

SHAMBHALA ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

Adopted 24th October 2005

View

At the Sakyong's Council meeting in Boston 29th April to 1st May it was agreed by all present that we have a firm commitment that in Shambhala Society access needs to be provided for seniors and people with disabilities to all activities, programs, practices, any teachings they would otherwise be able to receive, community events, etc. and this access needs to be as safe, workable, uplifted, and dignified as access is for anyone else. This includes the Urban and Practice Centers and all the other entities in our mandala.

Shambhala, as a society and as a path, means we have to look at our willingness to identify with people whose challenges are different from our own, and appreciate their importance to our world. In keeping with our Bodhisattva vow, and so much of what we stand for, we never give up on anybody in the Shambhala path, no matter how inconvenient that may be. We are willing to look into our own fears, biases and prejudices, unconscious or otherwise that may inhibit us from fully doing that. This is a significant, exciting and tremendous important challenge for all our paths and our society as a whole.

As a society we need to be inclusive of all persons and treat all members of the society and those who look into it in an equitable manner. To achieve this, centers need to work to eliminate physical and technological barriers and obstacles, whether or not that is required by law. Then we can move towards being a genuinely open and inclusive society, to which we have a firm commitment.

Practice

Accessibility Review Group. The Sakyong's Council asked the Corporate Affairs Committee to establish an Accessibility Review Group, with appropriate expertise, capable of conducting accessibility reviews on behalf of the Sakyong's Council.

Accessibility surveys. The Accessibility Review Group will contact the centers, starting with the larger ones, and work with those centers to complete accessibility surveys. Other centers will be encouraged to start the surveys and report their findings to the Accessibility Review Group. But in any event all centers will be contacted in due course by the Review Group, which will work with the centers to complete the survey.

Accessibility improvement plans. After the surveys are completed the Accessibility Review Group will look at the surveys with the centers to determine what problems there might be and work with centers to see if there are viable solutions to those problems and how those might be achieved, and set a timeline for achieving them.

Land Centers. The campus environment of land centers presents additional challenges, as access is not just a matter of individual building access. More extensive survey work will be required. Since land centers are used by far more people and are often the only place where certain programs can be attended, programs basic to the Shambhala Buddhist path, there is more urgency to develop and begin implementing improvement plans.

New Construction. The Accessibility Review Group will work with centers to ensure that attention to accessibility is built in to the design process.

Attached is the Accessibility Review Group Charter

SHAMBHALA

ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW GROUP CHARTER

Background

Many of the facilities within our mandala, including both local centers and land centers, are not fully accessible to people with disabilities and the elderly. At a meeting in May 2005, the Sakyong's Council adopted as a priority that all Shambhala events and programs be accessible and safe for all participants, including those who are elderly and/or have disabilities. To this end, the Council resolved to establish an Accessibility Review Group (ARG), comprised of individuals with appropriate expertise to conduct accessibility reviews on the part of the Sakyong's Council. The ARG would function as a consulting body to local Shambhala centers as well as to land centers, assisting them in their efforts to provide safe and accessible programming to everyone regardless of age or physical/mental/perceptual capacity.

Duties of the Accessibility Review Group

The ARG will report on its activities to the Sakyong's Council. The extent of the ARG's activities will be determined by the Sakyong's Council, and the ARG will take on any role or relinquish any role as directed by the Sakyong's Council. The ARG is intended to function as a source of information and support to Centers in their efforts to develop complete accessibility to all. When necessary, the ARG shall refer matters that require clarification of policy to the Sakyong's Council for determination.

Appointments to the Accessibility Review Group

All members of the Sakyong's Council are invited to sit on the ARG. The ARG shall contain not less than two members of the Sakyong's Council. Other members of the ARG shall be appointed or approved by the Sakyong's Council (or an entity or person of the Sakyong's Council's choosing), and serve at the pleasure of the Sakyong's Council. Any member of the ARG may be removed by action of the Sakyong's Council at any time.

HOW THE ACCESSIBILITY REVIEW GROUP WILL COLLABORATE WITH CITY & LAND CENTERS

A. Already Existing Shambhala Facilities

1. The ARG will assist existing Shambhala Centers in assessing their current levels of accessibility. This initiative will begin with the development and distribution of an accessibility review survey to approximately 10 of our larger centers. Members of the ARG will follow-up with personal or phone contact, and assist Centers in completing their reviews.
2. Other Centers are encouraged to begin their accessibility assessments, and will be asked to report their findings to the ARG. Eventually, all Shambhala facilities will be assisted by the ARG in conducting an accessibility review.
3. Based on the results of the review process described above, the ARG will help Centers to identify ways to make their facilities safer and more accessible. The ARG will be responsible for developing a time line for this process, which will be presented to the Sakyong's Council for approval.
4. On behalf of the Sakyong's Council, the ARG will monitor progress in the development and implementation of proposed improvements.
5. The ARG will provide a list of resources to Centers for achieving and monitoring accessibility.

B. Development of New Shambhala Facilities

1. All new construction within the Mandala must be accessible and safe to all persons. To this end, the ARG will work with Centers where new construction is proposed to ensure that attention to accessibility is built in to the design process. This would include, but not be limited to, compliance with local regulations and legislation.
2. Final plans for new construction will be reviewed by the ARG on behalf of the Sakyong's Council. The ARG will advise the Sakyong's Council regarding any unresolved accessibility concerns.
3. The ARG will monitor new construction to ensure any changes in building plans do not unduly compromise accessibility.
4. The ARG will advise the Sakyong's Council in cases where new building projects are not meeting accessibility goals