Shuswap Association for Community Living

Accessibility Report
& Plan
2025

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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 Supported; if input of Persons Supported 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 employees that ensures Persons Supported can better manage their needs. Examples of employment barriers include lack of education/training, disability, transportation,

Communication Barriers
Provide materials in a language or format that is understood by Persons Supported. 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 Supported.

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

Transportation Barriers
That could prohibit/limit 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 Supported from returning to full participation in the community of their choice I.e., such as accommodations, lack of program space, etc.

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 its actions to identify and remedy accessibility barriers within the organization 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.

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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. SACL delegates often present in Human Service Worker classes to share information about SACL and the sector.

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 Councillor. 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 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:

- Sharing resources for common professional development requirements
- Creating a Strategic Plan for the Group
- 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.

Women Who Wine

SACL's Executive Director is 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 Community Giving events. This group folded at the end of 2024.

Salmon Arm WorkBC

SACL's Vocational Counsellors regularly attend job fairs that provide keynote speakers and information sessions about opportunities, resources and funding available for inclusive hiring and retention.

Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee

The SACL Director of Services, Connie Sebelius, has been accepted on the Regional Accessibility Advisory Committee. The role of the committee is to provide recommendations that inform the Accessibility Plan of the Columbia Shuswap Regional District and help improve the livability, inclusivity, and accessibility for persons working and interacting within the region. They are looking forward to their first meeting.

CSSEA Community Living Services Panel

The SACL Executive Director, Karen Hansen, has been voted into a seat on the CSSEA Community Living Services Panel. The panel works jointly with General Services and Indigenous Services; the CSSEA Board of Directors are selected from the joint panel.

Public Relations

Community Participation
- SACL participated in Salmon Arm's Downtown Treat Trail
- SACL showed its support for National Day for Truth and Reconciliation by wearing their SACL orange shirts, participated in Pink Shirt Day in February, "Be a buddy, not a bully!"
- SACL hosted a pop-up event for Salmon Arm's Official Community Plan
- Executive Director, Karen Hansen, appeared on a panel of Shuswap non-profit ED/CEOs at the viewing of Uncharitable in November
- Heaven Can Wait Boat ride
- SACL continues to use "Downtown Dollars" for employee gifts

Volunteering
- SACL Persons Supported and employees volunteer at the Food Bank regularly, Christmas Kettles for Salvation Army, volunteering at Church's Thrift Store, Silverbacks games, Freedom's Gate – Equine Rescue, Church Lunches at CrossRoads, Andover Terrace, Turtle Valley Donkey Refuge Society, reading to children at the Strong Start Program
- The SACL Executive Director, Karen Hansen, regularly volunteered to bartend at events, through Women Who Wine, to support local businesses and organizations
- Persons Supported and employees went Christmas carolling for Seniors
- Persons Supported and employees participated in cleaning up the neighbourhood

Fundraising
- SACL continues to support local businesses like Grillers Meats Salmon Arm and Downtown Salmon Arm though collaborating fundraising events
- SACL partnered with Women Who Wine in collaborating with SAFE Society, to raise funds and shop for disadvantaged families in the community
- SACL participated in Giving Tuesday by posting on our website and placing donation boxes in local businesses and encouraging "Bring a Toonie to Work Day"
- SACL Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee held a BBQ Fundraiser and chili cook-off (to kick off DEI events and raise funds needed)

SACL continues to post regularly to its Facebook page and has increased its followers from 352 in 2023 to 401 in 2024.SACL started an Instagram page and is currently working on linking it to our Facebook account.

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.

- The Executive Director attends Shuswap Community Foundation's AGM to give thanks for grants awarded throughout the year.

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. In September 2024, CLBC reported that it had made significant progress in it's Accessibility Work Plan:

1. Created a CLBC People First policy working group, an Accessibility Advisory Committee and created its board's commitment to reconciliation statement and cultural safety policy.
2. CLBC made its first plain language videos for navigating CLBC processes as well as Accessible Communication Guidelines for its staff.
3. CLBC partnered with South Island Community Council and CAYA to pilot "Communication for Everyone" picture symbol boards and made a "request for alternative format" form on its website.
4. CLBC gathered feedback from Persons Supported to make its physical spaces welcoming for all and updated accessibility criteria for choosing new office locations.
5. CLBC hired an Equity Diversity Inclusion (EDI) Lead to create a strategy to strengthen accessibility.

