

CIBC Supports Employees with Exemplary Workplace Accommodation Program



CIBC is building a relationship-oriented bank for a modern world, and its commitment to diversity is foundational to that effort.

The bank's philosophy is that by creating a diverse workforce — and providing a welcoming, inclusive, accessible workplace — it will be better able to understand and serve its clients.

"CIBC is making inclusion the way we do business," explained Sarah Matheson, Director Employee Policies and Programs. "We value the perspectives and abilities that each of our team members bring to the table because their unique skills and experiences give us a competitive edge."

For CIBC, providing an inclusive and accessible work environment is a key part of its broader effort to support diversity and foster a culture of belonging. Through its Workplace Accommodation and Ergonomics Program, the bank seeks to ensure that all its team members have what they need to thrive and achieve their very best.

Desire to accommodate versus duty to accommodate

The program is managed by specialists, Amy DeMelo and Luke Wilson, who work collaboratively with team members to first understand their needs and then explore solutions — everything from assistive equipment and technologies to adaptive furniture and flexible work strategies — for removing or minimizing barriers. There is a clear commitment at CIBC to provide solutions across a broad spectrum of diverse needs.

"Our approach is based on the desire to accommodate versus the duty to accommodate," said DeMelo. Adds Wilson, "We genuinely care about our team members and are passionate about what we do and manage each accommodation request with trust and respect. It's important for everyone at CIBC to know that we're here to help."

To increase program awareness, the bank introduced new online content that details the services and benefits available and outlines the procedure for accessing the program when additional support is required. An automated process makes it easy and simple to get started.

Education and awareness sessions are also regularly delivered across the organization to further promote the program and its commitment to team members.

Innovative solutions and enterprise-level testing

In addition to more traditional workplace accommodations, CIBC provides a variety of specialized support services, such as personal attendants, sign-language interpretation, captioning and reader assistant services, as well as assistive technology. To ensure team members using various assistive technology tools have access to direct support, the workplace accommodation team works closely with new in-house assistive technology specialists dedicated to providing technical support and training so team members can focus on what matters.

Further, the workplace accommodation team regularly tests new assistive products and services to better meet the diverse needs of CIBC's 44,000 team members, who serve some 10 million clients worldwide. Examples include a recent pilot of a new technology for team members with low vision working in various positions, including client-facing roles. Another pilot for an in-house captioning service allows immediate on-site support, as well as easy access to captioning for internal conferences and presentations. Testing for new assistive products and services is conducted in collaboration with those who will benefit from the innovations if they're adopted. Their feedback on what works for them and what doesn't is an invaluable part of the overall testing process.

The team also partnered in the development of an inclusive design strategy for CIBC Square, the company's future headquarters opening in downtown Toronto in 2020. As part of this effort, a model workplace was created to test various design and technology features, which will help ensure the building is barrier-free and accessible to all.

The Workplace Accommodation and Ergonomics Program continues to help CIBC deliver an exceptional and seamless experience for its team members by prioritizing their wellbeing and providing the support they need to perform at their very best — this differentiated experience furthers CIBC's commitment to inclusion, diversity and accessibility.