

 Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board	SECTION: Human Resources
	POLICY TITLE: Individual Accommodation Plans
ORIGINAL DATE: N/A	POLICY AREA: Accessibility
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Purpose

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB) meets the requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the accessibility standards for Integrated Accessibility Standards (IAS), in accordance with *Ontario Regulation 191/11*, as amended.

Individual accommodation plans are a formal way of recording and reviewing the workplace-related accommodations that the Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB) will provide to an employee with a disability. Accommodation plans are living documents. They are reviewed and updated so that they remain effective and up-to-date.

Policy

Under the Employment Statement, the RRDSSAB is required to develop Individual Accommodation Plans for employees with disabilities of which they have been made aware. In most cases, employees with disabilities will tell their employers that they have a disability that requires accommodation. However, there may be times where the RRDSSAB may initiate a dialogue to offer assistance and accommodation to an employee who is clearly unwell or perceived to have a disability. By establishing a process for developing Individual Accommodation Plans, the RRDSSAB will have a clear and consistent approach for accommodating employees with disabilities.

The RRDSSAB is committed to the fair and equal employment of people with disabilities. While many individuals with disabilities can work without accommodation, other qualified applicants and employees face barriers to employment without the accommodation process. When communicating with an employee with a disability, the employer will do so in a manner that accommodates the employee's disability.

It is the policy of the RRDSSAB to reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with disabilities unless the accommodation would impose an undue hardship.

Accommodations will be provided to qualified individuals with disabilities when such accommodations are directly related to performing the essential functions of a job, competing for a job, or to enjoy equal benefits and privileges of employment. This policy applies to all applicants, employees, and employees seeking promotional opportunities.

Reasonable Accommodation

A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a job, an employment practice, or the work environment that makes it possible for a qualified individual with a disability to enjoy an equal employment opportunity.

Examples of accommodations may include acquiring or modifying equipment or devices; modifying training materials; making facilities readily accessible; modifying work schedules; and reassignment to a vacant position.

Individual Accommodation Plans Shall:

- a) assess and accommodate an employee on an individual basis ensuring the employees involvement in the process;
- b) each accommodation is assessed on an individual basis;
- c) allow the RRDSSAB to request an evaluation by an outside medical or other expert, at the RRDSSABs expense, to determine if and how accommodation can be achieved;
- d) employees are encouraged to request the participation of a representative from their bargaining unit or other representative from the workplace, where the employee is not represented by a bargaining unit, in the development of the accommodation plan;
- e) include information regarding accessible formats and communications support, if requested;
- f) be developed and communicated with the employee with a disability in a manner that accommodates the employee's disability;
- g) individual accommodation plans will remain private and only shared with those necessary to accommodate the plan;
- h) the individual accommodation plan will be reviewed as determined in the plan;
- i) consider input, as appropriate, from workplace, medical and/or other experts;
- j) detail the accommodations to be provided;
- k) detail timing for the provision of accommodations;
- l) will trigger the development of a *Workplace Emergency Response Information Plan (WERIP)*, if required; and
- m) if the accommodation is denied, the appeal process will be explained.

Procedures

Step 1: Receive Accommodation Request and Gather Information

An accommodation seeker shall submit an accommodation request to his/her immediate Supervisor/Manager through the completion of an *Individual Accommodation Request Form*. The Supervisor/Manager will share the request with the Human Resources Officer. The Human Resources Officer and the Supervisor/Manager will hold a meeting with the employee to begin the process of gathering information. An accommodation seeker shall provide relevant information, including medical documentation, to support his/her accommodation request. A bargaining unit employee is encouraged to engage his/her union representative.

Step 2: Analyze Accommodation Request

The Human Resources Officer, in discussions with the Supervisor/Manager, will consider the request. The Human Resources Officer will request and collect medical documentation from the accommodation seeker and determine whether the reason for the request is related to a disability. The accommodation seeker is required to provide medical documentation from an appropriate registered medical practitioner(s), which may include information obtained from another appropriate health care provider to assist the RRDSSAB in fulfilling the accommodation request.

Step 3: Develop Accommodation Plan(s)

The Human Resources Officer will consider, in consultation with relevant partners, reasonable accommodation options and work with the accommodation seeker, the accommodation seeker's Supervisor/Manager, and/or other departmental representatives to develop a plan to accommodate the employee. In some cases, a workplace accommodation may present undue hardship and will therefore not be available to the accommodation seeker. If this occurs, the accommodation seeker will be advised of such and other possible accommodation options, if available, will be considered. The relevant partners will consider if a *Workplace Emergency Response Information Plan (WERIP)* is required and, if so, develop one accordingly.

Step 4: Implement Accommodation Plan(s)

A reasonable accommodation option(s) is selected and implemented with the support of relevant partners.

Step 5: Follow-up, Review, and Adjust

The implemented accommodation is evaluated and monitored, typically by the Supervisor/Manager with the assistance of the Human Resources Officer. An accommodation must meet the needs of the employee as well as meet the operational and other requirements of the department. The accommodation will be adjusted or removed if necessary.

Funding Accommodations

Funding must be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), in consultation with the Director of Finance and Asset Management, for accommodations that do not cause an undue hardship.

Definition of Undue Hardship

An undue hardship is an action that is unduly costly, extensive, substantial, or disruptive, or that would fundamentally alter the nature or operation of the RRDSSAB.

Appeals

Employees or applicants who are dissatisfied with the decision(s) pertaining to his/her accommodation request may file an appeal with the Chief Administrative Officer within a reasonable period of time, for a final decision.

If the individual believes the decision is based on discriminatory reasons, they may file a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Board.