

**COTTONWOOD, INC.**

**ACCESSIBILITY PLAN**

**2023 - 2024**

(October 2023 – September 2024)

Updated October 2023

The Cottonwood, Inc. Governing Board reviews and approves the Accessibility Plan annually to ensure the promotion of full accessibility for persons served. Following is a summary of 2022-2023 goals and accomplishments and the Accessibility Goals for 2023-2024.

**GOALS FOR 2022-2023  
(October 2022 – September 2023)**

**1. Accessible Toilet Upgrades**

Upgrade two accessible toilets (taller models) annually throughout all three Cottonwood, Inc. Buildings to more fully accommodate the aging and physical needs of individuals served, staff, and visitors.

**Target Date: 2023 for first pair of upgrades**

**Completed: May 2023, all 3 buildings completed**

**2. Accessible Laundry Facilities at White House**

Build accessible, ground-floor laundry facilities at White House to ensure access and accommodate the aging and physical needs of all consumers living at the site.

**Target Date:** On hold. This will require substantial renovations of house and garage.

**Completed:**

**3. Bathroom Door in the Sewing Room**

Consumers are having difficulty entering the bathroom with their walkers because the door is heavy and has an automatic closer that is not on a timer. Resolution: Currently getting quotes to put open button on outside of bathroom and close/lock button on the inside of the bathroom for privacy. Overall, the use of the door will be much easier for the consumers to operate.

**Target Date: March 31, 2023**

**Completed: March 2023**

**Also 2023;**

- **Curb cut SW of building 2 for easier access for consumers getting on T-Lift**
- **Adjustable work chairs for ergonomics**
- **Adding more parking spot**
  - Two more Van Accessible**
  - Six more handicapped spaces**

**Additional improvements accomplished in 2022-2023 as well as general accessibility features of our services that promote full accessibility for individuals include:**

**Accessibility:**

- Remodeled bathrooms at three 4Plex apartments to be fully accessible
- Remodeled kitchens at all 4Plex apartments to include dishwashers
- Fenced in back yard at 25<sup>th</sup> Court
- Remodeled bathroom at Trail to be more accessible
- Installed shower wand and grab bar at Ridge Court
- Added grab bar in Trail bathroom
- Moved consumer to more accessible house with enhanced staffing pattern to accommodate increased health needs
- Rearranged bedroom, installed bed rail and video monitoring system to accommodate increased consumer health needs
- Crafted portable stand for consumer braces
- Installed pictures to help consumer with increasing memory issues
- Increased staffing at several SIL locations to accommodate increased medication administration support
- Began using new transit van with lift to accommodate person who uses a wheelchair
- Transferred from full-size van to minivan to accommodate increased mobility issues
- Provided temporary accommodation with increased staffing for consumers experiencing medical and mental health issues
- Removed shower door at 25<sup>th</sup> Court to allow unrestricted access
- Changed SIL visits to accommodate consumer work schedules
- Added AM staff at 25<sup>th</sup> Court

## **Life Enrichment Accessibility accomplishments in 2023:**

### **Accessibility:**

- Purchased 12 “talk buttons” for non-verbal participants to practice and increase participation in making choices and getting needs met.
- Working with the people who sponsor CHAMMPS Lunch to add meatloaf to the menu offerings for seniors.
- July 24, 2023, Life Enrichment launched a new day program called, Community, Outreach, Recreation Enrichment (CORE). This program has over forty Cottonwood participants. Highlights of increased accessibility for those participating in CORE include:
  - Greater access to the local Community and area-wide events with multiple integration activities offered daily.
  - No set break or lunch times to interfere with work or leisure activities of the person’s choosing.
  - Self-directed schedule. People are free to choose what activities and events they participate in on a daily basis.
  - Ability for a person to use their own independent skills by walking to or using the public transportation system to get around town and independently go to destinations of their choosing.
  - The flexibility to spend time with people of their choosing.
  - Offering very personalized schedule choices for those who choose to split their day between multiple service areas, community employment, or just participating in a shorter day.
  - Opportunities to learn life skills in real life situations, including Adult Daily Living Skills, social etiquette through immersion in the community, complementary work skills for those with community employment or employment in CWI.

