



## **ACCESSIBILITY PROGRESS REPORT 2026**

### **General**

Southern Oaks Ltd. is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders, including clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers and visitors who enter the premises, access information provided by the company, or use our services.

This progress report contains details of our policies, practices, and services in relation to the identification and removal of barriers. This plan is also used to establish prevention measures against new barriers emerging to ensure a barrier-free environment at our company.

This progress report is offered in any of the following formats upon request:

- print;
- large print;
- braille;
- audio; and
- electronic.

Southern Oaks Ltd. will provide this report in print or larger print within 15 days of a request and braille or audio format within 45 days of a request.

Southern Oaks Ltd. welcomes any feedback from the general public. Any feedback or questions regarding this progress report or requests in an alternative format can be addressed to the following designated company representative:

Contact: Jennifer Poirier - HR  
Email: [jen@southernoaksltd.com](mailto:jen@southernoaksltd.com)  
Phone: 519-738-6333 (ext. 233)  
Mail: 3191 County Rd. 11, Harrow, ON N0R1G0  
Website: southernoaksltd.com

Feedback can be provided anonymously if desired. Feedback can be received in the following formats:

- telephone;
- e-mail; and
- mail.

## Employment

Southern Oaks Ltd. understands that improving workplace accessibility and ensuring an accessible recruitment and selection process for applicants with disabilities can contribute to a more diverse and welcoming workplace culture.

We have implemented the following policies, programs, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to employment at our company:

- Where necessary, accommodations are being made during the recruitment and selection stages, and throughout the employment lifecycle.
- All training and development programs provided will consider an employee's barriers and abilities, and will be provided in alternative formats, such as print, large print, braille, audio and electronic, at request.

We remain committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in employment. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practice, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in employment in our company.

In our first Accessibility Plan we set one goal related to employment. The following section will show a goal related to employment, and the progress we have made towards it.

1. **Goal:** To attract more applicants with disabilities.

**Progress:** In June 2024, we added to our website that we are “committed to building a culture of inclusivity and accessibility” in the Company Info tab under Employment. We continue to train our management team on Accessibility in the Workplace when hiring and how to ensure a barrier-free hiring and accommodation process.

## Built Environment

Southern Oaks Ltd. will work to ensure that elements of the built environment, including building interiors and exteriors, are designed to facilitate barrier-free access to our services. We have implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to the built environment:

- Zero grade entrance located in the front entrance of the building
- Automatic door openers located at the front entrance of the building

We remain committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in the built environment. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in the built environment:

The following section will show one goal related to our built environment and the progress we have made towards it.

1. **Goal:** Increase safety signage in the building and truck yard.

**Progress:** We continue to update safety signage as required.

In October 2024, we installed more lighting in the back of the yard.

## **Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)**

Southern Oaks Ltd. understands that communication to and with the company is vital to an individual's access to the company's services. We have implemented the following information and communication technologies to allow individuals to communicate with us:

- Accessible formats including: print, large print, audio, and electronic;

To help ensure compliance with these services, the company has implemented the following policies, programs, practices, and services to identify, remove, and prevent new and existing barriers in relation to information and communication technology:

Upon request, we will provide or arrange for accessible formats and communication supports for employees, applicants, or persons accessing the company's services. Such accessible formats and communication supports are conversion-ready and are provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost.

We will consult with the individual to determine the specific barrier and the best way to provide support.

We remain committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in relation to information and communication technologies. After a thorough review of the policies, programs, practices and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified that continue to exist in relation to information and communication technologies:

The following section will show two goals, and the progress we have made towards them.

1. **Goal:** To train the management team to increase their accessibility knowledge and adapt services to those with disabilities.

**Progress:** We are continuing to identify training needs relating to accessibility features in current IT systems, software, and hardware. We have completed training the management team on computer software adjustments.

2. **Goal:** Decrease size of training sessions to allow associates to participate more meaningfully.

**Progress:** In October 2024, all training sessions are now at a maximum of ten associates.

## **Communication, other than ICT**

Southern Oaks Ltd. understands that communication to and with the company can take many forms and requires a variety of options to be inclusive of all individuals. We remain committed to addressing existing barriers and preventing new barriers in relation to communication other than ICT. After reviewing our policies, programs, practices, and services, and through feedback and consultations, the following barriers were identified.

The following section will show one goal, and the progress we have made towards it.

1. **Goal:** To provide information for meetings in alternative formats.

