

Accessible Customer Service

Approved December 12, 2016

Policy Intent

Extend-A-Family is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination. Extend-A-Family understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Extend-A-Family is committed to complying with both the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the AODA and is also committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Policy

Assistive devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities. In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide those that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services or facilities.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will work with the person with a disability to determine what method of communication works for them.

Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on our premises. When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability. A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

Support persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities Extend-A-Family will notify members promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be made publicly available by email and/or phone call or text message.

Training

Extend-A-Family will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees and volunteers,
- anyone involved in developing our policies,
- anyone who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on our behalf.

Staff will be trained on accessible customer service within 6 months after being hired.

Training will include:

- purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- Extend-A-Family's policies related to the customer service standard.
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- how to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities.
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Extend-A-Family's, services or facilities.
- Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

Feedback process

Extend-A-Family welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible service. Feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Extend-A-Family will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of availability of documents

Extend-A-Family will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request.

Extend-A-Family will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Modifications to this or other policies

Any policies of Extend-A-Family that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Events

All communication regarding Extend-A-Family events, meetings and workshops will advertise asking for requests for accommodation to ensure success for attendees.

Footnote: A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario