



**Shuswap Association  
for Community Living**

# **Accessibility Report & Plan 2023**



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# Definitions

## **Architectural Barriers**

Physical barriers that prohibit or impede individuals from accessing a building or grounds.

## **Environmental Barriers**

Any location or characteristic of the setting that **compromises**, hinders, or impedes service delivery and the benefits to be gained.

## **Attitudinal Barriers**

The organization evaluates any pre-conceived opinions that its personnel and other stakeholders may have of persons supported as these can impact access to services/supports. i.e., Terminology and language organizations uses in its literature or communications with persons served; if input of persons served is invited and used; if eligibility criteria of the organization create barriers for individuals with specific types of disabilities.

## **Financial Barriers**

Financial barriers include insufficient funding for services/supports, and the organization might be an advocate at a legislative level for increase funds, or it might promote activities to directly raise money for the support of a service or a person served.

## **Employment Barriers**

Providing a work environment for staff that ensures persons with disabilities can better manage their needs.

## **Communication Barriers**

Provide materials in a language or format that is understood by persons served. Is the website making sense to the people who are new to it? Are you addressing your needs or changes in your technology plan? Information should be provided in an accessible and understandable format for the persons served.

## **Technology Barriers**

Providing technological software or hardware to assist Persons Supported needing additional assistance with communication.

## **Transportation Barriers**

That prohibit a person served from reaching service locations, or unable to participate in supports and activities offered.

## **Community Inclusion Barriers**

Barriers include any barrier that would keep the persons served from returning to full participation in the community of their choice i.e., accommodations may be needed to enable participant to return to volunteer activities.

## **Other Barriers**

As identified by Persons Supported or other Stakeholders.

## **Reasonable accommodations**

Modifications or adjustments, which are not unduly burdensome, that assist the persons supported or employees to access benefits and privileges that are equal to those enjoyed by others.

## Overview

As a CARF-accredited organization, SACL promotes accessibility and the removal of barriers for the people to whom it provides supports as well as other stakeholders.

SACL recognizes the importance of a comprehensive review of accessibility issues and the subsequent development and approval of a written plan to ensure that barriers are addressed. SACL acknowledges that the organization's actions to identify and remedy accessibility barriers within the Association are critical. That being said, it is also evident that many people face equally challenging barriers in the community.

SACL believes that the lives of Persons Supported can be further enhanced through working with community to address external barriers. To that end, SACL continues its tradition of community involvement. The following events and activities demonstrate that commitment.

### Community Involvement

#### ***CLBC North Okanagan-Shuswap Community Council***

The Executive Director is a member of the CLBC North Okanagan-Shuswap Community Council. Its mission is to encourage, inspire, lead and support inclusion and the participation of people with intellectual disabilities in all aspects of the community where you live and work. The North Okanagan-Shuswap Community Council, together with CLBC staff and managers, enhance the creation of safe environments, improve access to community resources and acknowledge the gifts and contributions of people with diverse abilities. In addition, they help develop and promote creative solutions which improve community access and inclusion. Members include individuals with intellectual disabilities, family members, professionals from service provider agencies and business and community leaders.

#### ***BC CEO Network***

Benefits of Membership include;

- Providing a collective voice for the Social Services Sector, CEO's and Executive Directors across BC
- Promotes mutual support and professional development.
- Promotes effective and efficient business practices, and legal opinions including taxation, employment standards

#### ***Chamber of Commerce – Salmon Arm***

The Executive Director is a member of the Salmon Arm Chamber of Commerce. This non-profit organization is comprised of business, professionals, residents and other community groups that work together to achieve a healthy economic and socio-economic environment that benefits the entire community.

#### ***Okanagan College***

The Executive Director/designate sits on the Adult Special Education Committee. This committee addresses the college education of individuals with an intellectual disability and other special needs.

#### ***Social Impact Advisory Committee***

The Executive Director participates on the City of Salmon Arm's Social Issues Committee. This committee is comprised of social service groups, citizens at large and a City of Salmon Arm City

Councilor. This City run committee advises and makes recommendations to Council on policies, priorities, new initiatives and direction to maintain and improve the social wellbeing of all citizens through the provision of the City's core services and community services which are supported by the City.

