



## **ACCESSIBILITY POLICY**

### **Preamble**

At Goodwill, compassion and empathy guide everything we do. We understand that our policies and procedures must mirror our values. Our mission revolves around serving and uplifting those in need, and this lies at the heart of what we stand for. In every choice we make and every action we take, we emphasize our commitment to creating a workplace filled with compassion. These policies stand as a promise - to treat everyone, be it our employees, volunteers, clients, shoppers, or donors, with respect, kindness, and understanding.

### **Purpose**

Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes strives to provide goods and services to all customers, participants, visitors, employees and the public in a way that respects dignity, inclusion, and independence. Goodwill is committed to ensuring that the many benefits of goods and services are accessible to all people. Active steps are and will be taken to reasonably accommodate the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility.

### **Policy**

#### **Information and Communications**

Communications, from initial greeting through to the complete experience and follow up, will demonstrate our commitment to serve all people. Goodwill recognizes that individuals with disabilities may require different forms of communication to fully access services or fully participate as a consumer. Upon request Goodwill will provide accessible formats and communication support for persons with disabilities that take into account the individual's accessibility needs, and in consultation with the person making the request.

When creating external and internal documents information will be clear and accessible to all audiences.

Goodwill will ensure that the website, including web content, conforms to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, at Level AA.

#### **Accessibility Plan**

Yearly, Goodwill will assess accessibility barriers and document them in an Accessibility Plan outlining our strategy to address them. The Accessibility Plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years and will be posted on our website.

#### **Assistive Devices**

Customers, clients, and visitors are welcome to use their own personal assistive devices to access our merchandise and services.

#### **Support People and Service Animals**

Support people and guide dogs or other service animals are also welcome to accompany individuals with disabilities while shopping in our stores, donating at our donation centers or visiting our employment services and corporate office.

All Goodwill policies are reviewed annually.

## **Interruption of Services**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption within the facilities or services, we will provide the public with notice through our website [www.goodwillindustries.ca](http://www.goodwillindustries.ca), telephone greeting and signage at the affected premises and/or services.

## **Training**

Human Resources in conjunction with the site Manager will provide accessible customer service training to employees, volunteers, Board Members, and others who deal with the public or third parties on our behalf. Training will also be provided to people involved in the development of policies, plans, practices, and procedures related to the provision of our goods and services. This includes human resources, training teams and management.

Staff will be trained in Accessible Customer Service within 1 week of being hired.

Training will include:

- An overview of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005** and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- Goodwill's plan related to the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods or services to people with disabilities. Currently we have 2 sit /stand workstations, and 2 large screen computer monitors for which training is not necessary. The team members are aware of these options within our services.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Goodwill's goods and services

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service plan.

## **Feedback**

Comments on our services in regard to accessibility are welcomed and appreciated. We actively encourage the participation of all individuals in our feedback process. In addition to sharing your comments in person, by telephone at 519-850-9000 by mail at 255 Horton St., London, Ontario N6B 1L1, or electronically at [info@goodwillindustries.ca](mailto:info@goodwillindustries.ca).

## **Resolving Problems**

Despite our best efforts, sometimes problems can occur. Please report all issues to one of our staff and we pledge to handle them in the following manner:

- You will be greeted warmly and asked for all relevant details
- The person you speak to will strive to resolve the issue at the time. If this is not possible, additional assistance will be engaged.
- All customer issues will be addressed within five business days

## **Accessibility in Employment Practices**

Goodwill is committed to fair and accessible employment practice and will notify the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process. If a selected applicant requests accommodation Goodwill will consult with the applicant and arrange provision of suitable accommodation. When making offers of employment, Goodwill will notify the successful applicant of our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Goodwill will also consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when conducting performance management and providing career development and advancement to them.

Goodwill will maintain a written process for documenting individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities. The plan will contain information about any accommodation that is to be provided, types of accessible formats and communication support requested by employees and individualized workplace emergency response information.

**Monitoring**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the HR department with input from key stakeholders to ensure its effectiveness and to make necessary adjustments based on the evolving needs of Goodwill and its workforce.



## **MULTI-YEAR ACCESSIBILITY PLAN 2024-2029**

### **Goodwill's Commitment to Accessibility: A Message from Our CEO**

At Goodwill Industries Ontario Great Lakes, accessibility isn't just a checkbox; it's a core principle deeply rooted in all our actions. We believe that inclusion isn't an option, it's a core value that informs our planning, our activities and our attitudes. From our product of affordable goods to the services we provide, to our workplace culture, we are committed to our vision – Everyone working and thriving in sustainable communities.

