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**CAREBRIDGE COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**Accessible Customer Service Policy**

**DOCUMENT APPROVAL RECORD**

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## 1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines on providing goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Carebridge Community Support (CCS) is committed to providing consistent customer service to persons with disabilities by putting into practice the following four key principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equal Opportunity

### *Prescribing Legislation*

This policy has been prepared pursuant to requirements and information provided in Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

### *Glossary*

- "Assistive devices" means any auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids, and/or medical aids that are often used by persons with disabilities to help them with daily living.
- "Guide dog" means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Right's Act as 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 persons who are blind.
- "Service animal" means 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.
- "Support person" means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs, or access to goods or services.

## **2.0 Policy**

### **2.1 Assistive Devices**

CCS is committed to providing exceptional customer service to all customers, including those who use assistive devices in order to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.

Employees of CCS will be familiar with and supportive of the use of various assistive devices that may be used by our customers while accessing CCS's goods and services.

### **2.2 Communication**

CCS is committed to providing accessible information and communications to all customers. CCS endeavors to do its best to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

CCS employees will address each person's service needs by asking how they would prefer to communicate.

CCS will ensure that employees receive training on how to communicate with customers with various disabilities.

### **2.3 Use of Service Animal**

CCS is committed to welcoming visiting persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of its premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

- a) If a visiting person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, CCS shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- b) If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises or it is deemed unsafe for a visiting person with a disability to be accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, CCS shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from CCS's goods and services by bringing goods and services to the person in a part of the premises where the animal is not restricted or by offering a safe location where the service animal can wait, if the person is able to be separated from the animal while obtaining the service.
- c) CCS shall ensure that all staff, volunteers and other persons dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with visiting persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
- d) If it is not readily apparent that the animal is used by the visiting person for reasons relating to his or her disability, CCS has the right to request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- e) A visiting person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal must maintain care and control of that animal at all times.

- f) If a customer or a staff member has an allergy to animals, CCS shall make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of all individuals.

## **2.4 Use of Support Person**

CCS is committed to welcoming visiting persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

- a) If a visiting person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, CCS shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.
- b) CCS may require a visiting person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.
- c) If an amount is payable by a support person for admission to the premises or in connection with a support person's presence at the premises, CCS shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person by any other manner deemed appropriate.
- d) In situations where CCS has obligations under privacy laws or has issues of confidentiality or professional obligations, a support person may be requested to agree to requirements of service just as the person with a disability does.

## **2.5 Notice of Temporary Disruption**

CCS is committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining a process to provide notice of service disruptions.

- a) If there is a temporary disruption that would prevent persons with disabilities accessing particular facilities where they would obtain, use or benefit from CCS's goods and services, CCS shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
- b) Notice of disruption must include the following information:
  - The reasons for the disruption
  - The anticipated duration
  - A description of what alternative facilities or services are available, if any
- c) Notice shall be given on the approved Notice of Disruption by posting the information at a conspicuous place at the location of the disruption which may include any or all entrances or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

## **2.6 Training**

CCS is committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining a program for training staff on how to provide customer service to persons with disabilities.

- a) CCS shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:
  - (i) All employees, volunteers, and board members.
  - (ii) Every person who participates in developing CCS policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties on behalf of CCS.
- b) The training must include a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of this regulation, as well as instruction pertaining to the following matters:
  - (i) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
  - (ii) AODA legislation and how the legislation applies to organizations.
  - (iii) How to interact and communicate with persons with various disabilities, including those who use assistive devices and those who require a support person or service animal.
  - (iv) Key components of human rights in Ontario, as outlined in the Ontario Human Rights Code, and how they apply to AODA requirements.
  - (v) Discrimination, including various forms of discrimination, the prohibited grounds of discrimination, and the freedom from discrimination under key social areas.
  - (vi) The link between human rights and disabilities under the AODA, and how organizations can remove barriers.
- c) All employees, volunteers, board members, or other third parties on behalf of CCS that have direct contact with the public will be trained on the following:
  - (i) How to use equipment or devices available on CCS's premises or otherwise provided by CCS, that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
  - (ii) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing CCS's goods or services.
  - (iii) Accessible formats and communication supports that can be provided upon request to a person with a disability in a timely manner and at cost a that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- d) CCS's customer service policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. The training shall be provided to each person as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.
- e) The training shall also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

