Human Resources Policy: Section: Organizational Policy Subject : Information and Communications Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act	FOURCAST
Policy Number: HR – 6.06c	Page(s): Page **1** of **7**
Originated: November 2015	Approved By: Management
Revised: October 2023	Approval Date: October 2023
Reviewed:	

1   POLICY

1.01   The information and communication standard is part of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. It establishes processes that organizations must follow to create, provide and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible for people with disabilities.

1.02   All information and communication materials and services provided by Four Counties Addiction Services Team (Fourcast) shall follow the four cores principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) which are:
- o   Dignity
- o   Independence
- o   Integration, and
- o   Equal opportunity

1.03   Fourcast is committed to providing an accessible and barrier free environment for clients and employees. We will strive to provide information and/or communication in an alternative format that will meet the needs of each individual in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the clients/employees.

1.04   If information and/or communication are deemed unconvertible, Fourcast will provide the person requesting the information or communication with,

   a) An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
   b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

1.05   Should Fourcast not have the resources on site to accommodate a request for information or communication in an alternative format, Fourcast is committed to exploring support from external resources in an effort to meet the client's needs.

2   PURPOSE

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2.01   This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11 for the Information and Communications Standard set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This policy applies to the provision of information and communications materials and services for people with disabilities.

3   SCOPE

3.01   This policy applies to Fourcast employees and visitors.

4   RESPONSIBILITY

4.01   **Employees are responsible for**:

- Participating in all training related to AODA
- Adhering to the information and communication policy in order to meet the needs of clients with disabilities
- Informing clients that alternative formats for all information and communication is available.
- Identifying any barriers that affect a client's ability to access services so that an appropriate solution can be found
- Requesting alternative formats for a client or themselves from a program manager or human resources as needed

4.02   **Program Managers are responsible for:**

- Identifying and eliminating barriers (where possible) that prevent clients from accessing programs and services
- If a barrier cannot be eliminated, managers will use all reasonable efforts to identify another appropriate option
- Handling requests for accommodation in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner
- Ensuring that employees have received all training related to supporting clients with disabilities as outlined in the AODA.

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- Accessing external resources to provide information and communication in an alternative format for clients and employees

4.03 **Human Resources is responsible for:**

- Ensuring the organization has met compliance with AODA legislation
- Monitoring the implementation of policies and procedures, and making any necessary changes in order to achieve compliance.
- Evaluate current policies and procedures and adjust in accordance to any legislative amendments or additions

4.04 Fourcast is responsible for:
- Eliminating barriers that prevent people from accessing, or being included in programs and services offered by Fourcast
- Minimizing the need for individual accommodation by regularly reviewing policies, by-laws and practices to ensure they are not discriminatory
- Ensuring all clients and employees are advised of their right to be accommodated
- Handling requests for accommodation in a timely, confidential and sensitive manner
- Ensuring its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

5   **DEFINITIONS**

Communications –means the interaction between two or more persons or entities, or any combination of them, where information is provided, sent or received

Information – includes data, facts and knowledge that exists in any format, including text, audio, digital or images, and that conveys meaning.

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Accessible Formats– Include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communication Supports – Include but are not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Conversion Ready– An electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an acceptable format.

6   REFERENCES and RELATED STATEMENTS of POLICY and PROCEDURES

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)

Accessibili-IT

7   PROCEDURE

7.01   In accordance with the *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11*, this policy addresses the following:

A. General Requirements

B. Feedback Process

C. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

D. Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

E. Accessible Websites and Web Content

F. Exceptions

G. Review

A. General Requirements

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General requirements that apply across all of the five (5) standards (information and communication, employment, transportation, design of public spaces, and customer service) are outlined as follows.

Establishment of Accessibility Policies and Plans

Fourcast will develop, implement and maintain policies governing how it will achieve accessibility through these requirements.

Fourcast will include a statement of its commitment to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner in its policies. These documents will be made publicly available in an accessible format, upon request.

Fourcast 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 IASR. Accessibility plans will be made available in an accessible format, upon request, and will be posted on our website.

Fourcast will review and update its accessibility plan once every five (5) years and will establish, review and update our accessibility plans in consultation with persons with disabilities. This status report will be posted on our website. If requested, the report shall be created in an accessible format.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods and Services, or Facilities

Fourcast will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. The only exception is in cases where it is impracticable to do so.

Training Requirements

Fourcast will provide training for its employees and volunteers regarding the IASR and the Ontario Human Rights Code as they pertain to individuals with disabilities. Training will also be provided to individuals who are responsible for developing Fourcast policies, and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of Fourcast.

Training will be provided as soon as is reasonably practicable, but no later than three weeks after initial hire date. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis to current employees as changes to Fourcast's accessibility policies occur.

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Fourcast will maintain records on the training provided, when it was provided and the number of employees that were trained.

B. Feedback Process

Fourcast will ensure that all feedback processes (both internal and external) are made accessible to clients or employees, upon request.

In accordance with the customer service standards, Fourcast will make known the availability of accessible feedback formats.

C. Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Unless deemed unconvertible, Fourcast 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.

Fourcast 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.

Fourcast will make the availability of accessible formats and communication supports publicly known.

D. Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

Fourcast will ensure that all publicly available safety and emergency information (e.g. evacuation procedures, floor plans etc.) is provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

E. Accessible Websites and Web Content

Fourcast will ensure that our website, and where applicable web content, conforms to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) as outlined in the

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IASR, and will refer to the legislation for specific compliance deadlines and requirements.

F. Exceptions

The Information and Communications Standard does not apply to:

- Products and product labels;
- Unconvertible information or communications; or
- Information that the organization does not control either directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Unconvertible Information or Communications

If it is determined, in consultation with the requesting party, that information or communications are unconvertible, Fourcast will ensure that the individual who made the request is provided with an explanation and a summary of the information.

Fourcast will classify information or communications as unconvertible where:

- o It is not technically practicable to convert; or
- o The technology required to make the conversion is not readily available

G. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it is reflective of Fourcast's current practices and legislative requirements.