

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Purpose

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and applies to the provision of services to the public or other third parties.

All services provided by The United Way of Thunder Bay shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

Scope

- a) This policy applies to the provision of services at premises owned and/or operated by The United Way of Thunder Bay.
- 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 United Way of Thunder Bay, including when the provision of services occurs off the premises of The United Way of Thunder Bay such as Special Event occasions, meetings and workshops.
- c) The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of services that take place at premises owned and/or operated by The United Way of Thunder Bay.
- d) This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of The United Way of Thunder Bay's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to members of the public or third parties.

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 customers 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.

General Principles

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training

A. The Provision of Services to Persons with Disabilities

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

B. Assistive Devices

Customer's own assistive device(s):

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing services provided by The United Way of Thunder Bay.

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 services. For example, open flames and oxygen tanks cannot be near one another. Therefore, the accommodation of a customer with an oxygen tank may involve ensuring the customer is in a location that would be considered safe for both the customer and business. