



ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP

St. Joseph's Care Group

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# Accessibility Plan 2025-2029

**Prepared for**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Board Commitment Statement.....	2
Introduction.....	3
Accessibility Steering Committee.....	3
Section 1: Accessibility Progress at SJCG.....	4
Consultation and Engagement.....	4
Aim .....	5
Section 2: Strategies and Actions .....	6
Customer Service .....	6
Information and communications .....	7
Employment.....	7
Procurement .....	8
Training.....	8
Design of Public Spaces .....	9
For More Information .....	10

## Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Board Commitment Statement

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We, the Board for St. Joseph's Care Group, are dedicated to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within our team and our communities. We strive to foster inclusive and people-centred, wholistic care—addressing the needs of the body, mind, spirit and emotions.

Rooted in our Mission, Vision & Values, we are committed to achieving health equity for all peoples by taking ownership and responsibility to address systemic barriers, biases and inequities.

### OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

We recognize the systemic barriers experienced by, biases towards, and inequities that exist for Indigenous Peoples, individuals with disabilities, racialized people, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and other marginalized groups. We commit to ensuring that St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG) reflects the evolving diversity of our staff, volunteers, and the people we serve, acknowledging the historical oppression and social injustices endured by the Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) community.

We are committed to creating a culture of belonging and acceptance, where both clients and employees can be true to their identities and relationships without fear of discrimination. We extend gratitude to our 2SLGBTQIA+ employees and colleagues for their invaluable contributions, recognizing that our workplace thrives with their presence. As a Catholic organization, we take responsibility for acknowledging the challenges and hardships faced by the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

We actively prioritize equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) efforts, emphasizing a commitment to meaningful action. The establishment of an EDI Council directly reporting to the President & CEO is instrumental in establishing a comprehensive EDI foundation and framework within SJCG.

Our EDI journey is just beginning and signifies a long-term commitment. We will listen, learn, reflect and take actions that perpetuate a safe environment for all cultures, abilities and backgrounds.

As we strive to nurture individual potential, we believe strongly in the value of diverse skillsets,

backgrounds, and experiences that spurs innovation, strengthens teams and improves client care. We commit to integrate equity, diversity and inclusion into the day-to-day work that we do, fostering an organization where everyone feels respected, supported, valued, safe and empowered to be their true selves.

## Introduction

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Since the initial launch of the 2018-2024 Accessibility Plan, many accomplishments have been achieved within the realm of accessibility at St. Josephs Care Group (SJCG). As an organization, we continue to prioritize the needs of clients and families, staff, physicians, volunteers and learners with disabilities and work diligently to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility. Standards were developed for the AODA with the first accessibility standards, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) which came into effect on January 1, 2008. As an organization defined under the Act as part of the broader public sector, SJCG became compliant with the customer service standard requirements as of January 1, 2010. The Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) were added on June 3, 2011 outlining required standards for information and communications, employment, transportation, and built environment. In October 2012, this regulation was amended to include the design of public spaces.

## Accessibility Steering Committee

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SJCG has an Accessibility Steering Committee that includes a broad representation of employees and client and family partners. The committee is chaired by the Director of Equity & Development and guided by the leadership of the Vice-President, People & Mission. The purpose of the Accessibility Steering Committee is to provide a forum for discussion and recommendations related to improving accessibility for people with disabilities within SJCG, in keeping with the AODA and related standards. The terms of reference that guide the Steering Committee and all documentation relating to meeting minutes, plans of action, information guides, and more is available at [www.sjcg.net/accountability/accessibility.aspx](http://www.sjcg.net/accountability/accessibility.aspx).

The Chair of the Accessibility Steering Committee is also a member of Accessible Thunder Bay, a community partnership comprised of accessibility leads from Lakehead University, Confederation College, Lakehead District School Board, City of Thunder Bay, SJCG, Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, and the Thunder Bay Catholic District School Board. This partnership originally formed in January 2004 with the goal of sharing information and strategies to improve accessibility for people with disabilities in their respective organizations and the City of Thunder Bay as a whole, and to seek opportunities for collaboration in meeting the requirements of the AODA standards.

SJCG also receives input from various sources on an ongoing basis to inform plans and activities including:

- The [accessible.sjcg@tbh.net](mailto:accessible.sjcg@tbh.net) email address
- Feedback through the compliments and complaints database
- Social media
- Targeted feedback from clients, families, volunteers and staff
- Client satisfaction and employee engagement surveys

## Section 1: Accessibility Progress at SJCG

SJCG has been committed to identifying and removing barriers, while meeting the regulatory requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA, 2005). The corporate [2018-2024 Accessibility Plan](#) was developed together with clients, families, partner organizations and SJCG

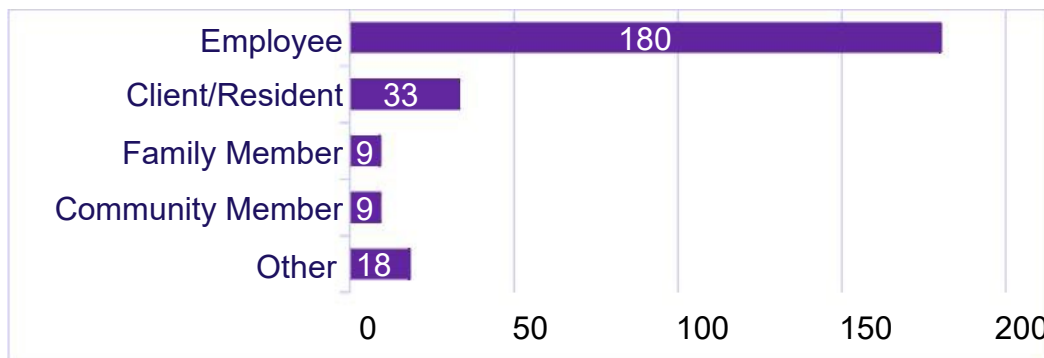
Accessibility Steering Committee. This living document has been continually updated over the course of the plan, ensuring clear and purposeful tracking of identified items. Some notable accomplishments include collaboration with community partners (Lift+) on initiatives such as maintaining barrier-free drop off points, developing accessibility-focused policy design and training delivery for staff and leaders, Visual Identity Guide was implemented establishing key characteristics of and standards for SJCG’s public-facing documents, along with creating a more inclusive physical environment at our many sites.

The provincial Integrated Accessibility Standards (ISAR) has 5 identified categories – Customer Service, Information and Communication, Employment, Procurement, Training and Design of Public Spaces that have guided our Accessibility Plan. Currently, over 80% of the items identified on our 2018-2024 Accessibility Plan within these categories have been completed, while others remain on track and / or in priority sequence. Please refer to the 2018-2024 Accessibility Plan to review a comprehensive list of all completed items.

### CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Like other organizations, SJCG Accessibility Plan has been developed to address any issues and barriers that may be preventing persons with disabilities from freely navigating throughout our many sites. As we continue to strive to meet the needs of our clients, families, staff, physicians, volunteers, and learners with disabilities, input was sought to help inform the 2025-2029 Accessibility Plan.

In February 2024, a 16-item survey was communicated to all staff, physicians, volunteers, and learners as well as community partners. Further, booths at St. Joseph’s Hospital Site, St. Joseph’s Health Centre as well as Hogarth Riverview Manor were held to better capture the client and family voice. Questions asked were intended to gather information on barriers to access programs and services, information, employment, public spaces as well as questions geared to better understanding accessibility care needs and transitions in care. A total of 249 individuals completed the survey. Out of the 249 individuals 72 (29%) reported having a disability as defined under the Human Rights Code of Conduct.



Unique to this survey were the addition of two questions focusing on communication of a clients disability needs at admission / intake and throughout care, as outlined as a recommendation in the

2023 Ontario Accessible Health Care Standards. On average, 75% of respondents answered “yes” to both questions, however, qualitative comments noted that charting and communication is not consistent and does not reliably follow the client throughout treatment. As a result, the action item – build consistent accessibility charting practices – has been reflected within the plan.

- *Do you feel as though accessibility / disability needs are understood and communicated clearly and consistently throughout care and the treatment team?*
- *Do you feel care and treatment (e.g., equipment, staff training and education, etc.) is adapted to an individuals accessibility needs?*

Overall, the responses were summarized, themed, and correlated to the various SJCG facilities. The Accessibility Steering Committee members were asked to review and validate the findings and make recommendations for future actions. SJCG has identified the following projects and programs between now and 2029 to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and to remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities. This a living document that will continue to be updated between 2025 and 2029.

## AIM

The 2025-2029 Accessibility Plan reviews the ongoing accessibility initiative at SJCG, builds on the measures that have been addressed in previous years, and includes improvement initiatives for the coming years. Any ongoing, in progress or not-yet-started items from the 2024-2028 Accessibility Plan have been transferred to the 2025-2029 Accessibility Plan for continually monitoring and action. Below transferred items along with newly identified action items have been listed.

