

# Accessibility Strategy and Plan

## Introduction

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Your Support Services Network is committed to full inclusion and fostering belonging. This is reflected in our Mission Statement (*‘Communicate. Connect. Collaborate’*) and our Vision Statement (*‘A Meaningful Life for All: Relationships, Community, Well-Being’*). YSSN is committed to services and supports which are accessible, customer service that is respectful and helpful, human resources policies which accommodate employees’ needs, technology which supports work from a variety of locations, education which enhances our cultural capacity, and sites which are easy to reach and located within safe neighborhoods.

## Your Support Services Network Locations

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Your Support Service Network operates from the following locations:

- 240 Edward St, Unit 3, Aurora (head office)
- Clark Ave, Thornhill (appointment only - crisis beds, safe beds)
- Bryne Dr, Barrie (DSO satellite site – appointment only)
- Jim Flaherty St, Whitby (shared space DSO satellite site-appointment only)
- 106 Victoria Street West, Alliston (shared space with ASCO- appointment only)

YSSN services are offered virtually, through office appointments and community visits.

## YSSN’s Commitment to Accessibility

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YSSN’s commitment to accessibility for individuals served, employees and the community includes:

- **Architecture**
  - ~ The main office in Aurora is a single level building with considerations for accessibility taken into the design (e.g., sidewalk ramp, accessible washroom with no door barriers, wider hallways)
  - ~ Workstations designed to accommodate appropriate height for wheelchair accessibility
  - ~ Other locations, including satellite sites, are all physically accessible

- **Attitudes**
  - ~ Non-judgmental, unprejudiced, accepting of others regardless of race, language, culture, ability or socio-economic status
  - ~ Individualized, strength-based framework for service delivery
  - ~ All staff must review AODA materials in Policies & Procedures, upon hire and on an annual basis ongoing
  - ~ All employees complete a cultural assessment (CQ) to create further individual awareness in how to work more effectively with ethno-cultural communities
- **Communication**
  - ~ All communication materials screened for plain language
  - ~ Many information resources available in both French and English
  - ~ Programs provide an active offer of French language services in French-speaking designated areas
  - ~ Many key documents (e.g., SIS tool, Consent, Complaint Resolution Process) translated into French
  - ~ YSSN, DSO and Streamlined Access website pages re-designed to ensure compliance with AODA Accessibility Standards
  - ~ Extensive use of language capacity with YSSN staff group and colleague agencies as needed
  - ~ Website designed to offer most content in both English and French and also has built in addition of Google Translate to provide basic translation of website content into more than 100 languages
  - ~ Access/use of interpretation services for all programs
  - ~ TTY line for Crisis Call Centre and DSO
  - ~ Participation in multicultural service networks for increased outreach to multicultural communities
  - ~ From a service delivery perspective, information provided to individuals-served is presented in a manner that is understandable (e.g., use of picture symbol systems, augmentative communication devices, simplified language, etc.)
- **Community Integration**
  - ~ The goal of service delivery is to assist individuals in developing sustainable community-based supports and services
- **Customer Service**
  - ~ Appointments available in evenings and on weekends when requested
  - ~ Standardized response time for phone calls and email messages
  - ~ Coverage arrangements for vacations, extended absences

- ~ Policies created to ensure accommodations such as welcoming support animals at agency sites, active welcome of support individuals at client meetings and case conferences
- ~ Ongoing consumer satisfaction surveys to collect feedback/suggestions
- **Employment**
  - ~ Business Interruption Plan minimizes service interruptions in case of weather, pandemic, etc.
  - ~ HR policies include Duty to Accommodate
  - ~ Agency committed to diversity in hiring (incorporates into recruitment activities) and making service more accessible to multicultural communities
  - ~ Alternative work arrangements allow staff to organize their work time in balance with their family needs
- **Finances**
  - ~ Community committees help make decisions for discretionary funding approvals, supporting diversity of thought and considerations in deliberations.
- **Geography**
  - ~ Aurora site has designated accessible parking spots
  - ~ Aurora site within a half-block of public transit along Yonge Street
- **Technology**
  - ~ Use of adaptive technology as needed (magnifiers, software for LD on desktop computers)
  - ~ Services offered virtually as an ongoing mode of delivery.

Barriers to accessibility are identified by local teams to their supervisors, by the Leadership group, by the Health and Safety Committee through regular inspections, by the Facilities Coordinator, and by the Senior Management group.

## Accessibility Goals

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- To identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities in all YSSN locations
- To review efforts to remove barriers over the last year
- To identify barriers which will be addressed in the coming year
- To continually improve Customer Service
- To identify how YSSN will make its accessibility plan available to the public

## Barriers addressed in 2022/23

Barrier	Description/Strategy	Outcome
<b>Physical Accessibility of Crisis Beds</b>	Renovate Charles St. to enable accessible bedrooms and a washroom	Crisis Bed program moved from Charles St. and is now hosted in three separate locations across the region, increasing physical accessibility within the program from a design perspective and across a broader geography.
<b>Access to service during periods of high community transmission rates of COVID</b>	Continue to modernize engagement modalities, develop virtual service options and develop tools for performance measurement and determination of satisfaction.	Based on survey data, virtual service delivery will remain a core modality for service delivery given the high degree of satisfaction of people served.
	Ensure that face to face meetings occur when required to support optimal service delivery using appropriate infection prevention and control measures.	Decision matrix and guidelines were developed that guided face to face service delivery during periods of high transmission.  Scripting developed to support staff in reviewing service delivery options.
<b>Access to YSSN services for residents in southern York Region</b>	Ensure access to space when needed for meetings, group events or activities and that these are held in fully accessible locations across the southern part of York Region.	Virtual service delivery continues to be a choice made by people supported and often addresses access. Community and partner spaces have been utilized as needed.
<b>Lack of clarity in communications with agency re-branding</b>	Develop a clear communication strategy regarding the rebranding, using various outlets to broadcast the change, employing plain language and visuals to reach a broad audience	Agency re-branding launch delayed to 2023-2024 fiscal year. Focus groups provided feedback on proposed branding which influenced final decision.

## Barriers to be addressed in 2023/24

Barrier	Description/Strategy	Timeline	Lead
<b>TTY machine challenges with move to 3CX phone system and program relocation</b>	Changes in phone technology and program locations have created monitoring and support issues with TTY. Problem solve an approach to having the TTY system operable and monitored. Process will be communicated internally and externally.	By July 1, 2023	YSSN Operations – with input from program Managers
<b>Inconsistent access to interpretation services across all agency programs</b>	Develop an agency wide approach to engage interpretation services and a budget to support this need.	By September 30 2023	Senior Leadership Team
<b>Reliance on virtual service delivery can impact upon the service experience.</b>	<b>With increased use of technology to deliver services, explore approaches that reduce barriers to meaningful engagement for people with vision and hearing impairments and embed these into agency practices.</b>	By December 31, 2023	Program Directors
<b>Lack of clarity in communications with agency re-branding</b>	Develop a clear communication strategy regarding the rebranding, using various outlets to broadcast the change, employing plain language and visuals to reach a broad audience	By March 31, 2024	Executive Director, Manager of Communications

### Ongoing Communication of the Plan

- The plan will be posted as a PDF document on the agency website
- Large-print versions will be made available on request
- The plan will be posted on in a central location accessible to all staff
- Full-print versions of the plan will be made available on request