### ***Salmon Arm & Area Community Response Network (formerly known as Shuswap Community Resources Coalition)***

The Executive Director participates as a member of the Shuswap Community Resources Coalition. This coalition is comprised of community non-profit agencies such as NOSBIS, CMHA, Enderby & District Community Resource Center; Eagle Valley Community Society, Eagle Valley Senior Citizens Housing Society, Salvation Army, Hospice, Immigrant Services, ASPIRAL, Shuswap Children's Association, SAFE Society, LASS, Seniors Resource and Referral, Family Resource Centre, N/S Community Resources. This coalition works towards developing meaningful partnerships within our community. Current partnership initiatives include:

- 1) Sharing resources for common professional development requirements
- 2) Creating a Strategic Plan for the Group
- 3) Helping Staff and volunteers with a Work/Life Balance strategy

### ***Practicum and Volunteer Placements***

SACL supports practicum students from a variety of local post-secondary educational institutions. Having practicum students at SACL allows students to apply theoretical knowledge in real world settings, expand on skills, and develop personal and professional connections. Practicum students provide new perspectives, reduce employee workload and promote SACL among potential jobseekers. The experience provides an opportunity for students entering the workforce to recognize the value of diversity, encouraging them to include individuals with disabilities in their community activities.

### ***The Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) (Previously known as Youth Employment Strategy)***

This Government of Canada program aims to help youth, ages 15 to 30 yrs., develop the skills and gain the experience they need to successfully transition into the labour market. YESS provides funding to organizations to deliver a range of activities that help youth overcome barriers to employment and develop a broad range of skills and knowledge in order to participate in the current and future labour market. Some students have gone on to the human services field both educationally and professionally.

### ***Women Who Wine***

SACL's Executive Director became a member of Women Who Wine, a fundraising group that believes in connecting and empowering women of various business acumens in our community through meaningful networking events. They collectively give back to the community through quarterly Community Giving events. They have supported SACL's endeavour to purchase a new work truck and we look forward to our continued collaboration.

## Public Relations

In 2022, SACL participated in Friends Abreast - Shuswap Dragon Boat Society, the Salmon Arm Fall Fair Parade. SACL showed its support for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by wearing their SACL orange shirts. We also partnered with Women Who Wine in collaborating with SAFE Society, to raise funds and shop for disadvantaged families in the community. In 2022, SACL made a big shift with its fundraising efforts to support local businesses like Grillers Meats Salmon Arm and Downtown Salmon Arm. SACL's Facebook page showed substantial growth with 302 followers.

## Presentations

SACL responds to invitations to speak to service clubs, students and other groups throughout the year. Presentations provide opportunities to inform, educate, motivate and inspire audiences regarding SACL's philosophy and its commitment to diversity, inclusion and welcoming communities.

In 2022, the Executive Director gave a presentation at Elks Lodge when they provided SACL with a donation. SACL speaks to Okanagan College's Human Service Worker students annually as well as Okanagan College's Friends of ASE (Adult Special Education) Meeting. SACL also presented in a Leadership class at King's Christian and had those students join our agency for various activities (bowling, movies, etc.). Laurel PosAbilities, behaviour support specialists, asked our Executive Director to present at a service provider/CLBC meeting to discuss our experience with the Behaviour Lead course.

## Meeting Established Standards

### Accessibility Acts

In July 2019, *The Accessible Canada Act* came into force. Its purpose is to make Canada barrier-free by January 1, 2040. This involves identifying, removing and preventing barriers in federal jurisdiction. In June 2021, the *Accessible British Columbia Act* came into effect. Effective September 1, 2022, over 750 public sector organizations were required to establish an accessibility committee, an accessibility plan and a build tool to receive feedback on their accessibility. CLBC, our funder, was one of these organizations and has until September 1, 2023, to achieve compliance to meet the requirements. CLBC has been working towards compliance, and as such, has hosted workshops, provided an online survey and completed an internal review. Five main themes surfaced:

1. Relationships make all the difference: People want consistent and understanding relationships with the staff that they're working with.
2. Information needs to be shared in many ways: Information offered in plain language, multiple languages, braille, and ASL. People shared that having a staff member or peer talk through information one-on-one was helpful.
3. Time matters: People asked for more one-on-one time with staff or peers to ask questions, learn about services, and understand information.
4. Clear communication is key: People want clear information about timelines, processes, and policies to be shared in a way that's easy to understand.
5. Welcoming physical spaces: People shared the need for physically accessible spaces for people who use mobility devices. And also, for staff who are there to greet and direct people around offices.

