

ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION**POLICY****APPROVED BY:****NUMBER:** 3-112**DATE:** December 20, 2011**PAGE:** 1 of 8**REVISED:****REVIEWED:****REF:** 34-60**NEXT REVIEW DATE:** December 2014

34-61

3-50

CATEGORY: CLIENT AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

All programs and services provided by The Youth Centre shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Scope

- a) This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises occupied and operated by The Youth Centre.
- b) This policy applies to employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of The Youth Centre, including when the provision of programs and services occurs off the premises of The Youth Centre.
- c) The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises occupied and operated by The Youth Centre.
- d) This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of The Youth Centre's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

General Principles:

The Youth Centre will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all clients receive the same value and quality;
- allowing clients with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that clients with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the client's disability.

Assistive Devices

Client's own assistive device(s):

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by The Youth Centre.

In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services.

Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs:

A client with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog, a service animal or a service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs, service animals and/or service dogs.

A client with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog or a service dog will be allowed access to food service areas that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. Other types of service animals are not permitted into food service areas due to the *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60*.

If a guide dog, a service animal or a service dog is excluded by law (see applicable laws below) The Youth Centre will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the client for reasons relating to his or her disability, The Youth Centre may request verification from the client.

Verification may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
- a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

The client that is accompanied by a guide dog, a service dog and/or a service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times. If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, The Youth Centre will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

Support Persons:

If a client with a disability is accompanied by a support person, The Youth Centre will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the client is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the client and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations The Youth Centre will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the client, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

The Youth Centre will make every effort to remove any fees/costs that may be associated with a support person attending programs/services/events. In the event that payment is required The Youth Centre will ensure that notice is given in advance by posting a notice of fees for support persons where the program/services/events fees are posted.

Notice of Disruptions in Service:

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of The Youth Centre. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that clients with disabilities rely on to access or use The Youth Centre's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

When disruptions occur The Youth Centre will provide notice by:

- posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on The Youth Centre website;
- contacting clients with appointments;

- verbally notifying clients when they are making a reservation or appointment; or
- any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Feedback Process:

The Youth Centre shall provide clients, including those with disabilities, with the opportunity to provide feedback on the services that they receive. Feedback will be received through a variety of mechanisms including The Youth Centre's Client Satisfaction Questionnaire and Suggestion Box (Suggestion Box Policy # 3-50). Alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbal feedback, in person or by telephone, or written feedback, hand written, delivered, website or email, will also be encouraged. Clients can submit feedback to the Executive Director at any time (Complaints and Allegations Policy # 34-60).

Clients that provide formal feedback may receive an acknowledgement of receipt if requested, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted (Complaints and Allegations Procedure #34-61).

Training:

Training will be provided to:

- a) all employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of The Youth Centre
- b) those who are involved in the development and approval of client service policies, practices and procedures.

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:
 - use assistive devices;
 - require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or
 - require the use of a support person (including the handling of admission fees).
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services.

- The Youth Centre's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible client service to clients with disabilities.

The Youth Centre will provide training as soon as practicable. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, agents and/or contractors who deal with the public or act on our behalf at orientation. Revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, procedures and/or practices. The Youth Centre will keep a record of training that includes the dates training was provided and the number of employees who attended the training.

Notice of Availability and Format of Documents:

The Youth Centre shall notify clients that the documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* are available upon request and in a format that takes into account the client's disability. Notification will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place owned and operated by The Youth Centre, including the website and/or any other reasonable method.

Acknowledgement & Agreement

I, _____(Employee Name), acknowledge that I have read and understand the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy of The Youth Centre. Further, I agree to adhere to this Policy and will ensure that employees working under my direction adhere to these guiding principles. I understand that if I violate this Policy, I may face corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Definitions

Assistive Device – is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that clients bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – the term disability as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Guide Dog – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Service Dog – as reflected in *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562*, a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability;
- or the person who requires the dog can provide, on request, a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person – as reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

Applicable Laws:

The *Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562 Section 60*, normally does not allow animals in places where food is manufactured, prepared, processed, handled, served, displayed, stored, sold or offered for sale. It does allow guide dogs and service dogs to go into places where food is served, sold or offered for sale. However, other types of service animals are not included in this exception.

Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario: If there is a conflict between a provision of this Act or of a regulation under this or any other Act relating to banned breeds (such as Pit Bulls) and a provision of a by-law passed by a municipality relating to these breeds, the provision that is more restrictive in relation to controls or bans on these breeds prevails.

Referenced Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Blind Person's Rights Act, 1990
- Dog Owners' Liability Act, Ontario
- Food Safety and Quality Act 2001, Ontario Regulation 31/05
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990