



# Central Veterinary Services

## Accessibility Policy

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### 1. Purpose

This Policy is intended to comply with the principles and guidelines set out in *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA). The content is designed to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard Regulation (under the AMA), as well as Central Veterinary Services' own accessibility and inclusion goals.

The Responsibilities described in Section 5 apply to all Central Veterinary Services operations that Central Veterinary Services owns, manages, or controls. If any barriers to Central Veterinary Services' services, information, goods, or facilities are identified but cannot be removed or prevented, we will make every effort to offer alternate ways to provide access.

### 2. Scope

This Policy applies to all operations that are owned or managed by Central Veterinary Services. This applies to all team members, including those who are permanent, temporary, casual, part-time, or on fixed-term contracts. This Policy also applies to volunteers, contractors, and others who are required to comply with applicable legislation and related Central Veterinary Services policies and who are authorized to represent Central Veterinary Services to clients or members of the public.

### 3. Statement of Commitment to Accessibility

Central Veterinary Services is committed to providing a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone. We are committed to providing accessible and inclusive services, information, goods, employment opportunities, and facilities, wherever possible. Central Veterinary Services is committed to meeting the requirements of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA) and all applicable accessibility and human rights legislation. We strive to incorporate the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equality of opportunity in all of our operations.

### 4. Definitions

The following terms are used in this Policy and have the following meanings:

**Accessibility:** refers to the ability to access and benefit from a system, service, product, or environment. Accessibility means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in all aspects of everyday life.

**Accessible or Alternate Formats:** include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

**Assistive Devices:** include any device used to assist persons with disabilities, for example:

- Mobility assistive devices, such as a cane, walker, wheelchair, electronic scooter, or similar device used to assist with mobility;
- Communication devices, such as a hearing device, laptop computer, communication board, or similar device used to assist with communication; or
- Medical devices, such as a personal oxygen tank or similar device used to assist with medical requirements of a disability.

**Barrier:** can be anything that hinders the full and equal participation in society of persons with a disability or functional limitation. Barriers can be physical, technological, or attitudinal. They can also be related to information or communications, or be the result of a system, policy, or practice.

**Disability:** as defined in the AMA, includes any physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, or sensory impairment—or functional limitation—that, in interaction with a barrier, hinders a person’s full and equal participation in society. Disabilities may be permanent, temporary or episodic in nature, and may or may not be evident to others.

**Service Animal:** The Human Rights Code (Manitoba) and the AMA define a service animal as an animal that has been trained to provide assistance to a person with a disability, for reasons relating to that person’s disability.

An animal may be identified as a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- a) The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as an identifying vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b) The person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to a disability.

Animals that provide comfort and companionship, but are not trained to assist with a person’s disability, are not service animals.

**Support Animal:** While not formally addressed in the AMA or accessibility legislation, support animals are generally considered to be animals supporting neurodiverse clients or offering emotional support, and animals working as therapy dogs that interact in therapeutic settings or that have frequent contact with the general public.

**Support Person:** In relation to a person with a disability, a support person is any person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to services, goods, or facilities.

## 5. Responsibilities

### Training

Central Veterinary Services will provide required accessibility training to all team members and volunteers. This training will be provided during the initial onboarding period, when changes are made to Central Veterinary Services’ accessibility policies or procedures, and when changes are made to applicable accessibility legislation.

Accessibility training will cover, at minimum:

- Principles, goals, and customer service standards of *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act* (AMA);
- An overview of the Human Rights Code (Manitoba) content that relates to persons with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- The process for access and use of any Central Veterinary Services assistive devices or equipment available on-site;
- What to do if a person is having difficulty accessing Central Veterinary Services' services, information, goods, or facilities, and wants to communicate a complaint, provide feedback to, or request accommodations from Central Veterinary Services; and
- Details of Central Veterinary Services' Accessibility Policy and procedures applicable to Central Veterinary Services and individual roles.

Central Veterinary Services will make every effort to incorporate training examples relevant to its services, information, goods, and facilities. Training will include a review of how to identify, remove, and prevent accessibility barriers and how to increase inclusion in Central Veterinary Services operations.