SACL has also made significant progress in its endeavour to improve accessibility for all:

- In January 2023, interested employees formed a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee (DEI) that review SACL policies and practices through diverse perspectives and provides recommendations to ensure inclusivity.
- The overhaul of the SACL Policy and Procedure Manual provided an opportunity to update policies, simplify language and ensure content was of a diverse and inclusive nature.

- To support the need for a wheelchair accessible vehicle, SACL has been awarded, in principle, a $94,000 grant through the federal government's Rural Transit Solutions Fund; we hope to purchase a bus with these funds in 2025.
- SACL is working to raise funds to install an accessible entrance into CI building by applying for grants and fundraising.

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.

In October 2023, SACL was surveyed and received recommendations regarding its Accessibility Plan. *"Although there is evidence that the organization has implemented an accessibility plan, its ongoing process for identification of barriers should consistently include the areas of architecture, environment, attitudes, finances, employment, technology, transportation and community integration (when appropriate)."*

After discussion with the CARF surveyors, it became evident that SACL needed to do more than gather data from surveys, complaint forms and Health and Safety inspections. An Accessibility checklist was developed in February 2024 and implemented in March 2024. The results of the data collected from those checklists are included in this document.

The annual SACL Accessibility Plan is developed by means of feedback obtained from Persons Supported, their families, caregivers, employees and other stakeholders. In addition, SACL implemented the Annual Accessibility Checklist mentioned above. 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 accessibility checklists, 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:

- Architecture
- Environment
- Attitudes
- Finances
- Employment
- Communication

- Technology
- Transportation
- Community Integration when appropriate
- Any other barrier identified by Persons Supported, 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

2024 Accessibility Action Plan Results

(Action Items from the 2024 Satisfaction Survey Results and Annual Accessibility Checklists)

In 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated that 84% of respondents felt that SACL identified and addressed accessibility barriers, 14% responded neutrally and 1% disagreed.

Architectural Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** In 2023, no architectural barriers to receiving services were indicated in satisfaction surveys. **Checklists completed for 2023 indicated:** 1. Accessible Parking spaces for Community Inclusion services are not clearly marked. 2. Curb ramp from the parking onto the sidewalk does not exist for Community Inclusion Services. 3. The main entrance is not easily seen for Community Inclusion services. 4. The entrance is not well lit for Community Employment Services. 5. The Administration, CI and CES workspaces and bathrooms pose various concerns around accessibility for people with wheelchairs/mobility aids and people with low or no vision.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	1. All services identified, in 2023, as having architectural barriers were moved to new worksites in June 2024. No architectural barriers were identified in the 2024 services Satisfaction Surveys. However, some were identified in the Accessibility Checklists. 2. All new worksites underwent and passed required inspections. 3. Accessibility Checklists were completed in January 2025.

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Environmental Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** In 2023, satisfaction surveys indicated that between 92% and 100% of respondents felt that services were provided at times and in locations that meet the needs of the Persons Supported. Two responses indicated they were looking forward to the move of services. Parking was indicated as an issue and one response stated they would like some night and weekend services. When asked if there were things that make it harder for them to come to SACL or meet with their worker 38% of Persons Supported stated there were issues. Comments on these surveys indicated that: • Weather/snow and road conditions were of concern. • One survey indicated their peers upset them. **Checklists completed for 2023 indicated:** The noise level in Community Inclusion services was high.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services) and checklists from January 2025	1. Peer interactions and parking – Community Inclusion employees and Persons Supported provided positive feedback since the move. Interactions have changed between Persons Supported for the better, they feel they have more choice in activities and have reported that parking is a bonus. 2. Nights and weekend services – Some employees work flexible positions where they are able to work at various times throughout the week to meet the needs of Persons Supported. This may include evenings or weekends. In November 2024, SACL signed a new Memorandum of Understanding with CUPE 3999 (Local Issues) that includes language allowing employees to work more flexible schedules to accommodate the needs of Persons Supported. 3. Weather/snow and road conditions – SACL has policies that address severe weather and winter tire requirements (*Transportation Policy*). SACL makes it a priority to keep programs and services open and available even during inclement weather and only closes a worksites or programs due to advisories on highways or buses not running. Should the weather keep an individual from attending a location SACL may cancel the hours or, if required and able, would meet virtually. 4. High noise level in Community Inclusion Services – Community Inclusion services moved to a new space in June 2024. The move for these services allows for programs to be based throughout the site, in spaces that allow for some separation resolving the concern. The SACL Executive Director reports that high noise levels have not been reported to her since the move.

