

2.1 ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Purpose

BACI is a disability confident organization and is committed to ensuring that our homes, buildings, programs and support services are free of barriers and accessible to all. Furthermore, BACI believes accessibility and inclusion are pillars of our mission and vision to serve individuals with disabilities, along with all children, their families, and the greater community. Accessibility and inclusion are intertwined values that support each other and cannot exist exclusively.

This policy sets out both the standard and the measurement approach used to ensure accessibility. When linked to our 'Disability Confidence' policy, our commitment to accessibility is extended to one of full inclusion.

Definitions

Accessibility is about making things fair and usable for everyone.

A **disability-confident organization** is a company or employer that:

- Welcomes people with disabilities.
- Makes sure jobs and workplaces are accessible.
- Supports employees with disabilities so they can succeed.
- Fights stereotypes and treats everyone fairly.

It's about being inclusive, respectful, and proactive in creating a workplace where people with disabilities can thrive just like anyone else.

Scope

The Accessibility policy applies to all facilities, vehicles, communication methods, printed materials and technology used in the operation of BACI as they are encountered by interested parties, including people receiving service, their families and friends, staff, volunteers and community partners.

Guiding Principles

Accessible to Groups with shared accessibility needs (people who experience vision and hearing loss, use wheelchairs or other mobility aids).

By ensuring that BACI meets or exceeds the generally recognized standards for accessibility upon which our annual accessibility review is built, we will ensure that the following aspects of our organization are accessible for everyone:

- Facilities – physical spaces that are safe and easy to navigate.
- Technologies – tools and systems that are usable by all.
- Human Resource Practices – inclusive hiring, onboarding, and workplace support.
- Communications – information that is clear, understandable, and available in accessible formats.

Accessible to Individuals – BACI understands that meeting accessibility standards for groups is not sufficient to ensure access to each person. BACI endeavors to provide reasonable individual accommodations including, but not limited to:

- Communication
- Financial
- Transportation
- Physical
- Technology
- Staff training

Cultural Competency and Diversity – BACI views diversity as a key component of Accessibility and Inclusion. BACI serves and employs individuals from diverse cultures and commits to making its services accessible to all. BACI understands that a culturally competent workforce, reflective of the population (i.e. culture, age, gender, sexual orientation, spiritual beliefs, socioeconomic status, language) is key in providing supports to ethnically and culturally diverse individuals, families and interested parties. BACI is an organization that fosters inclusion, tolerance and respect for diversity and accessibility in all forms.

NOTE: BACI is committed to creating and implementing an Accessibility and Diversity Plan on an annual basis.

Implementation

Standard Development – BACI has created and endorsed a set of accessibility standards drawn from best practice around the country. Proximity to these standards is measured annually and the standards themselves will be reviewed annually and updated as required.

Accessibility Questionnaires

Accessibility questionnaires will be submitted as soon as accessibility needs arise. BACI staff will complete the forms which capture the information on accessibility from the following areas.

- Architectural (e.g. building access, furniture arrangement, uneven surface, etc.)
- Environmental (e.g. odour, pollution, humidity, etc.)
- Attitudinal (e.g. bias issues, exclusion, avoidance, discrimination)
- Financial (e.g. limited access to healthcare and therapy, housing, cost of assistive devices)
- Employment-related (e.g. limited career advancement opportunities, insufficient workplace accommodations)
- Technological (e.g. inaccessible software, lack of assistive technology)
- Transportation (e.g. high cost of transportation, inaccessible infrastructure, no public transportation)
- Community Integration (e.g. lack of inclusive public spaces, isolation)
- Technological (e.g. inaccessible software, lack of assistive technology)
- Any other barrier identified by persons served, families or other interested parties.

BACI is using the accessibility questionnaires to collect information on accessibility needs and accommodations and tracks the completion of these accommodations. Those questionnaires provide the details on accessibility across the areas mentioned above, as it relates to the following target groups:

- Persons Served
- Other interested parties (particularly families, friends, community partners and funders).

Accessibility and accommodation requests from staff are addressed through collaboration with HR.

Accessibility Plan

Based on the findings collected through questionnaire submissions, the Senior Manager of Quality Assurance (or designate) will complete a Barrier Assessment and Accommodation Summary and Accessibility Plan designed to remove identified barriers and strengthen existing accessibility.

Reporting and Monitoring

The annual Barrier Assessment and Accommodation Summary and the accompanying Accessibility Plan will be presented to the Board of Directors and monitored accordingly.

Linking Policies:

- 1.3 Quality Assurance
- 1.3a Quality Assurance – Children’s Services
- 1.8 Code of Ethics
- 1.9 Complaint Policy
- 1.16 Disability Confidence Policy
- 4.1 Employee Hire Policy
- 4.14 Employment Equity Policy
- 9.1 Rights & Responsibilities of People