

# BLUE SKIES ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Accessibility policy was approved by organizers at the May 28, 2016 meeting

Accessibility policy revised and approved by organizers at Retreat Meeting: March 2, 2025

## 1. PREAMBLE

The Blue Skies Cultural Centre (“Blue Skies”) is committed to maintaining accessibility, where possible, for festival attendees and participants in all Blue Skies programs. Blue Skies has the following practices in place, as suggested by The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*. Although not required, actions we have taken have included:

- a. Require all Organizers and Volunteers (over 18) to complete the AODA training on an annual basis
- b. Have a protocol and form for registering Service Animals
- c. Designate space for Service Animals to rest and hydrate
- d. Post our *Accessibility Statement (2023)* at the Info Booth, outlining services we offer and what we cannot offer, due to terrain and rural venue
- e. Acknowledge limited electrical hook ups for medical devices
- f. Acknowledge limited toilet facilities with wheelchair or walker access
- g. Provide limited Large Print Programs, available at the Info Booth, Gate and Volunteer Board. Other forms of the Program available for individualized access on our website.

The following applies to the Blue Skies Music Festival, all Organizational meetings, and all Blue Skies in the Community programs.

## 2. THE RUSTIC, WILDERNESS NATURE OF THE BLUE SKIES FESTIVAL

The Blue Skies Music Festival takes place on a rustic, wilderness site – it has many hills and rocks and lacks shelter, shade, pavement and other modern amenities. Within this context, which is a fundamental aspect of the festival, Blue Skies will do its best to accommodate people with disabilities. Blue Skies will communicate on the festival website <https://www.blueskiesmusicfestival.ca/> the rustic nature of the festival site so that attendees can prepare themselves.

## 3. ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

Blue Skies is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. When asked, we will provide information and communication materials in accessible formats with communication supports to the best of our ability. This includes on our Website, at the Gate, Volunteer Board and Info Booth. This is a work in progress.

**4. ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

Blue Skies will endeavour to ensure that all organizers and key volunteers are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities attending Blue Skies events.

The rural, rough terrain makes negotiating in a wheelchair, with a walker or cane very challenging. Pathways are not marked or lit. Organizers have all reviewed protocols for assisting people with mobility equipment. We endeavour to provide some electrical outlets for servicing and charging CPAP and other machines, however, we cannot guarantee steady or extensive power. There are large print Programs at the Info Booth, Volunteer Board and the Gate.

**5. SERVICE ANIMALS**

Blue Skies welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by service animals. While dogs are not generally welcomed on the festival site, certified service animals are permitted at Blue Skies events. We request that all certified animals be registered at the Gate before entering the festival site.

**6. SUPPORT PERSONS**

Blue Skies welcomes support persons, including family members, friends, and contract support workers, accompanying an individual with a disability. A support person is required to apply for and pay for their entrance ticket, the same as a regular attender.

**7. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION OF SERVICES**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for people with disabilities, (including, but not limited to on-site facilities, accessible parking, and volunteer assistance), Blue Skies will promptly, to the extent possible, notify affected people by announcements from the main stage, at the Info Booth and by circulating around the site.

**8. TRAINING**

A. Individuals in the following positions are requested to complete AODA accessibility training:

- a. Hats, Apprentices and Perennial Organizers
- b. Festival Key Volunteers
- c. General Volunteers over 18 are asked to read and comply with the shorter version of the AODA training as posted at all Site Areas where there are general volunteers, as well as at the Info Booth and the Volunteer Board.

B. An Accessibility Info Binder is available at the Info Booth with:

- a. An overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*
- b. The *Blue Skies Accessibility Policy* (this document)
- c. Short form AODA training document
- d. Registration forms for Service Animals
- e. Information on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- f. Information on assisting those having difficulty in accessing on-site services
- g. FAQs as listed on the website

## 9. INFORMATION AND FEEDBACK PROCESS

People may seek information related to festival accessibility at any time in the year by contacting [accessibility@blueskiesmusicfestival.ca](mailto:accessibility@blueskiesmusicfestival.ca), or at the Info Booth during the Festival.

Festival attendees who wish to provide feedback on the way Blue Skies provides services to people with disabilities are encouraged to provide comments on accessibility, written or verbally, at the Info Booth during the festival. Feedback may also be provided via the email address above.

All enquiries and feedback will be directed to the Blue Skies Accessibility Committee, who will acknowledge receipt of all inquiries/feedback and then address the concern to the best of our ability, and advise of what steps have been taken to address any concerns.

## 10. ONGOING PROCESS

Blue Skies Organizers will seek input from people with disabilities in order to ensure Blue Skies understands the needs of people with disabilities.

Blue Skies Organizers will review its practices and any that do not respect the dignity and independence of people with disabilities, where possible, will be modified or removed.

The Accessibility Committee will meet through the year to review current accessibility legislation and inform the Organizing group in a timely fashion.

The Accessibility Committee will monitor the designated email address for comments and respond as soon as possible.

The Accessibility Committee will update the FAQs on the Website and apprise the Organizing group of any concerns or questions raised.

The Accessibility Committee will endeavour to assist the Organizing group in facilitating possible accessibility changes to the Site and others aspects of Blue Skies.