Accessibility is about embracing diversity and championing inclusivity in everything we do. It's about recognizing that accessibility isn't a one-size-fits-all solution, but rather an ongoing journey of continuous improvement.

As we continue to push the boundaries of what's possible, I encourage each and every one of you to join us in our mission to make the world a more accessible place. Together, we can create meaningful change and build a future where accessibility is no longer an afterthought, but a key part of our brand that drives our success.

### **Introduction**

Goodwill Industries, Ontario Great Lakes (Goodwill) is committed to meeting the objectives and requirements outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the applicable regulations, and to meeting the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner, through the implementation of the requirements of the Act and its applicable regulations. This Plan applies to all divisions of Goodwill.

Goodwill strives to meet the needs of its employees, clients, and customers with disabilities and is working hard to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Our plan shows how we will play our role in making Ontario an accessible province for all Ontarians. The plan is reviewed annually and updated as needed, at least once every 5 years.

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to Goodwill policies. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

## **Customer Service**

The Customer Service Standard (Ontario Regulation 429/07) was the first standard under the AODA to become law. It ensures that people with disabilities can receive goods and services in a manner that takes into account one's disability.

Requirements include development of a policy, practices, procedures as well as the provision of training for staff and volunteers.

Goodwill submitted compliance reports to the province indicating we had addressed the requirements of the Regulation and were meeting the compliance obligation. We will continue to ensure compliance with the Customer Service Standard.

We developed feedback processes to respond to inquiries and suggestions received by phone, email, mail, in person. This has been communicated to internal and external stakeholders.

Detail actions and list initiatives from past years.

## **Feedback**

Comments on our services with respect to accessibility are welcomed and appreciated. We actively encourage the participation of all individuals in our feedback process. In addition to sharing your comments in person, by telephone at 519-850-9000 by mail at 255 Horton St., London, Ontario N6B 1L1, or electronically at [info@goodwillindustries.ca](mailto:info@goodwillindustries.ca).

## **Training**

Human Resources in conjunction with the Learning and Development team and location supervisors will provide accessible customer service training to employees, volunteers, Board Members and others who deal with the public or third parties on our behalf. Training will also be provided to people involved in the development of policies, plans, practices and procedures related to the provision of our goods and services. This includes human resources, training teams and management.

## **Information and Communications**

Communications, from initial greeting through to the complete experience and follow up, will demonstrate our commitment to serve all people. Goodwill recognizes that individuals with disabilities may require different forms of communication to fully access services or fully participate as a consumer. Upon request Goodwill will provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities that take into account the individual's accessibility needs, and in consultation with the person making the request.

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## Section 1. Past Achievements to Remove and Prevent Barriers

Goodwill has completed the following accessibility initiatives:

Objective	Strategy
Effectively provide information to clients, customers and employees.	As required by AODA legislation, Goodwill lets the public and employees know that any written information and other forms of communication will be made accessible, upon request. This note is included on our Website, posted in locations, posted on job postings, and as part of our accommodation policy.
Maintain a diverse bilingual/bicultural staff to meet the needs of persons served and appropriately reflect the communities we serve.	Strive to hire and maintain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve. We have a network of service providers that we can work with when we don't have staff onsite to translate.
Promote a culturally inclusive workforce that embraces and respects diversity.	Through policies, committees, and initiatives Goodwill instills a culture of caring and inclusivity.
Obtain information and feedback from clients, customers, employees about our accessibility and accommodation policies.	Employees complete annual survey, Goodwill does "mini" surveys through the year which may include diversity surveys. During onboarding employees complete a confidential life scan as well as a demographic questionnaire that allows Goodwill to get a pulse on the needs of employees and invest in training or programs in specific areas if needs are identified. Clients are invited to rate their experience early in service and post service. Feedback is reviewed by management to identify themes and respond accordingly. Customers are encouraged to provide feedback through email, phone, or mail. Contact information is available at all locations, as well as on the Goodwill website.