While there are no new requirements for SACL to meet currently, CLBC is making accessibility even more of a priority and it is important that SACL align itself accordingly.

## **CARF Accreditation**

SACL pursues accreditation through CARF (The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), an independent, non-profit accreditor of health and human services. SACL achieved a three-year accreditation certification in the summer of 2005 which has now been renewed consecutively to date. SACL has prepared an annual Accessibility Plan since 2003. As barriers are identified, they are addressed based on priority and cost.

The annual SACL Accessibility Plan is developed by means of feedback obtained from Persons Supported, their families, caregivers, employees and other stakeholders. This plan aides in quality improvement and maintenance by identifying trends in annual surveys, suggestion submissions, meeting minutes, as well as other sources.

While SACL may not have the capacity to address all the identified issues due to budget and contractual limitations, it continually seeks to address and minimize accessibility barriers. SACL leadership reviews issues, recommendations and impacts to establish priorities in their objectives. The Executive Director is designated as the official person responsible for the implementation of the plan. The Quality Assurance Coordinator collects and analyzes responses from surveys, suggestions, complaints, incident investigations and collates suggestions from Persons Supported, Stakeholders & Staff, the OH&S Committee, and the Community. Suggestions and improvements are reviewed on an ongoing basis at the management level and when appropriate, at the OH&S and Staff meeting level. Corrective measures and adjustments are developed and implemented based on the outcomes of this process.

SACL leadership has a working knowledge of what should be done to promote accessibility and remove barriers. SACL addresses accessibility issues to:

- Enhance the quality of life for Persons Supported in their programs and services
- Implement nondiscriminatory employment practices
- Meet legal and regulatory requirements
- Meet the expectations of everyone in the area of accessibility

SACL assesses the accessibility needs of persons supported, employees as well as others associated with the organization. SACL implements an ongoing process for identification of barriers in the following areas:

- 1) Architecture
- 2) Environment
- 3) Attitudes
- 4) Finances
- 5) Employment
- 6) Communication
- 7) Technology
- 8) Transportation
- 9) Community Integration when appropriate
- 10) Any other barrier identified by Persons served, personnel and other stakeholders.

## **Reasonable Accommodation**

SACL evaluates and carefully considers the merits of all requests for accommodation to determine whether any remedial actions are appropriate. Requests for reasonable accommodations are:

- Identified
- Reviewed
- Decided upon
- Documented

For Persons Supported accommodation requests are identified and reviewed:

- Upon admission.
- During annual Person-Centered Service Planning.
- Upon request

For Employees accommodation requests are identified and reviewed:

- Upon hire
- During annual reviews/evaluations
- By special request



## **2022 Accessibility Action Plan Results** **(Action Items from the 2021 Satisfaction Survey Results)**

In 2022, 75% of respondents did not identify any barriers to services.

### **Architectural Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

### **Environmental Barriers**

In 2022, SACL continued to promote mutual respect between participants and individual needs. SACL also continued to explore opportunities to increase space for services as well as administration. Only, 4% of those surveyed indicated there were environmental barriers to receiving SACL services, a significant decrease from 30% in 2021.

### **Attitudinal Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

### **Financial Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

### **Employment Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

### **Communication Barriers**

In 2021, 7% of persons surveyed indicated that there were communication barriers when attending SACL services, a significant decrease of 80% in 2020. In 2020, it was planned that a separate survey to determine the trend was planned but was not provided to persons supported.

In 2022, continued to be minimal at 8% of respondents indicating there are communication barriers when attending SACL services. The survey was not provided as there didn't seem a need for it.

### **Technology Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

### **Transportation Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

### **Community Inclusion Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

### **Other Barriers**

No action items were indicated for 2022.