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Attitudinal Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility **Plan** 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** In 2023, 71% of Persons Supported in Job Development agree with the statement that they feel they are an important part of their workplace and feel respected. This was a 21% decrease from 2022. The Services Manager reported that if a Person Supported is in a job that is not their ideal job or where they're not happy; but will stay with it until a better placement is found. **Checklists completed for 2023 indicated:** No barriers were indicated.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	Persons Supported in **Job Development** expressed a 21% decrease in feeling important and respected in their workplace. The Person Supported may express that they want to look for alternative employment. This would then be added to their employment plan and steps are put in place to find alternative employment. Another option is that steps to assist the Person Supported to have a conversation with their employer to make changes at their current workplace to make the placement more suitable. When doing employment plans Persons Supported have an opportunity to express that they want to look for alternative employment. In 2024 services Satisfaction Surveys, 77% (up from 71%) of Persons Supported in Job Development agreed with the statement that they feel they are an important part of their workplace and feel respected.

Financial Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** Families & Caregivers commented that: 1. Phone system had issues 2. More funding (mileage) so they are better able to meet the needs of the Person Supported 3. Smaller groups for Persons Supported outings **Checklists completed for 2023 indicated:** It was reported that Community Employment Services is currently full and there is a waitlist at CLBC.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	1. Fundraising - SACL continues to explore long term sustainable fundraising opportunities. Two event planners have been contracted to plan a large SACL fundraising event for 2025. They hope it will become an annual event 2. Phone system – In June 2024, SACL introduced a new web-based phone system, Ring Central. The Executive Director reports that she has not heard complaints of the new phone system. Advantages to the new system is voicemails are

	automatically emailed to the appropriate people so a likely quicker response time and messages don't get forgotten 3. <u>Advocate for Increased funding for mileage</u> - SACL continues to request increased funding from CLBC. SACL received increases to mileage with the new Collective Agreement 4. <u>Advocate for Increased funding so smaller groups can attend more activities</u> - SACL continues to request increased funding from CLBC. SACL includes these issues when negotiating each contract and addendum/revision 5. <u>Advocate for Increased funding</u> for more employment services spaces. SACL continues to request increased funding from CLBC. SACL includes these issues when negotiating each contract and addendum/revision

Employment Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** <u>Employment Supports - Persons Supported</u> 20% of Persons Supported in Employment Supports disagreed with the statement that they can choose the job they want. This is an increase from 0% in 2022. <u>Employees</u> 77% of employees that responded to the satisfaction survey indicated that they agreed with the statement that Health and Safety are priorities at SACL. 20% were neutral and 3% disagreed. This is a 10% drop in agreement from last survey. When asked what they liked least about working at SACL the top three items were: 1. Pay rate/salary 2. Co-worker relationships 3. Nothing – nothing negative to say **Checklists completed for 2023 indicated:** No barriers were indicated
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	<u>Employment Supports – Persons Supported</u> 1. <u>Persons Supported cannot choose the job they want</u> – The Employment Supports Manager expressed that if a Person Supported is in a job that is not their ideal job or where they're not happy; but will stay with it until a better placement is found. The Person Supported may express that they want to look for alternative employment. This would then be added to their employment plan. and steps are put in place to find alternative employment. Or steps to assist the PS have conversation with their employer to make changes at their current workplace to make the placement more suitable. When doing employment plans PS have an opportunity to express that they want to look for alternative employment. In <u>2024,</u> 0% (down from 20%) of Persons Supported in

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Employment Supports disagreed with the statement that they can choose the job they want. Great success!

Employees like least about working at SACL

1. Pay rate/salary –SACL is required to follow the collective agreement, that being said, SACL has taken steps to improve the situation. If a new hire has at least 2 or more years related experience SACL will put them at step 2 once probation is completed. If a new hire has greater than 5 years related experience plus at least 1-year management experience in this or a related field then they will be put at step 4 once probation is completed.

