

ACCESSIBILITY PLAN

Purpose

It is the goal of Mississippi Valley Textile Museum to provide high quality visitor experiences for persons of all ages and capabilities. This plan, therefore, outlines measures to ensure the best possible access to the Museum's exhibits and programs, in a manner that promotes dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Training

Sensitivity on the part of staff and volunteers to the various needs of all visitors is critical to providing a positive experience. To this end, part of the orientation training for all staff (including volunteers) who interact with the public in any way includes Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act customer service training.

The format of this training is outlined in Mississippi Mills' Accessibility Standards for customer service policy to include:

- a review of the purpose of the Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- a review of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service as prescribed under the Act
- instruction on Mississippi Mills' standards for Customer Service Policy and its procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities
- a review of the Mississippi Valley Textile Museum Accessibility Plan
- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing services
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal
- information about, and instruction for the use of, any equipment or devices available on the Museum's premises that may help with the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

Assistive Devices

Mississippi Valley Textile Museum will ensure that staff and volunteers are familiar with the various types of assistive devices that visitors may use and that use of any such devices is welcomed as visitors access our services. Safety issues will be addressed, such as oxygen tanks and open flame.

Communication

Mississippi Valley Textile Museum staff and volunteers will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability.

Service Animals

Persons with disabilities are welcome to bring their service animals anywhere in the Museum that is open to the public.

Support Persons

Staff and volunteers will be properly trained to identify support persons who may be a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend that may accompany a visitor to assist them. The support person will be admitted at no charge.

Feedback Process

Visitors are welcome to provide feedback on the way Mississippi Valley Textile Museum provides services to people with disabilities. This may be done verbally at our reception desk. All comments will be directed to the Executive-Director/Curator.

SPECIFIC PROVISIONS

The following sections outline current provisions for making Mississippi Valley Textile Museum's facilities and programs accessible and plans for future improvements.

Access for persons with physical disabilities

Persons with physical disabilities may include those who require the use of a wheelchair or who are ambulatory but require some assistance through use of walkers, canes, or frequent rest stops.

Current provisions:

1. A visitor entrance at the parking lot main entrance of the building has ramp access.
2. The second level of the museum that cannot practically be accessed by ramps can be accessed through the warehouse doors at street level or by elevator from the first floor
3. One designated handicapped parking space is provided.
4. Two accessible washrooms are provided.
5. Adequate space is allowed in exhibit areas for movement of wheelchairs and walkers.
6. Exterior lighting at all main entrances, accessibility ramp, and emergency exits.
7. An elevator to the second floor has been installed and is accessible at the north side of the Norah Rosamond Hughes Gallery.

Access for persons who are blind or who have visual impairments

Current provisions:

1. Light levels are adequate on stairs and ramps to allow those with visual impairments to negotiate these areas more easily.
2. Magnifying glasses are kept on-site for use by visitors who are vision impaired.
3. When leading a tour, opportunities will be offered for the person who is visually impaired to handle objects where safety and the condition of the artifacts allow. A staff member must be present to assist the visitor.

Plans for future improvements:

Strips of paint in high contrast colours will be added to edges of all remaining stairs which have not had this done. Further consultation required as to viability.

Access for visitors who are deaf or hard of hearing

Current Provisions:

Assistance is provided for persons who are deaf or hard of hearing at the visitor reception/admission. Staff are trained to speak clearly and directly, facing visitors to assist those who are lip-reading. Information is provided in print form.

Access for persons with intellectual disabilities or learning disabilities

Current provisions:

1. A variety of levels of understanding of the exhibit message is provided by:
 - exhibits that are visually rich with objects and very visual,
 - interpretive labels that are not too heavy with text or audio.
2. For visits by special needs groups, museum staff consults with the teacher or staff in charge of the group to plan and implement necessary modifications.
3. Hands-on activities in programs assist those who have intellectual disabilities in understanding.

Access for persons with language barriers

Current provisions:

1. For organized groups, such as ESL or adult learning classes, leaders of such groups are not charged admission because they are acting as resources for the participants.
2. For casual visitors, a patient attitude is very helpful in communicating with those who have difficulty speaking or understanding English.

Access for young visitors

Plans for future improvements:

1. For organized group programs, hands-on activities are being developed in all programs and long-term exhibits to increase learning on the part of young children. Further consultation required as to viability.
2. Children's activity centres will allow children to engage in hands-on activities related to the exhibits. Further consultation required as to viability.

Access for Older Visitors

Current provisions:

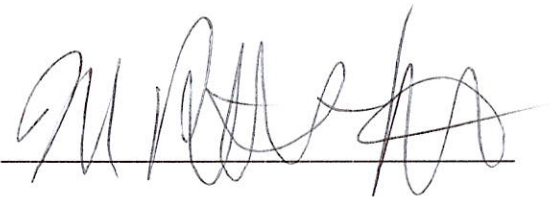
1. Ramp access, rest areas and magnifying glasses assist elderly visitors.
2. Grab bars have been installed in the two accessible washrooms to assist those with difficulty standing.

Other Disabilities


Other less common or less visible disabilities may also affect our visitors- for example, speech difficulties, mental illness, etc. As with the specific disabilities outlined above, staff and volunteer sensitivity to the needs of all visitors and a willingness to make accommodation on a case-by-case basis ensure the best possible experience for all our visitors.

Access for staff

Many of the above provisions also make the museum more accessible to staff and volunteers with disabilities. Special provisions and modifications required for the staff or volunteers are made on an as-needed basis.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Michael Rikley-Lancaster', written over a horizontal line.

Michael Rikley-Lancaster
Executive Director/Curator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of stylized, overlapping loops, written over a horizontal line.

Stakeholder