## 2023 Accessibility Action Plan

(Action Items from the 2022 Satisfaction Survey Results)

### Architectural Barriers

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 100% of Persons Supported indicated there were no architectural barriers to receiving services. This is consistent with 2021.</b>   |
| <b>Solution</b>             | <b>No Trends</b> – SACL will continue to provide safe access from public/private transportation to programs/services during cold weather. Community outings are planned for everyone attending to be able to participate. |
| <b>Priority</b>             | High  |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | \$0   |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC  |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A   |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | Services Managers & Staff   |

### Environmental Barriers

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 4% of those surveyed indicated there were environmental barriers to receiving SACL services. This marks a significant decrease from 30% in 2021.</b> |
| <b>Solution</b>             | <b>No Trends identified</b>  |
| <b>Priority</b>             | High   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A  |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC   |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | <b>Ongoing</b>   |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | N/A  |

### Attitudinal Barriers

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 9% of persons surveyed indicated that there were attitudinal barriers when attending SACL services. This is a 1% decrease from 2021.</b> |
| <b>Solution</b>             | <b>No Trends identified</b>  |
| <b>Priority</b>             | Moderate   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A  |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC   |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A  |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | N/A  |

## Financial Barriers

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 0% of persons surveyed felt there is not enough funding to provide all the services wanted.</b>  |
| <b>Solution</b>             | <b>No Trends identified</b> - SACL will continue to request increased funding from CLBC as needed. SACL will also continue to investigate long term sustainable fundraising opportunities. |
| <b>Priority</b>             | Moderate   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A  |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC   |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A  |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | Executive Director, Services Managers  |

## Employment Barriers

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 100% of Persons surveyed indicated that their worker helped them figure out problems they might have at their job. An increase of 17% from 2021.</b> |
| <b>Solution</b>             | <b>No Trends identified</b> - SACL will continue providing supports that ensure Persons Supported can better manage their needs.                                 |
| <b>Priority</b>             | High   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A  |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC   |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A  |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | Services Managers & staff  |

## Communication Barriers

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 8% of people surveyed indicated that there are communication barriers when attending SACL services, an increase of 1% in 2021.</b> |
| <b>Solution</b>             | Due to the marked improvement in feedback from satisfaction surveys in 2021 and 2022, the separate survey to determine a trend was abandoned.  |
| <b>Priority</b>             | Moderate   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A  |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC   |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A  |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | Quality Assurance Coordinator, service managers and staff  |

## Technology Barriers

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <p>In 2022, 74% of persons supported who were surveyed indicated that SACL provided access to assistive technology if required, consistent with 2021.</p> <p>In 2022, stakeholders were also surveyed with the same question. The results were positive; 80% of employers, 73% of employees responded they felt that SACL provided access to assistive technology when needed. 100% of families/caregivers responded neutrally.</p> |
| <b>Solution</b>             | No trends   |
| <b>Priority</b>             | Low   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A   |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC  |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A   |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | N/A   |

## Transportation Barriers

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <p>In 2022, 4% of respondents felt there were transportation barriers, consistent with 2021 data. This indicates a drastic shift from 2020 when 100% of respondents felt there were transportation barriers.</p>   |
| <b>Solutions</b>            | <p><b>No trends</b> - In 2022, SACL will continue to advocate and educate caregivers regarding the need to provide transportation to community events outside the hours of SACL Services. SACL will continue to support and educate persons supported on use of available modes of transport and how to access them (walking, busses, taxi, friends etc.)</p> <p>SACL will continue to actively explore, support and advocate for the development of natural supports in the lives of Persons Supported. There are several training videos available to staff and Persons Supported on Open Future Learning, an online learning provider to which SACL subscribes.</p> |
| <b>Priority</b>             | Moderate   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | within services budget   |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC   |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A  |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | Services Managers & Staff  |

## Community Inclusion Barriers

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 0% of persons surveyed feel they experience community inclusion barriers, consistent with 2021.</b> |
| <b>Solution</b>             | <b>No trends</b>  |
| <b>Priority</b>             | Low   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A   |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC  |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A   |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | N/A   |

## Other Barriers

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Barrier and Location</b> | <b>In 2022, 0% of persons surveyed indicated they experienced other barriers. A decrease of 7%.</b> |
| <b>Solution</b>             | <b>No trends</b>  |
| <b>Priority</b>             | Low   |
| <b>Cost</b>                 | N/A   |
| <b>Funding Source</b>       | CLBC  |
| <b>Due Date</b>             | N/A   |
| <b>Person Responsible</b>   | N/A   |

## Monitoring & Report Distribution

The Executive Director reports the Accessibility Plan Results to the Board of Directors. The Accessibility Plan results are documented annually and provided in a complete format and is available to:

- SACL Board of Directors
- Staff
- Persons Supported
- Families & Caregivers
- Stakeholders
- Community Living BC
- The General Public

The SACL Accessibility Plan is also available on the SACL Website:

[www.shuswapacl.com](http://www.shuswapacl.com)