2. Co-worker relationships – While SACL currently has procedures, policies and training that address this topic there is always the possibility that co-worker relationships may become strained. Some remedies and responses to past and current concerns have been:

    a. Team Wide meetings - quarterly - In early 2024, team guidelines were developed for each program area, by each team, to establish guidelines on how the team interacts with one another and how they hold each other accountable.

    b. Employee fun days – are scheduled randomly and each team finds ways to celebrate with each other throughout the year.

    c. Wellness Wednesday Messages – weekly - checking in, birthday, thank you and recognition messages, mental health information, reminders of policy and procedures that may be getting forgotten, offering possible options for support and understanding. Recently, SACL Shout Outs have been added.

    d. Satisfaction Surveys – annually - an opportunity for all employees to provide feedback.

    e. Sparrows Nest (previously Lifeworks) – ongoing – an employee assistance program (EAP) and work-life/wellness resource. LifeWorks provides confidential consultations, counselling, community referrals, multimedia resources, and online access to hundreds of articles, self-assessments, blogs, audio recordings, toolkits, calculators, and more.

    f. Team Guidelines to address conflict within teams - In 2024, SACL developed Team Guidelines for each program area. With employee participation, we developed guidelines on how the team interacts with one another, how they hold each other accountable, and how they address concerns.

    g. Promoting Civility in Non-Profits – SACL worked with Okanagan College – they have developed a workshop that includes Assertive Communication which all employees will take in the spring of 2025

    h. Required Training and Policy Review includes: employees are required to review and be aware of all SACL policies and procedures relevant to their position. Mandt Training provides a foundation for communication and relationships by teaching people to manage their own behaviour and respond proactively.

Communication Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** Overall, stakeholders, families, caregivers, employers and Persons Supported felt that SACL personnel are available to discuss matters of interest or concern, they know they will get help when needed and SACL is responsive to their needs.
	• A <u>Family/Caregiver</u> commented that they would like to get more details when PS (Person Supported) is having a difficulty handling emotion. This helps at home.
	• A <u>Job Development Person Supported</u> commented there was a communication issue with an employer regarding payment.
	• <u>Home Share Service Provider</u> commented that they would like more detail of how Persons Supported day went.
	• <u>Employees</u> When asked how SACL could help its teams work together better employees' top responses were tied at 34% between Team development such as workshops, team activities, and events and Communication such as workshops, emails and discussions. Other suggestions about communication improvement employees provided: a) Checklists of outlines/expectations when onboarding b) Returning texts, phone calls and emails in a timely manner c) Positive and respectful communication
	Accessibility Checklists indicated: Not all documents are in plain language.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	**In 2024, SACL reviewed, assessed and addressed its practices, such as:** • <u>Provide more details to families/caregivers</u> when Persons Supported are having a difficult time. SACL has monthly communications and any interactions with caregivers are documented in the caregiver contact note. Families/Caregivers are encouraged to reach out to the key worker should the provided solutions not be enough. Should the issue not be resolved Service Managers and Team Leaders are available and have open door policies. Complaint/Satisfaction Forms are available on line and can also be requested. It is important to note that if a Person Supported decides that something should not be shared with a caregiver/family that SACL will not share it (in keeping with PIPA requirements and SACL Policy). • <u>Seek to improve communication between employers and Persons Supported.</u> The SACL Employment Services Manager reported that staff continue to reach out employers and Persons Supported at least monthly, to let them know staff are here to assist as needed. Staff mediate meetings as needed.

- SACL provided various activities, events, communications and workshops to help their teams work better together:
  a) Provide checklists of expectations for onboarding – SACL provides a comprehensive onboarding process that includes checklists to ensure all expectations and standards are clear to the new employee. The processes are completed within specific timelines. There are: interview administrative, training/policy review and review/orientation checklists. New employees are required to review policies, handbooks, plans and reports as well as complete courses that have competency-based testing. There are orientations to each program/service area as well as specific training to individuals that may have unique needs. Expectations are clarified through online and in-person discussions, meetings, training, evaluations and semi-annual check-ins. Checklists are used to ensure that each new staff has submitted all required documents, have completed all required training and have been orientated fully in necessary areas prior to being cleared to work. All employees have access to the SACL Policy and Procedures Manual on Nucleus General Information.
  b) SACL provides timely responses to communications. In 2024, the SACL Policy and Procedures Manual was overhauled. Timelines for responding to complaints and conflicts. Policies now align and expectations are clearer as to when and how these kinds of issues are addressed. Results of employee surveys demonstrate a consistent increase in satisfaction regarding SACL's timely response to staff complaints and suggestions from 2022 (40%), 2023 (60%) to 2024 (76%)
  c) SACL continues to encourage and require positive and respectful communication through training, modelling and policy. Examples include:
     i) Wellness Wednesday weekly mailout to all employees offering shout-outs by fellow employees, birthday wishes, agency news and health information
     ii) The development of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) committee and a land acknowledgement
     iii) SACL employee potluck holiday party
     iv) Sponsoring a family through SAFE society for the holidays
     v) SACL hosted a pop-up event for Salmon Arm's Official Community Planning Committee and hosted a mental health speaker to hour a former team member
     vi) Overhaul of the SACL Policy and Procedures manual. Changes include plain language, a better reflection of our supportive company culture, improved inclusive language and a new format for easier navigation.
- SACL provides additional training, as needed, for people that struggled with communication. The SACL Human Resources Manager collaborated with Okanagan College to develop and provide mandatory assertive communication

