



COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION

Department	Corporation Service	Policy No:	CS 2011- 101
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Replaces:			

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Background:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was created with the goal of developing standards that would improve accessibility for people with disabilities across the province. The AODA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility designed to make Ontario more accessible. The first specific standard to be developed is the Accessible Customer Service Standard that provides for service delivery in a way that preserves the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

CHC is committed to providing excellent customer service to all persons that we serve, including people with disabilities.

Policy

CHC will promote accessible customer service through the development of policies, procedures and practices that considers persons with disabilities. When serving residents with disabilities, reasonable efforts shall be made to provide the same level of service given to other customers and service shall be provided in a manner that respects their dignity and independence. CHC is committed to recognizing the diverse needs of its residents and customers by striving to provide services that are accessible to all persons we serve.

Scope:

This policy shall apply to all persons who provide goods or services to the public on behalf of CHC, whether that person does so as an employee, student, volunteer, Board member, or otherwise and all those who participate in developing policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to the members of the public. CHC will include, in our contracted services procedures, a clause requiring the contractor to meet the requirements under this legislation.

Definitions:

(Accessibility) Standard:

A “standard” explains an accepted way of doing something. It states what the requirements are, who has to meet them, and by when.

Assistive Device

“Assistive devices” means technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids modified or customized that are used to increase, maintain or improve how a person with a disability can function. Assistive devices may accompany the customer or already be on the premises, and are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services provided by CHC.

Disability:

(a) 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;

(b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;

(c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,

(d) a mental disorder; or

(e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Dignity:

“Dignity” means service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

Documented Consent:

“Documented consent” means that the person with a disability has given consent for a support person to attend a confidential interview and that the consent is documented by CHC staff on the consent form. The person’s consent can be written, verbal, by nod of a head or by other methods that confirm consent, depending on the type of disability.

Persons with Disabilities

Individuals who are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Service Animal:

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

Support Person:

Any person who accompanies the person with a disability in order to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Procedures/Implementation:

Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

CHC will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the following:

- CHC goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods and services to those persons with disabilities are integrated with those goods and services that are provided to persons without disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary in order to provide the person with a disability to access CHC's goods and services.
- Person with disabilities are given equal opportunity to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit services provided by the CHC.
- When communicating with a person with a disability, CHC will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
- CHC is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. CHC will allow people to use their personal assistive device to access services unless otherwise prohibited by law. In such situations CHC may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from CHC's goods and services, where CHC has such other measures available. It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.
- If a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, CHC will permit the person to enter the premises with the animal and keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, CHC will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from CHC's goods and services. If

it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, CHC may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability. CHC may also, or instead, ask for 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. It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

- If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises. CHC may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on CHC's premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

Disruption in Services

- CHC is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to our residents; however, temporary disruptions in CHC's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within CHC's control or knowledge.
- CHC will make reasonable effort to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. CHC will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, CHC will provide notice as soon as possible.
- When temporary disruptions occur to CHC's services or facilities, CHC will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on CHC's website (www.wechc.com), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible i.e. by phone or in writing.

Feedback

Feedback is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and notice of the process will be posted on CHC website (www.wechc.com) and/or in other appropriate locations.

Training:

CHC will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

The content of the training will include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA.
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07).
- Instruction on CHC's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Windsor Essex CHC goods and services.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal.
- Information about the equipment or devices available on CHC's premises that may help with the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

CHC will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").

Availability of Documents

When providing a document to a person with a disability, CHC will provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person's disability into account. The time frame for providing information in an alternative format will vary depending on the media chosen, document size and complexity while all attempts will be made to provide same in a reasonable time frame. Any costs will be borne by Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation.

Notice of the availability of all documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be posted on our website(s), and available through our Offices.