*\*To view action items from 2018-2024 please refer to [Accessibility Plan 2018-2024](#)*

## Section 2: Strategies and Actions

<b>Legend:</b>	<b>Complete</b>	<b>Ongoing</b> (monitoring phase)	<b>In Progress</b> (action phase)	<b>On hold</b>	<b>Not yet started</b>
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### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Actions	Target Date	Responsibility	Plan/Resources	Status
Support implementation of the Senior-Friendly Care Framework across SJCG		Manager, North West Regional Seniors' Care Program	<p>Manager, North West Regional Seniors' Care Program, will participate on accessibility committee</p> <p>A member of the Accessibility Steering Committee will participate on any senior or older adult working groups or task forces as appropriate.</p>	Ongoing
Build consistent Accessibility charting practices	2025-2026	Director, Equity & Development	Collaborate with Informatics and Collaborative Practice departments on building in consistent and clear charting practices for accessibility within Medi-tech Expanse implementation. Accessibility needs are clearly documented within a clients chart to ensure needs are captured and understood throughout transitions in care.	In Progress

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Actions	Target Date	Responsibility	Plan/Resources	Status
Launch of New SJCG Website	25/26	CECR	A Content Management System has been procured, servers purchased and configured. CECR will, within its span of control, produce a website that meets web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG) 2.0. Additional software has been purchased to test accessibility.	In Progress
Consultation on Website	25/26	CECR	SJCG will launch a new external website. Prior to launch, extensive consultation will take place to help determine things like priority themes, navigation, and so forth.	In Progress
French Language Services	25/26	Equity & Development	Where an Autoattendant exists or where the main telephone number terminates on voicemail, the menu will be available in English and in French.	In Progress

## EMPLOYMENT

Actions	Target Date	Responsibility	Plan/Resources	Status
Work with community partners		Human Resources	Continue to build partnerships with organizations who support people with disabilities.	Ongoing
Review recruitment, onboarding, and orientation		Human Resources	Identification of opportunities to create inclusive recruitment process.	Ongoing
Talent Pool Builder	24/25	Human Resources	Ensuring accessibility is reflected in applications when applicants apply for positions with SJCG as well as accessibility data tracking.	In Progress

## PROCUREMENT

Actions	Target Date	Responsibility	Plan/Resources	Status
Review procurement processes	2025	Materials Management	Procurement staff participate on accessibility committee and provide an overview of requirements for new equipment and/or infrastructure upgrades.	Ongoing
CFP representation on the Product Evaluation Committee (PEC)	2025	Materials Management	Recruitment for Client and Family Partners (CFP) with lived experience in accessibility to help inform purchasing.	In Progress

## TRAINING

Actions	Target Date	Responsibility	Plan/Resources	Status
Online modules		Learning and Development	All online orientation modules to be reviewed for full accessibility access – modules to be reviewed and updated as required.	Ongoing

## DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

Actions	Target Date	Responsibility	Plan/Resources	Status
Automatic door openers for balcony doors at HRM		Building Services	Project currently underway. Aiming for project completing by March 31, 2025.	In Progress
Accessibility Review at Amethyst House		Building Services	Significant office space is available in the basement of Amethyst House, but it currently does not have accessible access. Consultant engaged for design options.	In Progress
Health Centre accessible parking		Building Services	Review possibility of increasing accessible parking for clients at Health Centre site.	On hold (continue to review opportunities)
Accessible washrooms at Balmoral site	Spring 2025	Building Services	Full renovation underway to add accessible washrooms on site. Project to be completed March 31, 2025.	In Progress

## For More Information

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For more information on this accessibility plan, please contact Ashley Lyon, Chair – Accessibility Steering Committee at 807-346-2366 or [accessible.sjcg@tbh.net](mailto:accessible.sjcg@tbh.net). More information can be found on the SJCG website at [www.sjcg.net/accountability/accessibility.aspx](http://www.sjcg.net/accountability/accessibility.aspx)

SJCG is committed to providing inclusive and barrier-free access to information, documentation, programs and services. SJCG shall, upon request and in consultation with the person making the request, make available any public document including public emergency procedures, plans, and safety information in an accessible format. Feedback or requests for accessible formats for this document and/or corporate publications may be submitted by telephone, email, in person or in writing:

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