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	training for all SACL employees "Promoting Civility in Non-Profits" which all employees will take in the spring of 2025 • SACL continued to develop documents that are easy to read and understand • SACL continued to revise existing documents so they are in plain language

Technology Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** Persons Supported surveyed were asked if SACL provided access to technology where required (computers, assistive technology) and they responded with 65% agreement. This is 9% decrease from 2022. Employees surveyed were asked: SACL does it's best to research, implement, and improve upon appropriate technological software and management systems within their allotted budget? 94% of employees agreed or responded neutrally. Comments provided indicated that there were some concerns. • ComVida being difficult for availability and scheduling. • Personal Service Plan format – would be nice to have a specialized template within Nucleus. SACL provides appropriate access to the technology you need to fulfill your job requirements. 94% of employees agreed or responded neutrally with this statement. Comments indicated hope that the new location for some services would remedy concerns. Employees also indicated that: • There were no laptops in the church from which they work • Some laptops that are provided are slow • Some laptops are not being utilized • Most staff access is needed at day end and so there is a shortage **Accessibility Checklists indicated:** SACL does not ask for input on how users experience the website. SACL does not have voice to text options for navigating the website or relaying information.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	• ComVida scheduling - ComVida training is available in S Drive and from managers whenever someone has trouble with something. ComVida system has been going well. • Personal Service Plan format – in in June 2022, SACL approached Nucleus regarding possible options to the existing PCP format. Nucleus responded saying SACL may want to consider using POMS differently. SACL has submitted a list of changes for the current PCP to Nucleus. SACL has now received the information it needs to complete this project and it will be done by March.31.25

	• Laptop availability and use – SACL Executive Director reported that laptops are made available to those who need them and learning library for iPads is available but rarely used. New laptops were provided in many of the programs in 2024. • Feedback from users of the SACL website – SACL will review, assess and develop a way to obtain feedback from users of the website. i.e. a survey on the website, add a question to the annual satisfaction survey. Questions will be added to the Satisfaction Surveys for the next round (2026 for 2025 services) to ensure SACL gets feedback about the website. • Text to speech for website users – In March 2023, SACL explored the option of text to speech for the website. The quote came in at $1400. At the time, it was decided to set the project aside. SACL can revisit the subject and assess whether the budget will allow for the expense. SACL has been writing grants and has not been successful yet.

Transportation Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** In 2023, Transportation barriers were not identified as significant. This is consistent with 2022. However, comments indicated: • One Person Supported commented that transportation was an issue but did not elaborate. • One family/caregiver survey indicated there was insufficient parking. • One employee commented that staff are expected to have winter tires and felt it showed a lack of understanding with their discomfort driving in poor weather conditions. **Checklists completed for 2023 indicated:** No barriers were identified.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	General transportation issues - SACL continued to support and educate Persons Supported on use of available modes of transport and how to access them (walking, busses, taxi, friends etc.) SACL continued to actively explore, support and advocate for the development of natural supports in the lives of Persons Supported. Insufficient Parking – The new locations will allow for increased parking nearby or a close walk away, all free of charge. Winter Tire Requirement – while SACL is bound by law to enforce the requirement to use proper winter tires. It continues ensure that all employees are aware of the laws, standards and policies that govern this decision.

Community Inclusion Barriers

Indicator, Barrier and Location (from Accessibility Plan 2024)	**2024 Satisfaction Surveys (for 2023 services) indicated:** No barriers were identified. **Checklists completed for 2023 indicated:**

	No barriers were identified.
Results and Solutions (from Satisfaction Surveys for 2024 services and checklists from January 2025)	

Other Barriers

No action items were indicated for 2024.

