as appropriate.
Marketing and communications are not inclusive, either in depicting people with disabilities, including them as a potential target audience, or in considering them.	Check that your marketing and communications efforts reach people with disabilities. Include people with disabilities of all generations in photos, testimonials and other communications.
Emails or other electronic communications are not accessible to people who use screen readers.	Make sure every email is accessible to people who use screen readers and offer alternative methods of communication.
Having only one way for your customers to reach you, for example, by telephone only.	Allow customers to contact you in a variety of ways including telephone, email, TTY or train your staff on using the relay service over the phone.

Accepting only online job applications.	Welcome job applications in a number of formats.
Systemic Barriers	Possible Solutions at Willowgrove
People with disabilities are excluded from events, or included as an after-thought when planning events.	Make sure that accessibility is considered when making plans for events and invite attendees to tell you if they have different needs. Consider using an accessibility checklist for events.
Not knowing about the different types of accommodations an employee might need to return to work after an absence due to a disability.	Learn about the types of accommodations employees might need, and teaching employees to flag concerns to Executive Director and teach the organization about any specific needs.
There is no leadership or accountability for issues related to accessibility for people with disabilities.	The Executive Director is the point person to implement accessibility policies and procedures.
Hiring policies do not encourage applications from people with disabilities.	Posting on website about Willowgrove's processes to identify and remove barriers, such as inaccessible locations for interviews.
Procedures such as using certain products or cleaning supplies may exclude or cause allergic reactions.	Willowgrove has implemented a peanut-free environment, and could consider developing a "fragrance-free" policy.
Physical/Architectural Barriers	Possible Solutions at Willowgrove
Doorways, aisles, or pathways are blocked or too narrow for a person using a wheelchair or walker.	Notify Health and Safety rep if pathways, doorways, or storage areas are obstructed or impassable.
Event or meeting spaces are inaccessible.	When scheduling team/group meetings in a physical location consider potential barriers such as lack of ramps, proximity to washrooms, lighting, and signage.
Accessibility features such as power-operated doors are broken and not fixed promptly.	Notify Health and Safety rep and develop a maintenance plan and ensure prompt response times when equipment is broken.

Information and Communication

Willowgrove will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, upon request. Accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual. Willowgrove will take into account the person's accessibility needs when customizing individual requests and shall consult with the individual making the request to ensure suitability.

In cases where mobility is limited for a customer, Willowgrove is working to create signs around the property that would notify staff of a need for pick-up or if a customer could not access a particular building or portion of the property. Willowgrove is aiming to implement these signs by Sept. 9, 2024.

Willowgrove does not have any plans for building a new website at this time, however, Willowgrove has started the process of converting its website and web content to conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and is currently taking steps to have the following changes in place by June 30, 2024:

- Providing text alternative for any non-text content
- Providing synchronized alternatives for multimedia
- Ensuring that information and structure can be separated from presentation
- Distinguishable content, including the separation of foreground from background
- Making all functionality available from a keyboard
- Providing all users enough time to read and use content
- Designing content in ways that avoid seizure triggers
- Providing ways to help users navigate, find content, and determine where they are located
- Making text content readable and understandable
- Making web pages appear and operate in predictable ways
- Maximizing compatibility for current and future user agents, including assistive technologies

Feedback Processes

Willowgrove will ensure processes are in place for receiving and responding to feedback.

Willowgrove will make these processes accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communications supports, upon request.

Willowgrove will notify the public about the availability of these accessible formats.

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way Willowgrove provides goods and services to people with disabilities can give verbal feedback in person, or over the phone. Customers can also

request a Customer Feedback Form that will be provided upon request, or send a letter or email containing feedback.

Publicly Available Information

Since Jan. 2014, Willowgrove's AODA Policies and Accessibility Plan have been posted on the organization's website, and has posted written Notices for clients and staff. In addition, Willowgrove will make other information accessible upon request, and commits to working with each individual in order to best meet their needs.

Employment

Willowgrove is committed to integrating accessibility into regular workplace processes and to ensure accessibility in the recruitment and selection process, and throughout all stages of the employment life cycle.

Willowgrove will inform employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability, including:

- Providing the information required to new employees as soon as practicable after they begin their employment
- Notifying employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations which take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability

Willowgrove will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that all people are treated and provided information and communication in a manner that is consistent with the principles of the AODA, including:

- The establishment of Accessibility Policies and Plans that will help govern how Willowgrove will achieve accessibility through these requirements
- Posting a statement of commitment online and on the property which outlines how Willowgrove will meet the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner
- Informing employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including but not limited to, policies on the provision of job accommodations that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability
- Posting a Supporting DEI in Employment statement online, which reads: "Willowgrove

encourages all qualified people to apply to work within the organization, but recognizes that there are unique barriers for individuals from marginalized or under-represented populations. If this is true for you, and you are considering applying to work at Willowgrove, please let us know how this organization can better accommodate you throughout its recruitment process.”

In addition, Willowgrove will develop and implement written processes for documenting individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The process for the development of these accommodation plans will include the following:

- The ways in which the employee can participate in the development of the plan
- The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis
- The ways an employee can request an evaluation by an outside medical expert, or other experts to determine if accommodation can be achieved, or how it can be achieved
- The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee’s personal information
- The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan should be reviewed or updated determined, and how it should be done
- The means of providing the accommodation plan in an accessible format, based on the employee’s accessibility needs

Willowgrove will also create individual workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities. Willowgrove has created a Worksheet for Individual Emergency Response Plans. The information collected from this form will outline and take into account the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace, and will be created in consultation with the employee. This means that:

- Willowgrove shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability
- If the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary and the Willowgrove is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee’s disability
- If the employee who receives an individual workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee’s consent
- As soon as practicable after becoming aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee’s disability

- Review the information when the employee moves to a different location in the organization, when overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed and when the Willowgrove reviews its general emergency response policies.

Willowgrove will develop and implement (where required) return to work processes for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work. The return to work process will be documented and include an outline of the steps necessary to facilitate the employee's return to work. The return to work process and plan will be created in consultation with the employee and shall use documented individual accommodation plans. In the event of a redeployment, Willowgrove will take into account the accessibility needs of its employees.

Modification to This or Other Policies

Willowgrove will do its best to remove identified barriers for its employees or customers. Any policy of Willowgrove that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact Johnny Wideman, Executive Director, by phone at (905) 640-2127 or by email at johnny@willowgrove.ca.