

## Statement of Commitment on Accessibility

Immigrants Working Centre (IWC) is a not-for-profit and charitable organization committed to the goals of equality and inclusion for immigrant and refugee women in Canada. This mission encompasses a commitment to promote equality and inclusion in Canadian society for women newcomers with disabilities and the full participation of all people with disabilities in Canadian society. IWC recognizes that immigrants and refugees with disabilities confront significant social barriers to their integration into Canadian society, in addition to the barriers that all newcomers to Canada face. These additional barriers include: lack of accessible and affordable housing, lack of accessible transportation, fewer educational and employment opportunities, discriminatory attitudes and misunderstandings about disability, and social isolation.

The IWC organization believes that its staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers should play a role in mitigating and, where possible, removing the additional obstacles to social inclusion that its clients and employees with disabilities face. Therefore, IWC is committed to the development and implementation—over the next several years—of new policies, practices, and procedures that will enable the organization to better address the needs of immigrant and refugee women with disabilities and promote and uphold the dignity and independence of all people with disabilities. This commitment includes the following:

### **Accessibility and Removal of Barriers to Inclusion**

- On-going identification and removal (where possible) of existing physical, attitudinal, communication, employment, and other barriers to the full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities at the four locations of IWC, in the publication of Unpack, and on the IWC and Women's Press websites, as well as prevention and removal of future barriers

### **Training**

- Training of all IWC staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers on the barriers to full participation in Canadian society that all people with disabilities confront and the additional particular barriers to participation in Canadian society that immigrant and refugee women with disabilities in particular face

- Training of all IWC staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers on the accessibility standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code, as it applies to people with disabilities
- Training of all IWC staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers on services, supports, and goods in the broader community that can benefit newcomer women with disabilities
- Training of all IWC staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers on appropriate ways to interact and communicate with people with disabilities, including people with disabilities who use assistive devices (such as walkers, wheelchairs, and TTYs) or communications supports (such as notetakers, captioning, and sign language) or who are accompanied by support personnel or service animals
- Training of all IWC staff, settlement counsellor, teachers, and volunteers on exit, evacuation, and other safety procedures for people with disabilities in the event of fire or other emergencies

### **Materials in Alternative Formats**

- Provision of all IWC materials in alternative, accessible formats (including large-print, Braille, and audio CDs and DVDs) upon request

### **Assistive Devices**

- Establishment of a hospitable and respectful environment on IWC premises for the use of assistive devices (such as walkers, wheelchairs, and screen-readers) and communication supports (such as note-takers, captioning, and sign language) by IWC staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers with disabilities, as well as IWC clients and members of the public with disabilities

### **Other supports**

- Establishment of a hospitable and respectful environment on IWC premises for support people who accompany IWC staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers with disabilities, as well as IWC clients with disabilities
- Establishment of a welcoming environment on IWC premises for service animals that accompany IWC staff, settlement counsellors, teachers, and volunteers with disabilities, as well as IWC clients with disabilities

## **Disruption and Discontinuity of Services**

- Public notice in various venues of any interruptions or discontinuities of standard IWC services, temporary site closures, and cancellation or postponement of events

## **Accountability and feedback**

- Review of IWC accessibility policies every five years and revision of this Statement of Commitment, where necessary
- Solicitation of input from clients with disabilities and IWC staff, counsellors, teachers, and volunteers with disabilities on all changes to IWC policy on accessibility
- Provision of prompt and meaningful feedback on all suggestions and concerns about accessibility to the four locations of IWC, the Women's Press, and the IWC and Women's Press websites, as well as about all IWC policies, practices, and procedures that directly and indirectly affect clients with disabilities, as well as IWC staff, counsellors, teachers, and volunteers with disabilities

This IWC Statement of Commitment on Accessibility is available in alternate formats upon request. Please contact [communications@iwchamilton.ca](mailto:communications@iwchamilton.ca) or by calling our office at 905-529-5209.