## Employment

Objective	Strategy
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Goodwill is committed to hiring, recruiting, and supporting candidates with barriers to employment including disability.	Human Resources and the Leadership Team work with managers to ensure recruitment practices are inclusive and remove as many possible barriers for candidates during the recruitment and interview process. Human Resources and key management roles have received Disability Confident Employer training and received certifications. Goodwill has a Recruitment Taskforce with the goal to build more accessibility into our recruitment. Goodwill works with our internal career centre, as well as external community partners to help connect candidates with barriers to employment with hiring managers, and support during the recruitment process.
Human resources work with all managers to ensure accommodation policy is being followed and employees requesting accommodations are supported during the process.	Review accommodation policy annually, train all managers on handling accommodation requests, ensure all new employees are aware of the accommodation policy as part of their orientation.
Provide applicants with information describing how persons with disabilities may request reasonable accommodations in the application process.	Required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. Information on accommodation must be included with all job postings, when inviting candidates to interview, and when sending notice to successful applicants.

## Design of Public Spaces (Architectural and Environmental)

Objective	Strategy
Health and Safety reps for each location do site inspections monthly and identify any potential barriers or safety concerns. Any findings are reported on ThinkLP tracking system and Loss Prevention and HR are notified.	Using Health and Safety checklist, Health and Safety reps inspect sites monthly. Issues are reported through ThinkLP tracking system which notifies HR, Loss Prevention, and senior management and appropriate division directors.

The HR and Loss Prevention reviews facilities inspections, monthly safety audits, and any ongoing safety reports. Once reviewed, the team consults with the appropriate department head to ensure compliance and that the physical environment of the organization demonstrates ongoing attention to safe practices, reduction of safety and health risks, and concern for the health and safety of persons served and personnel.

Consistent review of developed comprehensive policies and procedures that ensure a safe, comfortable environment for all staff, visitors, customers, and clients.	The Human Resources team with the assistance of Loss Prevention reviews policies and procedures annually and recommends updates to Mission Leadership Team.
An external agency invited to conduct an inspection of all facilities. Fire department, Insurance or other.	Goodwill submits in writing accessibility features of government funded sites and programs regularly as part of ongoing compliance. Fire inspections conducted by local Fire Departments periodically at all locations. Third part company checks fire systems and fire extinguishers periodically, at least annually at all sites. Maintenance requests submitted are either handled by internal maintenance staff or sent to third parties, depending on urgency and complexity.
Goodwill must file an accessibility report with the Ontario Government every 3 years.	Goodwill must file an accessibility report every 3 years and post the report on the company website. This report requires compliance in accessibility policies, training of staff and volunteers, plan for accessible self-service kiosks (if applicable), accessible customer service requirements, accessible employment practices, accessible information, accessible public space requirements, and the creating of a multi-year accessibility plan.
Provide assistance in the event of building evacuations and live drills to persons with mobility limitations.	In situations where an employee or client may have mobility issues or other barriers which could cause issues in reacting to evacuations or drills, management of each site would prepare a plan on a case by case basis.
Make sure buildings are fully accessible	Corporate elevator recently renovated to add additional accessibility features.



## Transportation

Objective	Strategy
Promote accessibility at all locations.	Goodwill's website clearly identifies where our facilities are located in each region and the distance to travel to get there. We provide public transit training for any clients or employees who require this and will coordinate para transit for clients to get to and from our Career Centres. Availability of public transportation is always examined when looking at new potential sites.
Transportation considerations included when working with clients to find employment within Goodwill or with local businesses.	Staff evaluate employment opportunities with persons served based on public transportation availability, distance from their residence, and the cost of daily transportation. Goodwill actively participates in transportation initiatives to support access to the workplace (ie Lyft)
Encourage the use of public transportation and car pooling for clients and employees.	Goodwill's travel policy promotes using the most economical option possible and requires carpooling and avoiding unnecessary travel. Staff are also encouraged to use public transportation as a best option when transportation to work is needed.

## Community Integration

Objective	Strategy
Goodwill serves individuals who seek meaningful and sustainable work with an emphasis on building and strengthening abilities of persons challenged by physical, mental, developmental, sensory, learning, addictions and other disabilities, and also the chronically unemployed, youth at risk, the aged, Indigenous peoples and newcomers to Canada.	Continue to collect data with new employees through our baseline profile which helps identify potential barriers and allows Goodwill to focus on key areas which may be common themes for many employees. The baseline profile has employees answer questions about their education background, access to medical services, benefit history, age, self declared race, and past employment history. Goodwill is able to invest in high need areas to help remove potential barriers for employees, and employee coaches are able to connect employees with appropriate supports based on their needs.

