

Accessibility Plan

The purpose of this Accessibility Plan is to promote accessibility and remove barriers. Siena Francis House addresses accessibility concerns to enhance the quality of life for those served in our programs and services, implement nondiscriminatory employment practices, meet legal and regulatory requirements, and to meet the expectations of stakeholders in the area of accessibility. This report and improvement plan is meant to enhance access to programs, services, facilities, and the community.

Assessment of Sites and Practices

In order to assess accessibility, Siena Francis House examined its identification of barriers in the following areas: architectural (physical), environmental, attitudinal, financial, communication, transportation, community integration, technology, and employment.

Architectural or Physical Barriers

- Architectural or physical barriers are generally easy to identify items like door access that prevents access to a building for an individual who uses a wheelchair, narrow doorways that need to be widened, and not all bathrooms are made accessible. These are identified by annual inspections, monthly safety inspections, and observing day to day activities. It is apparent that although barriers have been identified, there is a need to regularly review these barriers. The new Miracles building is ADA compliant with a larger doorways and bathroom accessibility.

Environmental Barriers

- Environmental barriers can be interpreted as any location or characteristic of the setting that compromises, hinders or impedes service delivery, and the benefits to be gained. Some service sites may be located in areas where the person served and/or personnel do not feel safe or feel that confidentiality may be risked. In addition to such external environmental barriers, internal barriers may include noise level, lack of sound proof counseling rooms, highly trafficked areas used for service delivery, or type or lack of furnishings that impact the comfort level of the persons served and staff.
- Lighting may be a barrier, for instance, if fluorescent lighting is used and the flicker precipitates seizure activity in an individual. The physical office environment could present a barrier if it is noisy or is a very open structure and an individual is easily distracted by activity. Fragrances could be considered an environmental barrier as many people have allergic reactions to various smells and do not perform at their best under such conditions.
- Although the organization doesn't conduct a formal assessment in this area, staff are aware of the need to accommodate reasonable requests in this area.

Attitudinal Barriers

- Attitudinal barriers may include the terminology and language that the organization uses in its literature or when it communicates with individuals with disabilities, other stakeholders and the public, how individuals with disabilities are viewed and treated by the organization, and the community, whether or not client input is solicited and used, whether or not the eligibility criteria of the organization screens out individuals with specific types of disabilities.
- To educate the staff and community on the advantages of eliminating barriers and promoting opportunities for people with disabilities, Siena Francis House provides disability awareness and terminology/language training to all staff annually.
- To increase communication on the benefits of promoting opportunities for people with disabilities, the following steps are continually being considered as opportunities arise.
 - Marketing Information Packets
 - Press Releases
 - Radio and Television Public Service Announcements
 - Networking through Membership of Appropriate Professional Organizations
 - Social Media

Financial Barriers

- Financial barriers include insufficient funding for service and supports. Siena Francis House advocates at a city, state, and federal for increased funding and promotes activities to directly raise money for the support of a service or a person served. Siena Francis House analyzes internal efficiency and staff needs as well.
- Covid-19 placed a financial strain on resources being supplied and impacted our staffing levels at times.

Communication Barriers

- Siena Francis House offers an accessible, user-friendly website that makes it possible to share information about our agency and its programs and services, taking into account differences in ability.

Transportation Barriers

- Transportation barriers include persons being unable to reach service locations or being able to participate in the full range of services, supports, or activities offered. Transportation has been identified as a major barrier to employment. Siena Francis House help clients that are on routes that are conducive to assessing public transportation. Siena Francis House employs a driver who takes clients to their appointments.
- Siena Francis House will provide preventive maintenance on our company cars and vans.

Community Integration Barriers

- Barriers to community integration include any barrier that would keep the person served from returning to full participation in their community. Accommodations may be needed for the persons served to return to their previous community job site.

Technology Barriers

- Technology barriers could include the evolving technology, the upkeep of equipment, and issues more specific to the populations served.

Employment Barriers

- Siena Francis House recognizes that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its policies prohibit discrimination in all employment practices including job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training and other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. It applies to recruitment, advertising, tenure, layoff, leave, fringe benefits, and all other employment related activities. The Human Resource Department reviews and updates policies as needed.
- The staff's direct supervisor and/or Human Resource Department may accommodate a request from a staff for reasonable accommodations. All requests for reasonable accommodations are handled on a case by case basis. Examples of accommodations may include, but not limited to: making existing facilities used by staff readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, allowing part time or modified work schedules, adjusting marginal job requirements such as the need to hold a driver's license, that are nonessential for performing specific jobs, acquiring equipment or devices to assist in staff's job, providing reader for persons with blindness, or interpreters for individuals with deafness when feasible.

There may be barriers identified that Siena Francis House doesn't have the authority or resources to remove; effective accommodations may be the appropriate action to be taken in those circumstances.

Siena Francis House may identify short and long range actions to be taken. Barrier removal that is not currently achievable may be achievable later when the organization has more resources. The organization's planning may have options for referral to and the use of other generic services and networks that may be more accessible.

The Accessibility Plan lists the barriers that limit access to programs and services and provides a detailed outline of the methods to be used in removing the barriers and scheduling necessary steps to achieve a barrier-free environment. If the time period for achieving compliance is to be longer than one year, the plan should identify interim steps to provide program access. The plan may identify person(s) responsible for implementing the plan.

Leadership and Responsibilities

The Leadership Team at Siena Francis House will be the entity responsible for the review of the Accessibility Plan. The Compliance Director will have the oversight of the accessibility plan and task management. The status of the plan will be reviewed annually. The Leadership Team is responsible for prioritizing and reviewing the Accessibility Plan as well as all requests for reasonable accommodations. The Leadership Team will evaluate and carefully consider the merits of all requests for accommodation to determine whether any remedial actions are appropriate. All requests will be identified, reviewed, decided upon, and documented. When an agreement has been reached to provide the accommodation, the steps to accommodation may be part of the person's plan. When an accommodation cannot be made, Siena Francis House demonstrates a referral system that assists the person served, staff, or other stakeholders, in the use of other resources that are accessible. Processes can be different for requests from persons served versus those made by staff.

Communication of the Accessibility Plan

Siena Francis House will create an annual report in writing. This report will include progress made in the removal of identified barriers and areas needing improvement. Copies of the Accessibility Plan will be made available upon request clients, visitors, and staff. Alternative formats will be available upon request.