SACL Accessibility Plan 2025
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2025 Accessibility Action Plan
(Action Items from the 2024 Satisfaction Survey Results and Annual Accessibility Checklists)

Results from SACL Satisfaction Surveys and Accessibility Checklists provide the data that aides in the development of this action plan.

In June 2024, SACL moved its services and administration offices to new sites. It is important to remember that the surveys were done in January 2025 and therefore responses could be based on the older sites or the newer sites.

When asked if they felt that SACL identified and addressed accessibility barriers, 99% of respondents surveyed agreed or responded neutrally.

Architectural Barriers

Barrier and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:** There were no architectural barriers to receiving services. This is consistent with 2023. **Accessibility Checklists indicated:** 1. Accessible parking spaces near location – Cluster reports that there are individual parking spaces for tenants but it's challenging for additional parking spots as they are not leveled properly. 2. Curb ramp from the parking onto the sidewalk - Adm/CES indicated that there is no curb ramp from the parking area onto the sidewalk. 3. Route to the building entrance is stable, firm & slip resistant – 1st Ave indicated that it is not. No comment was made. 4. Automatic Doors – CI does not have one at the main entrance or on the washrooms. They are currently fundraising and asking for grants to get one for the main entrance. Admin/CES does not have signage on washrooms. 5. Entrance not well lit - 1st Ave – there is no light when entering through the garage. 6. Tactile warning strips for entrance stairs – CI reported they don't have them 7. Edges of carpets/mats securely attached to minimize tripping hazards – Admin/CES, 1st Ave & Cluster reported they are not. 8. Doors and door frames have good colour contrast with surrounding wall surfaces and floors – Admin/CES reports they do not. 9. If the main entrance is not accessible, does a sign clearly visible at the front of the building indicate the location of an accessible entrance? – 1st Ave reports they do not have a sign indicating the accessible entrance. 10. Are text characters raised (sized between 5/8 and 2 inches high, with high contrast)? Admin/CES does not and CI did not respond 11. Braille signage – CI and Admin/CES indicated they do not have braille signs. 12. Soap dispensers automatic or easy to use – CI reports No, you push the soap out.
Solution	Admin/CES No curb ramp from parking to sidewalk - The front entrance at Admin/CES is accessible (with curb onto sidewalk) but not the side parking lot and that won't change.

	Carpets/mats not secured – Mat has been removed
	Poor contrast with frames vs. walls – will consider this when it is time to repaint
	Accessible washroom signs, with braille, have been ordered for Admin/CES and CI.
	
	1st Ave
	    Unstable/not slip resistant route to entrance - Other than in the winter time, the route to 1st Ave entrance seems fine. In the winter it is heavily de-iced and that is my only note thus far. Unfortunately, there is no way to fix the parking issue at Cluster without extensive ground work being done.
	    Garage not well lit –Light switch in the garage is one of those things we don't address for now. Most of the time, staff are entering the garage through the back where the switch is and if not, the garage door would be open to allow for natural light to get in.
	    Carpets/mats not secured - The mats have been secured. They are all non-slip rugs.
	    Sign indicating accessible entrance – will make a sign
	
	Community Inclusion
	    No Automatic Doors - CI doors will be done in the coming months - waiting for results of a couple of grants.
	    No Tactile warning strips for entrance stairs – The Executive Director reports that this may not get addressed soon.
	    No braille signage – Washroom signs with braille are being installed.
	    Soap dispensers are not automatic or easy to use - They are not automatic but are easy to use. There have been no reports for Persons Supported that they are difficult to use.
	
	Cluster
	    Unlevel parking - There is no way to fix the parking issue at Cluster without extensive ground work being done.
	    Carpets/mats not secured - Cluster mats aren't lifting but will be secured.

Priority	High
Cost	Unknown
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	February 2026
Responsible	SACL Leadership

Environmental Barriers

Barriers and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:** Between 84% and 95% (down from 92% and 100%) of respondents felt that services were provided at times and in locations that meet the needs of the Persons Supported. 46% of Community Inclusion Persons Supported indicated there were issues with noise, 36% with crowding and 21% with temperature (some felt it was to warm and some felt it was too cold) in the space.