**Progress:** Since October 2024, printouts of topics for discussion are now provided at meetings, and the power point presentations utilized during the meetings are read aloud by the presenter. Further, training session evaluations are completed as a group with questions being read aloud by the presenter. In addition, the presentation is available after the meeting, if requested.

## **Procurement of Goods, Services and Facilities**

Southern Oaks Ltd. is committed to ensuring that all individuals can obtain our services. We have implemented the following methods to allow individuals to obtain our services.

- Online through email;
- Telephone;
- In person;

The following section will show one goal, and the progress we have made towards it.

1. **Goal:** Review our procurement procedures to include accessibility checks when seeking our services.

**Progress:** In July 2024, we created an accessibility checklist to go over the building environment for our visitors.

We are committed to ensuring that all of our services and facilities are accessible to all individuals. We have implemented the following methods to allow individuals to access our services and facilities:

- Zero grade entrance located at the front entrance of the building
- Automatic door openers located at the front entrance of the building

## **Design and Delivery of Programs and Services**

Southern Oaks Ltd. is committed to ensuring that all programs and services are designed in a manner accessible to all individuals. We have implemented the following methods to ensure this accessibility:

- Our website meets Level AA conformance set out in the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

The following section will show one goal, and the progress we have made towards it.

1. **Goal:** To review current programs and services and take accessibility into consideration.

**Progress:** Ongoing - we continue to monitor all programs. In July 2024, we created an accessibility checklist in our policies and also created a guide to hiring accessibility in the workplace.

## Transportation

Southern Oaks Ltd. as part of the transportation and logistics industry is committed to meeting accessibility requirements when using our vehicles to transport goods. As we do not provide the service of passenger transport we do not consider public or passenger service barriers. Instead, we focus on evaluating and reducing potential barriers for employees and candidates, such as physical obstacles like ramps, curbs, and equipment design.

We continue to evaluate vehicle and equipment accommodations to ensure they comply with occupational health and safety standards, as well as other legal and contractual obligations for safe implementation.

## Consultations

Southern Oaks Ltd. recognizes that persons with disabilities are equal participants in all areas of life. We are guided by the recognized principles of the *Accessible Canada Act*:

- All persons must be treated with dignity regardless of their disabilities;
- All persons must have the same opportunity to make for themselves the lives that they can and want to have regardless of their disabilities;
- All persons must have barrier-free access to full and equal participation in society, regardless of their disabilities;
- All persons must have meaningful options and be free to make their own choices, with support if they desire, regardless of their disabilities;
- Policies, programs, services, and structures must take into account the disabilities of persons, the different ways that persons interact with their environments, and the multiple and intersecting forms of marginalization and discrimination persons face;
- Persons with disabilities must be involved in the development and design of policies, programs, services, and structures; and
- The development and revision of accessibility standards and the making of regulations must be done with the objective of achieving the highest level of accessibility for person with disabilities.

Accordingly, we are committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities are involved in all decision-making regarding our policies, programs, practices, and service delivery. In preparation of this progress report, we consulted with persons with disabilities in the following manner:

- Companywide survey
- Focus groups and 1-1 interviews with employees with disabilities so they can share their feedback and ideas.

- Consultations with those who have issues with low vision, hearing loss, physical disability, neurodiversity, mental illnesses and others with invisible disabilities.

The range of disabilities represented in consultations included:

- 35% have a visual impairment, 15% have a hearing impairment

Individuals were asked several questions regarding the company's policies, programs, practices, and service delivery. A summary of these questions and answers for those who completed the questionnaire are as follows:

- 81% are extremely satisfied with our accessibility measures, 23% are satisfied
- 100% agree we provide training on diversity, inclusion, disability awareness and accessibility, and we have policies and procedures regarding discrimination and harassment
- 100% feel there are no harmful attitudes regarding disabilities in our workplace
- 100% agree we have barrier-free access to the building that is safe and our facility areas are accessible
- 100% agree the accessibility of our technology is acceptable

Through the consultation process, we have learned that we can improve on the lighting in the yard, remove some clutter, and shorten the length of meetings or training sessions. We intend to address these issues on a short- and long-term basis, as identified in each respective section of this progress report.

## **Feedback**

Currently, we have not received any feedback through our official feedback mechanism. We believe that the reason for this lack of feedback is that the public does not interact with our company on a regular basis.

## **Conclusion**

Southern Oaks Ltd. is committed to improving accessibility by continuously monitoring and updating our progress. Over the next year we plan to keep advancing our accessibility commitments while also looking ahead to the future.