- f) The training content may vary depending on who is receiving the training and the nature of the service provided and depending on the individual site/program requirements.
- g) The training provided to staff who deal with the public on a regular basis shall be more focused on person-to-person interaction than the training provided to staff that have less contact with customers. The site/program or managers/supervisors may choose the particular content of the training and the way each of the topics described above is addressed.
- h) Records shall be kept of who was trained, when they were trained and in which format the training was delivered.

## **2.7 Feedback Process**

CCS is committed to establishing, implementing and maintaining a process for receiving and responding to feedback about how to provide goods or services to persons with disabilities. Comments on CCS's services, including regarding how well we are meeting our customers' needs are welcomed and appreciated. Feedback will be used to improve customer service processes.

- a) CCS's feedback process is as follows:
  - (i) Customer acquires the Accessible Service Feedback Form provided on our website or available upon request at our main facility. This Form is presented in Appendix A.
  - (ii) Customer provides feedback by telephone, mail, e-mail, fax, hand-delivered or in-person to the contact person identified on the Accessible Service Feedback Form.
  - (iii) CCS receives feedback and it is reviewed and forwarded to the appropriate manager/supervisor.
  - (iv) An answer to the feedback is not mandatory, however, if the feedback is in regards to a complaint, the supervisor and/or manager responsible for where the event took place may deem it appropriate to respond to the customer.
  - (v) Should an answer be deemed appropriate and should the customer have chosen to supply his or her contact information, the customer may expect the said answer within 10 business days.

## **2.8 Availability of Documents**

CCS is committed to raising awareness towards accessibility and to breaking down barriers for persons with disabilities in order for them to have the same kind of opportunities as everyone else.

The policy regarding accessible customer service shall be made available to anyone upon request.

## 2.9 Alternate Format

CCS is committed to provide individual accommodation to its customers where appropriate by creating its own alternate formats of printed materials. Upon request, alternate formats shall be provided in a manner in which is to be agreed upon by the requestor and CCS including:

- a) To the extent possible, customers with disabilities will be offered alternative communication formats that will meet their needs as promptly and as feasibly possible at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons;
- b) To the extent possible, documents will be provided to customers in an alternative format that will meet the needs of the customer in a timely fashion; and,
- c) To the extent possible, if telephone or other used forms or communication are not suitable for a customer's needs, alternative forms of communication will be offered.

## 3.0 Administration

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures please contact:

Amanda Matheson, Director of Human Resources  
Carebridge Community Support  
67 Industrial Drive, P.O. Box 610  
Almonte, ON  
K0A 1A0  
Phone: (613) 256-1031 ext. 240  
Fax: (613) 256-1185  
Email: [amatheson@carebridge.ca](mailto:amatheson@carebridge.ca)

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.



# APPENDIX A

### Accessible Service Feedback Form

1. Please provide information on the person providing the feedback: Date: _____ Name (s): _____ Address: _____ Telephone: _____ E-mail: _____
2. What date and time did you visit our facility: _____
3. What facility were you visiting: _____
4. What was the purpose of your visit: _____
5. Did we meet your customer service needs? Please explain: _____ _____
6. Were accessible formats provided upon request? Please explain: _____ _____
7. Did you encounter any barriers or difficulties accessing services? Please explain: _____ _____
8. Do you have any other comments: _____ _____
9. Would you like to be contacted to discuss your customer service experience: _____ If so, how would you like to be contacted: _____

Feedback can be submitted by telephone, mail, e-mail, fax, hand-delivered, or in person to the following:

Amanda Matheson, Director of Human Resources  
Carebridge Community Support  
67 Industrial Drive, P.O. Box 610  
Almonte, Ontario, K0A 1A0  
Phone: (613) 256-1031 ext. 240; Fax: (613) 256-1185  
Email: [amatheson@carebridge.ca](mailto:amatheson@carebridge.ca)