	When Persons Supported were asked if there were things that make it harder for them to come to SACL or meet with their worker 23% (down from 38%) of Persons Supported stated there were issues. Comments on these surveys indicated: • Not enough time with half day • My chair not working weather • Just the commute • Balloon popping noise **Checklists indicated:** The noise level in Community Inclusion services was high.
Solutions	Community Inclusion Persons Supported Noise: In the new space for Community Inclusion there is a quiet craft room and a room designated for quiet activities for those who have trouble with noise. The team will experiment with scattering lunch times, teaching Persons Supported appropriate noise levels using Volume Meters and add visuals throughout the space.
Priority	Medium
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	February 2026
Responsible	Community Inclusion Services Manager

Attitudinal Barriers

Barriers and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:** No barriers were identified. **Checklists indicated:** No barriers were identified.
Solution	No Trends Identified
Priority	N/A
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	N/A
Responsible	N/A

Financial Barriers

Barriers and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:**

	While, overall, data indicated that 70% to 100% of respondents were satisfied with the amount of funding available, there were comments from Employees, Persons Supported and Families & Caregivers stating they would like more funding or more service. **Accessibility Checklist indicated:** • Mileage funding could be better • Services are provided but would be nice to get more from CLBC • SACL fundraises for many things that CLBC does not fund
Solution	1. <u>Fundraising</u> - SACL will continue to explore long term sustainable fundraising opportunities. Two event planners have been contracted to plan a large SACL fundraising event for 2025. They hope it will become an annual event 2. <u>Advocate for Increased funding</u> for mileage/more activities - SACL will continue to request increased funding from CLBC
Priority	Moderate
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	February 2026
Responsible	SACL Leadership

Employment Barriers

Barrier and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:** <u>Employers</u> While 75% of employers agreed; one employer disagreed with the statement that they are satisfied with the level of support their employee was receiving. <u>The employer commented</u> that the Person Supported was a few days without support and just dropped off. The Person Supported was able to do her job but was difficult for the employer to support her. <u>Employees</u> When asked what they liked least about working at SACL the top three items were: <u>Nothing</u> – nothing negative to say <u>Pay rate/salary</u> <u>Hours/scheduling practices</u> – one employee would like to work one day less a week but would have to give up their line. **Accessibility Checklist indicated:** No barriers were indicated.
Solutions	<u>Employers</u> <u>Level of support of Persons Supported</u> - SACL has checks and balances in place to mitigate any issues. When there is a successful placement for many years, there are

fewer checks. Once SACL becomes aware of issues it addresses them. In this case when SACL learned of the issues it provided appropriate supports.

Employees like least about working at SACL

Pay rate/salary – While SACL is required to follow the collective agreement, it has improved the situation somewhat. In 2022, improvements were made to help with recruitment, then they were changed slightly in 2023 when the crisis eased. If a new hire has at least 2 or more years related experience SACL will put them at step 2 once probation is completed. If a new hire has greater than 5 years related experience plus at least 1-year management experience in this or a related field then they will be put at step 4 once probation is completed. This is still the practice. All staff received substantial raises with the new collective agreement as well as more to come in the next 3 years.
Hours/scheduling practices - Flex time, job sharing, part-time positions and compressed work schedules are available to some positions. It would seem this may be an issue of misunderstanding.

Priority	Medium
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	February 2026
Responsible	SACL Leadership

Communication Barriers

Barriers and Location	For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:
	Families and Caregivers Surveys
	When asked to check the SACL services they felt people were helped to move towards surveys indicated lowest response rates for:
	• Increased use of natural supports
	• Self-Advocacy
	• Access to non-disability related resources
	One respondent commented that knowing who the keyworker is would be beneficial as there have been several changes and they are unsure of who to contact.
	Home Share Provider Surveys indicated an overall drop in satisfaction with the amount of information provided regarding:
	o Standards, laws and regulations (down 17%)
	o Communication methods (down 33%)
	o Authorization to make decisions regarding supports, healthcare, finances & legal issues (down 17%)
	o Performance monitoring process (down 33%)