## Financial

Objective	Strategy
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The annual department budget developed each year to address the needs of clients and employees.	Senior Leadership, Department Heads, and finance work together to create a budget based on social enterprise revenue, government funding, other external funding or grants, and other income.
Promote and maintain financial management practices that promote fiscal responsibility at all levels of planning and strategy.	Board of Directors review budgets and financials with a Board Finance Committee and as part of Board packages. Financial results are shared regularly with all leadership levels across the organization. Annual audit performed by external auditor.
Bridge advance program provides funding for employees in distress who need an advance on their pay. This advance has no interest and can be paid back slowly over time, within 1 year.	Employee coaches help employees experiencing a financial crisis apply for an interest free bridge advance. Amount is normally around \$500, but may be more based on circumstances. Employee is able to pay back a small portion each pay for up to a year to eliminate financial hardship in paying it back.
Continuous research and review of possible grants and other funding opportunities.	Goodwill looks for opportunities through government and private funders to receive funding to promote our Mission and new initiatives. This has included partnering with various financial institutions, municipalities, provincial and federal grants, etc.

Flexible work policy is in place with a hybrid model allowing a mix of working from home and in office work, for those that want flexibility.	Flexible work policy allows eligible employees to work from home, reducing costs associated with commuting as well as allowing for better work life balance.
Income Tax clinics each year open to employees and community members.	Free income tax clinics are run annually around tax time to help employees and community members file their taxes.

## Attitudinal

Objective	Strategy
<p>Goodwill provides work opportunities, skills development and employee and family strengthening for people who face barriers such as disability or social disadvantage. The aim is to promote and advance individuals, families and communities toward economic self-sufficiency and prosperity. Goodwill focuses on and promotes a circle of hope, dignity, and strength and strives to provide opportunities and training to people to help them realize their full potential.</p>	<p>Goodwill's values; Inclusion, Compassion, Aspiring Workforce, Respect and Empathy provide a lens for how we made decisions and policy, behave and uphold how we do business. All staff have employee coaches available to them which are resources to help set and achieve personal and career goals, deal with personal issues, and support in employees home and work lives. All managers and staff receive training on working with and serving people with barriers such as disabilities. This includes training on AODA standards, Destigmatizing, Diversity, and Mental Health First Aid. Employees have access to Employee Coaches which help</p>
<p>Create ongoing awareness internally and with communities served by sharing success stories with employees, community partners, and the general public on how Goodwill has changed the lives of clients and employees through the work we do.</p>	<p>WFD staff and managers are encouraged to share success stories when they identify them. With the permission of clients or employees success stories are shared through videos, interviews, and news letters. These stories are shared at internal meetings, board meetings, Goodwill award ceremonies, stakeholder reports, on Goodwill's website, and with community partners.</p>
<p>Build relationships with local businesses promoting Goodwill's mission and the benefit of hiring those with barriers and making partnerships to create opportunities for clients.</p>	<p>Regular outreach to local businesses and relationship building by WFD staff and Goodwill leadership. Acknowledging partnerships through Success Stories, social media posts and within stakeholder reports.</p>
<p>Create and promote an environment that is inclusive and removes barriers for clients and employees.</p>	<p>a) As required by AODA legislation, all employees and managers are required to take Disability awareness training during onboarding which gives information on working with customers or clients with barriers.</p>
	<p>b) Employees sign off on Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Policies and Diversity policies on onboarding. These policies are also regular reviewed and discussed at huddles and meetings with employees.</p>
	<p>c) Capture demographic profile of new hires into Goodwill to demonstrate commitment to inclusive hiring. Participate in federal government's 50-50 Challenge to ensure diversity at board and leadership levels.</p>

Increase public awareness of Goodwill's mission through participation in community events, networking events, job fairs, and other community events.	Human Resources, Career Centre staff, and managers regularly take part in, and host, job fairs and community events to promote Goodwill and the work we do. Goodwill represented at tables such as Inclusive Economy Roundtable, Health & Homelessness Coalition.
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## Technology

Objective	Strategy
Plan and budget for the use of technology to support and advance business effectiveness, client services, and employee technical skills.	Budget for organization technology costs and policies that includes hardware, software, security, confidentiality, backup policies, assistive technology, disaster recovery preparedness, and virus protection to support information management and performance improvement activities. Partner with 3rd party IT provider, Leadwave, to maintain, test, and advise.
Computer labs available to public and clients at our Career Centres to help find and apply for work, work on resumes, etc.	Career Centres have computer labs available for clients to use, as needed. Computer labs are staffed with employees who may help clients in preparing resumes or using the technology in general.
Assistive devices integrated into business functions. ie screen readers, magnifiers. Training on assistive technologies for participants and employees as needed.	Career Centres and employment environments contain assistive devices for clients or employees needing such devices to take part in services or regular employment.

