



## Intent

The intent of this policy is to ensure Forward House provides equitable, barrier-free employment practices in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and applicable human rights legislation, including the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Forward House is committed to fair, inclusive, and accessible employment practices across all stages of the employment lifecycle. This includes recruitment, hiring, training, performance management, career development, and return-to-work processes.

This policy establishes processes to identify, remove, and prevent barriers to accessibility, and to ensure employees with disabilities are supported through individualized accommodation and inclusive workplace practices. This policy will be made available in accessible formats upon request.

## Definitions

### Disability

Includes visible and non-visible, physical, developmental, intellectual, learning, mental health, and sensory disabilities, whether temporary or permanent.

### Accommodation

Reasonable adjustments to workplace practices, policies, job duties, or environments to enable equal participation, up to the point of undue hardship.

### Undue Hardship

A situation where accommodation would cause significant difficulty or expense, as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code, considering factors such as cost, outside sources of funding, and health and safety risks.

### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Formats or supports that make information accessible, including but not limited to large print, plain language, assistive technology, or communication assistance.

### Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)

A documented, individualized plan outlining workplace accommodations for an employee with a disability.

## Guidelines

Forward House will comply with all applicable accessibility and human rights legislation and will implement employment practices that promote dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

### Recruitment, Assessment and Hiring

Forward House will notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.

This includes:

- Notifying applicants in job postings that accommodations are available upon request
- Providing accommodations during the recruitment and assessment process upon request
- Consulting with applicants to determine appropriate accommodations
- Notifying successful candidates of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities

### Informing Employees of Supports

Forward House will inform all employees of policies used to support employees with disabilities, including this policy.

- This information will be provided to new employees as soon as practicable
- Updated information will be provided whenever there are changes to policies

### Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

Upon request, Forward House will provide accessible formats and communication supports for:

- Information required to perform job duties
- Information generally available to employees in the workplace

Forward House will:

- Consult with the employee to determine suitable formats or supports
- Provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats in a timely manner

### Workplace Emergency Response Information

Forward House will provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, where the disability makes such information necessary.

- With the employee's consent, this information may be shared with designated support persons
- Emergency response information will be reviewed:
  - When the employee moves to a different location
  - When overall accommodation needs are reviewed
  - When the organization reviews general emergency response policies

## Individual Accommodation Plans (IAPs)

Forward House will develop and maintain a written process for the creation of individualized accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

The process will include:

- Employees may request accommodation through their manager or Human Resources
- Employee participation in the development of the plan
- Assessment of individual needs
- Identification of appropriate accommodations
- Consideration of outside medical or expert evaluation, where appropriate
- Protection of personal information and confidentiality
- Documentation of the accommodation plan
- Timely development and implementation of the plan
- Written reasons provided if an accommodation request is denied
- Regular review and updates of the plan
- An appeal or review process for employees who disagree with the plan

## Return-to-Work Process

Forward House will maintain a documented return-to-work process for employees returning from disability-related absences.

This process will:

- Be individualized and supportive and include consultation with the employee
- Use the employee's Individual Accommodation Plan, where applicable
- Outline steps to facilitate a safe and sustainable return to work

## Performance Management

Forward House will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as any Individual Accommodation Plans, when:

- Conducting performance reviews
- Providing feedback
- Implementing performance improvement processes

## Career Development and Advancement

Forward House will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, and any Individual Accommodation Plans, when:

- Providing training opportunities
- Supporting career development and advancement

## Redeployment

Where redeployment occurs, Forward House will consider:

- The accessibility needs of employees with disabilities

- Any existing Individual Accommodation Plans

## Training

Forward House will ensure all employees, managers, directors, and those involved in recruitment and employment decisions receive training on:

- Accessibility standards under AODA
- The Ontario Human Rights Code as it relates to disability

Training will be provided as soon as practicable and updated as required.

Forward House will maintain records of Accessibility training, including the dates training was provided and the individuals who received the training.

## Feedback Process

Forward House will maintain a process for receiving and responding to feedback regarding accessibility in employment practices.

Employees may provide feedback through their manager or Human Resources. Feedback will be reviewed and, where appropriate, used to improve accessibility policies and practices.

Accessible formats and communication supports for the feedback process will be provided upon request.

## Confidentiality

All information related to employee accommodations will be handled confidentially and in accordance with applicable privacy legislation.

## Review and Continuous Improvement

Forward House will review this policy on a regular basis and update it as required to ensure ongoing compliance with legislation and to improve accessibility in employment practices and remove barriers.