	o The process for resolution should they or the Person Supported be unsatisfied with something (down 17%) Employee Surveys indicated general improvement or stability regarding communication. However, there were comments indicating that continued work on team building, management transparency and approaching problems or concerns with curiosity are still employee concerns. **Accessibility Checklist indicated:** Not all documents are in plain language, but SCL is working towards it
Solutions	SACL will review and assess current practices, develop a plan to take steps to remove identified barriers to communication such as: Families & Caregivers • Service Managers will check with Keyworkers to ensure they are doing monthly check ins. This will be added to month end checklist for staff and managers. Home Share Providers • It is suspected that the lower satisfaction rates is more about CLBC than SACL. The Home Share Services Manager reports that this information is reviewed with Home Share Providers. Employee • SACL will be providing training for emotional intelligence and assertive communication. • SACL continues to work with the Union to address communication issues and staff are often reminded to go to Managers/Union Reps when they have concerns. Wellness Wednesdays are sent weekly and are a good way to share information with all personnel. Plain Language Documents • Continue to develop documents that are easy to read and understand • Revise existing documents so they are in plain language
Priority	Medium
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	February 2026
Responsible	SACL Leadership

Technology Barriers

Barriers and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:** When asked if SACL provides access to technology to assist where required (computers, assistive technology) 79% of all respondents agreed and 19% responded neutrally. 2% disagreed.

	Persons Supported surveyed were asked if SACL provided access to technology where required (computers, assistive technology) and they responded with 76% agreement (up from 65%). Employees surveyed were asked: SACL does it's best to research, implement, and improve upon appropriate technological software and management systems within their allotted budget? 100% (up from 94%) of employees agreed or responded neutrally. Comments provided indicated that there were concerns with new laptops not being ergonomic or efficient and a preference for past software i.e. PayWorks. SACL provides appropriate access to the technology you need to fulfill your job requirements. 98% of employees (up from 94%) of employees agreed or responded neutrally with this statement. Employees also indicated that: • More computers at Community Inclusion would be nice • Staff are required to use their personal cell phones, which compromises their privacy outside of work **Accessibility Checklists indicated:** That SACL does not ask for input on how users experience the website. SACL does not have voice to text options for navigating the website or relaying information.
Solutions	SACL will address: Feedback from users of the SACL website – SACL will review, assess and develop a way to obtain feedback from users of the website. i.e. a survey on the website, add a question to the annual satisfaction survey. Text to speech for website users - SACL will revisit this issue and see if it can be done within the budget. New laptops not being ergonomic – there are laptops and desktop computers available for employees, should they need something different. If something is not meeting an employee's needs ergonomically, they are encouraged to approach their Service Manager or Team Leader for support. New laptops not being efficient – Not knowing the context of "efficient" whether this means money spent, time spent, etc. makes it difficult to address this concern. Assistive Technology – Employment Services employees have in the past used *WorkBC Assistive Technology Services* for Persons Supported and will make use of it if needed.
Priority	Medium
Cost	TBA – Text to speech – Waiting for an estimate
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	February 2026
Responsible	SACL Leadership

Transportation Barriers

Barrier and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:** In 2024, Transportation barriers were not identified as significant. This is consistent with 2023. However, comments indicated: • <u>One employee</u> commented that no one should have to drive on icy roads. **Accessibility Checklists indicated:** <u>Community Inclusion</u> - For the most part Persons Supported are able to reach service locations but transportation can be difficult for some Persons Supported.
Solutions	<u>Driving on icy roads</u> – SACL employees are not expected to drive in dangerous weather. If buses are running so is SACL but no one is expected to travel long distances in unsafe conditions. SACL has cancelled services when needed. Staff may be expected to deliver essential services in poor weather. In this case, they are able to choose to drive their own vehicles, rather than SACL ones, if they feel more comfortable. SACL employees annually review "Right to Refuse Unsafe Work and Work Refusals Training". Should they feel they are being asked to do something unsafe they may follow the process/protocol as outlined in the training.
Priority	Medium
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	February 2026
Responsible	All Personnel

Community Inclusion Barriers

Barrier and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:** No barriers were identified. **Accessibility Checklists indicated:** No barriers were identified.
Solution	No trends
Priority	Low
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	N/A
Responsible	N/A

Other Barriers

Barrier and Location	**For services in 2024, Satisfaction Surveys indicated:**

	In 2024, no other barriers were identified. This is consistent with 0% reported barriers in 2023. **Accessibility Checklists indicated:** No barriers were identified.
Solution	No trends
Priority	Low
Cost	N/A
Funding Source	CLBC
Due Date	N/A
Responsible	N/A

SACL Accessibility Plan 2025
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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
- Employees
- 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