Central Veterinary Services will also ensure that those who are involved in the development and approval of accessibility-related policies, practices and procedures at Central Veterinary Services are trained on applicable accessibility legislation and Human Rights Code content that relates to persons with disabilities.

Human Resources will maintain training records for each Central Veterinary Services team member.

## **Information and Communication**

Central Veterinary Services will provide information about Central Veterinary Services and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports, upon request.

We will communicate with persons with disabilities in formats that take into account their disability and accessibility needs and, whenever possible, in the manner they request. Upon request, Central Veterinary Services will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible or alternate formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

In the event that Central Veterinary Services determines information or communication cannot be provided in the format requested, Central Veterinary Services will provide the individual making the request with an explanation. Central Veterinary Services will also provide a summary version of the information or communication requested.

## **Assistive Devices**

Central Veterinary Services is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from Central Veterinary Services' services. Team members and volunteers will be trained on how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device. Team members will also be trained on how to use any Central Veterinary Services assistive devices or equipment available on-site.

If an individual experiences a barrier when attempting to use their assistive device to access Central Veterinary Services' services, information, goods, or facilities, Central Veterinary Services team members will work with the individual to make every effort to provide alternate ways to accommodate their request.

## **Service Animals**

Central Veterinary Services is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises (for example, in an area where food is being prepared in a commercial kitchen), then Central Veterinary Services will make every effort to enable the person with a disability to access services in an alternate manner.

Central Veterinary Services team members and volunteers will be trained on how to interact with persons with disabilities who require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal.

Service animals can often be identified through visual indicators. For example, a guide dog might be wearing a harness or a vest with a certification badge or it may be helping a person perform tasks. If a service animal cannot be identified easily, Central Veterinary Services team members or volunteers may request that the person with the animal provide documentation from a regulated health professional to confirm that the animal is required for reasons relating to their disability.

## **Healthcare Services for Service and Other Support Animals**

Central Veterinary Services provides additional training and support to staff who are working with clients with service animals or who are providing direct healthcare to service animals. Service and other support animals includes patients who may serve as mobility service animals, guide and hearing dogs, animals supporting neurodiverse clients or offering emotional support, and animals working as therapy dogs that interact in therapeutic settings or that have frequent contact with the general public.

A Central Veterinary Services Accessibility Checklist providing reminders for ensuring accessible healthcare services for our clients and patients is available to all staff and volunteers. Individual accommodations or requests by clients with service and other support animals are noted in their files and reviewed prior to appointments.

## **Support Persons**

Central Veterinary Services is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Central Veterinary Services team members and volunteers will be trained on how to interact with persons with disabilities who require the assistance of a support person.

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to access Central Veterinary Services premises that are open to the public and other third parties. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on the premises. Unless otherwise indicated, there is no cost for support persons who are accompanying a person with a disability to participate in accessing services or attending events.

If a client wants to give permission to a support person to communicate with clinic team members or make medical decisions on their behalf, the client needs to contact Central Veterinary Services to communicate that authorization.

## **Notice of Temporary Disruption of Accessible Services**

Central Veterinary Services will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in accessible services or facilities usually used by persons with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Central Veterinary Services will communicate details of the accessible service disruption to team members and the public in ways that are appropriate to the disruption. Notice of disruption of accessible services or facilities at Central Veterinary Services will be posted at

the location of the disruption, at the front entrance of the facility, and where appropriate for the particular disruption. This may include Central Veterinary Services' social media sites, service counters, or email announcements.

For lengthy and planned disruptions, Central Veterinary Services will post a notice on the Accessibility page of its website.

### **Accessibility Feedback**

Feedback regarding accessibility to services, goods, facilities, and the way Central Veterinary Services team members and volunteers interact with others is welcome and appreciated. Customer feedback assists us in identifying and removing barriers to accessibility. Various contact methods are available to provide feedback and are listed on the Accessibility page of the Central Veterinary Services website.