Power of technology program used to allow employees to gain access to refurbished laptops or tablets at a subsidized rate.	In order to ensure all employees have access to technology, Goodwill offers a program opened to employees (possibly clients in the future) where refurbished laptops and tablets can be purchased at a subsidized rate through a payroll deduction payment plan, making technology more available for those that want it but may have financial barriers from obtaining the technology.
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## Section 2. Identified Barriers, Strategies and Actions

### Information and Communications

Goodwill is committed to making our information and communications accessible to people with disabilities.

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
Ensure signage is accessible at all locations.	Taking into consideration the range of disabilities, ensure that all signage is readable and in an acceptable range of vision. Recommend additional evacuation signage be posted. Safety signage and emergency systems are checked as part of monthly safety inspections. Include	Low	TBD	Goodwill	Ongoing as signage is added and replaced	Marketing	Ongoing	

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
	brail signage where appropriate.							
Not all policies are written in clear language and available in accessible formats	Ensure all policies are updated to use clear language, especially employee facing policies, and ensure all policies are in a format that is accessible.	Medium	Staff Time	Goodwill	2025	Human Resources	In Progress	

## Employment

Goodwill is committed to fair and accessible employment practices.

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
Large portion of employees being hired through Indeed possibly missing some with barriers.	Ensure there are multiple venues to apply to Goodwill, and Career Centre/Community partners are utilized as a priority. More	Medium	Staff time	Goodwill	ongoing	HR and Management	In progress	

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
	walk-ins are being hired due to social media advertising of jobs. Work to continue to rely less on Indeed for new hires.							

### Design of Public Spaces (Architectural & Environmental)

Goodwill will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Goodwill will put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
Elevator maintenance making Horton Career Centre inaccessible for those requiring it, temporarily	Inform all personnel and clients that may be impacted and make alternative arrangements when possible.	High	Staff time to inform clients and staff	Goodwill	March 15, 2024	Facilities and Construction	Complete	Elevator includes accessibility upgrades.
Bathrooms at Tillsonburg location are not fully accessible.	Expand location to include bathrooms on grade	Medium	TBD	Goodwill	March 2025	Facilities and Construction		Construction upgrade in this year's annual plan and capital budget

## Transportation

Goodwill is committed to accessible transportation services and options for employees and clients.

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
Opening new locations in remote areas that may not have robust public transportation, keeping some people with transportation barriers out of the workforce.	Work with municipalities and local partners when opening new locations to see options available. Plan locations to be in convenient locations.	Low	NA	Goodwill	Ongoing	HR/Operations		Participating in Lyft partnership through GII to increase access to transportation for new employees in areas Lyft is available.

## Community Integration

Goodwill is committed to removing barriers from clients or employees participating in their community of choice.

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement

## Financial



Goodwill is committed to ensuring financial barriers do not keep clients or employees from participating in employment or services.

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
Due to cost-of-living crisis, more employees are struggling to cover unexpected expenses or emergencies.	Maintain Bridge Advance Program, examine officially increasing “standard” amount to account for cost of living increases and more frequent higher requests. Continue to look at wage rates to remain fair and competitive and increasing employee earnings.	Medium	Amount unpaid if separation occurs before advance is paid back.	Goodwill	Q3 FYE 2025	VP, HR, CFAO	In progress	Goodwill’s minimum wage raised to \$1.00/hr above legislated minimum; hourly bonuses doubled

## Attitudinal

Goodwill is committed to removing attitudinal barriers and biases that team members and other stakeholders may hold that could impact services and supports to clients and other team members.

Barrier Description	Action Needed	Priority	Estimated Cost	Funding Source	Target Date	Person/Department Responsible	Status	Progress Notes at end of year or areas needing improvement
Ethics line is not being full utilized when employees may feel they are not treated fairly.	Continue to promote ethics line to employees and help them understand when it could be used.	Low	Time	Goodwill	Ongoing	HR, Communications, Learning team	In Progress	
Needing to better understand barriers clients may face from a staff perspective	Develop a survey for program staff to complete to share thoughts on potential barriers clients may face	Medium	Time	Goodwill	October 1, 2025	HR, WFD Leadership	Not Started	