## **Retirement Enrichment Services Accomplishments in 2023:**

### **Accessibility:**

- Purchased call light alarms for bathrooms. Notifies staff when someone needs help.
- Received a new battery pack for the AED.
- New emergency lighting was installed.



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## 2023 CONSUMER TRANSPORTATION SUMMARY

The majority of consumer rides to and from work are provided by T-Lift/Transdev, an organization hired by the City of Lawrence to provide both fixed route and door-to-door paratransit services. JobLink works closely with T-Lift to schedule approximately 515 demand rides per week. In addition, there are around 40 rides scheduled each week which have been set up with T-Lift as subscription rides, which guarantees that these individuals will always have their rides available, as opposed to the demand rides, which sometimes cannot be scheduled because the time the ride is needed is booked. Both the demand and the subscription rides are monitored by the Data Manger to ensure accuracy.

A grant awarded to the city of Lawrence Transit allowed for free fares in 2023. This includes the “T” (the fixed route bus) buses, T-Lift Paratransit, and the Night Line. This saved riders \$2.00 per paratransit and Night Line rides, and \$1.00 per fixed route rides (\$.50 for riders with disabilities), or monthly savings on paratransit pass of \$68, and the fixed route \$34 (\$17 for riders with disabilities).

T-Lift and the “T” (the fixed route bus) run Monday through Saturday from 6:00 a.m. until 8:00 p.m. The fixed route is in the process of implementing the redesign of bus routes. Routes are simplified, realigned and interlined to better serve the community. In January 2024, a central station or hub will be completed, and the KU bus routes, and the “T” will begin the new routes. Several fixed route buses run until 10:00p.m. during KU Spring and Fall semesters.

Para transit rides can be scheduled no earlier than 6:15 a.m. to comply with the mandatory 30 minute “window” (waiting period) which surrounds a ride. Generally, rides are scheduled to be up to 45 minutes in length in order to accommodate routing, although some rides are scheduled up to an hour in advance because of the distance between the pick-up and drop off location. The final rides for the day can be scheduled no later than 7:45p.m., also to accommodate the “window.”

Night Line is a night/afterhours shared ride bus service. Rides are scheduled in advance through T-lift and are available Monday-Saturday, 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. Fare on Night Line is also free in 2023 saving riders \$2.00 each way. In previous years, no reduced fare was offered and only accepted cash. Vehicles are accessible for riders with special needs.

Currently, about 20 rides per week are scheduled through Independence, Inc.’s door-to-door paratransit service. The cost per ride for this service is \$3.00 per in-town ride, \$5.00 per ride within Douglas County, and \$30 fare for out-of-town, round-trip medical appointments. This generally is paid by the consumer’s family or support team directly to Independence, Inc. Rides for this service are limited not only by availability, but also are based upon “need.” The determination of “need” is made solely by Independence, Inc. Independence, Inc. paratransit rides are available Monday-Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**GOALS FOR 2023-2024  
(October 2023 – September 2024)**

**1. East Door of Building 2**

Install accessible automatic door opener on the east door of building 2.

**Target Date: July 2024**

**Completed:**

**Ongoing activities to promote full participation & accessibility include:**

- All news/media releases and public information requests are carefully reviewed and monitored by the Director of Community Relations/Development and the CEO.
- Staff members will continue to actively participate on local councils, such as parks and recreation, transportation, housing, employment, to promote full community participation for persons with developmental disabilities.
- Consumer input will continue to be actively solicited regarding all aspects of their life through informal discussions, Consumer Committee meetings and through individual service planning meetings.
- An annual review of this plan and the Accessibility policy will be conducted by the Management Team, Safety Committee, Consumer Committee, and Cottonwood Board of Trustees to determine progress made and address areas of deficiency.
- Electronic signatures are offered as an option for annual documents such as PCSP, ROIs, etc. to expedite the signing process and remove barrier related to meeting/delivering signed physical copies.

*Colleen Himmelberg*  
CEO