**Policy**: **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability - Customer Service Standards**

**ACSA**

Date: February 2013 (Revision Date: December 2015)

**Purpose:**

To strive to provide accessible customer service to persons of all ability levels, and follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

**Scope:**

In accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and the AODA Customer Service Standard, Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA) strives to provide people with disabilities the opportunity to access goods and services following the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and service providers.

**Policy:**

At ACSA, it is our promise that our employees, volunteers, contractors and service providers aim to provide, to the best of their abilities, the same ACSA experience to all customers, including people with disabilities.

We will also carry out functions and responsibilities to fulfill the terms outlined in the AODA Customer Service Standard.

**Definitions:**

***Disability* -**

1. 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 impairment, deafness or hearing loss, loss of speech or impediment, or physical reliance on a service animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
4. a mental disorder
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

***Accessible* -** capable of being entered or reached, approachable; easy to get at; capable of being influenced, obtainable; able to be understood or appreciated.

***Assistive Device* -** a device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the customer Service Standard.

***Dignity* -** respecting and treating every person including persons with a disability as valued and as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer.

***Goods and Services* -** shall mean goods and services provided by ACSA to the public.

***Independence* -** shall mean freedom from control or influence of others, freedom to make your own choices.

***Service Animal*** - an animal that is specifically trained to assist a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability.

***Support Person* -** an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

**Procedure:**

**Communication:**

ACSA employees will communicate with customers, including people with disabilities, in a way that takes into account their needs guided by the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. ACSA endeavors to provide alternative methods of communication upon request as promptly as possible.

**Assistive Devices:**

People with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services at ACSA. 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.

**Service Animals:**

Service animals are welcome while accompanying people with disabilities on the parts of ACSA’s premises that are open to the public. Where service animals are not clearly identified, an employee may ask the owner to provide appropriate documentation.

It is the responsibility of the person using the service animal to ensure that the service animal is kept in control at all times.

If a health and safety concern present itself in the form of a severe allergy to the service animal, ACSA will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

**Support Persons:**

At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on ACSA’s premises that are open to the public. If confidential information needs to be shared, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation with the support person.

ACSA may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on ACSA’s premises.

**Notice of Temporary Disruption:**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities, ACSA will post a notice of disruption at the public entrances of the site of disruption. Notification will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative services, if available.

**Feedback Process:**

To show its commitment to continuous improvement, feedback regarding the way ACSA provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by communicating to any employee or reception at ACSA. The staff will make a note of feedback given in person, verbal or written, online, by telephone or any other means. The feedback will be forwarded to the HR department. Any action taken as result of the feedback will be communicated to the person as soon as possible.

**Availability and Format of Documents:**

As required by the Customer Service Standard, ACSA will provide the requisite documentation upon request of the customer. When providing these documents to a person with a disability, ACSA will endeavor to provide the information in a format that takes the person’s disability into account.

A notice will be posted at a conspicuous place on all ACSA sites indicating the documents can be made available in an alternative format upon request.

**Modifications to Policies:**

All policies, practices and procedures on providing goods and services will be reviewed to ensure any roadblocks to accessible customer service are considered.

**Training:**

All employees, volunteers, contractors or service providers who deal with the public, as well as all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures will be trained to provide accessible customer service to people with disabilities.

Training will be conducted through e-Learning and include the following content:

1. The purpose of the AODA and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard
2. How to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities
3. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
4. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing goods and services
5. ACSA’s policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Employees, volunteers and contractors shall receive training as part of their orientation and on ongoing basis as changes are made to this policy and/or to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

**Responsibilities:**

**Manager**

1. Follow the guidelines as set out in this policy and related training.
2. Provide employees with training to assist customers while following the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.
3. Provide customers and interested parties with a copy of this policy upon request.
4. Ensure that notification is provided for any disruption of services.

**Employee/Volunteer/Contractor**

1. Follow the guidelines as set out in this policy and related training.
2. Provide a consistent customer experience to all customers and ensure that they are served in a manner that allows access to all goods and services offered.
3. Use the skills and knowledge outlined in the training program to ensure that customers with disabilities are served appropriately.
4. Receive consent from the customer when confidential information must be shared with a support person.
5. Inform management of any issues regarding accessibility, or disruption of services.
6. Ensure any feedback received regarding accessible customer service is forwarded to the HR department and copied to the Executive Director.

**Review:**

To remain compliant, this policy shall be reviewed annually, in response to business needs and in response to any legislative changes.

**Exceptions:**

There are no exceptions to this policy.