Central Veterinary Services will provide an initial response to accessibility feedback as soon as possible, within five business days. Central Veterinary Services will communicate with the individual providing feedback and will work with them to address and resolve complaints wherever possible. If necessary or if Central Veterinary Services policies or procedures are affected, issues will be forwarded to the management team for review.

### **Establishment of Accessibility Policies and Plans**

Central Veterinary Services will create and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to identify, prevent and remove barriers and to meet its requirements under the AMA and other applicable accessibility legislation. Central Veterinary Services will post its accessibility policy and multi-year accessibility plan on the Accessibility page of its website and will provide these documents in an alternate format upon request.

Central Veterinary Services will review and update its accessibility plan every two years, in consultation with team members, clients, and community members.

### **Hiring (for applicants)**

Central Veterinary Services is committed to being inclusive in our hiring policies. We will notify the public that we will accommodate the needs of people with disabilities throughout our selection and hiring process. During the selection process, we will include the following paragraph in print and online job postings:

*Central Veterinary Services is committed to building a diverse team through inclusive recruitment and selection. We welcome and encourage applications from individuals from a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and communities that we seek to serve. If you have an accommodation request during the selection process, please inform us as soon as possible at [humanresources@centralvet.ca](mailto:humanresources@centralvet.ca) and we will make every effort to fulfill your request.*

When scheduling an interview, we will ask applicants if they have any accommodation requests. If an interview candidate requests an accommodation, we will discuss their request with them and make every effort to fulfill their accommodation requests.

### **Workplace and Emergency Information (for team members)**

Upon request by a team member, Central Veterinary Services will provide workplace information in an accessible or alternate format or offer communication supports when needed. Workplace information includes:

- Any information team members need to perform their jobs (for example, job descriptions and manuals); and
- General information that is available to all team members at work (for example, the Central Veterinary Services Accessible Employment Policy, newsletters, and bulletins about Central Veterinary Services policies, and health and safety information).

We will work with team members with disabilities to develop individual accommodation plans where requested. If requested, these plans will also include individual emergency response plans and information to assist during an emergency or evacuation. Central Veterinary Services provides emergency response information and will work with team members who request assistance to ensure team members with disabilities are supported during emergency and evacuation procedures.

Central Veterinary Services will take into account any accessibility needs identified by team members during performance management, career development, and redeployment processes.

### **Public Spaces and Barrier-Free Access**

When building or making major changes to public spaces of its facilities, Central Veterinary Services will ensure that accessible designs are incorporated wherever possible.



Central Veterinary Services will do its best to maintain barrier-free access in its facilities by:

- Keeping entrance ways clear of snow, ice, debris, and hazards;
- Keeping hallways, meeting rooms, and waiting areas clear of clutter;
- Ensuring that placement of standing signage is not a tripping or access hazard; and
- Providing safe access for mobility devices in our public areas.

### **Communication of Accessibility Policies**

Notice of availability of this and other Central Veterinary Services accessibility policies, procedures, and plans will be displayed in a prominent way on Central Veterinary Services premises and on the Accessibility page of its website.

If a person requests any Central Veterinary Services public policy, procedure, or plan, Central Veterinary Services will provide it in a manner that takes into account the requested format, within a reasonable time, and at no cost to the person making the request.

Central Veterinary Services will inform all team members about policies to support people with disabilities. Its Accessibility Policy and Accessible Employment Policy will be reviewed with new team members when they are hired. If any Central Veterinary Services accessibility policies or procedures are modified, all current team members and volunteers will be informed and the documents will be updated at all posted locations.

### **Changes to Existing Central Veterinary Services Policies**

Central Veterinary Services will modify or remove any existing Central Veterinary Services policies that do not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

## **6. Contact Central Veterinary Services**

For more information on accessibility at Central Veterinary Services or to access our Accessibility Policy, Multi-year Accessibility Plan, or Accessibility Feedback Form online, visit the Accessibility page of our website at <https://centralvet.ca/About/Accessibility>.

If you have any questions or feedback, accommodation requests, or would like to request a copy of our accessibility policies in an alternate format, contact us by phone at 204-275-2038 or by email at [accessibility@centralvet.ca](mailto:accessibility@centralvet.ca).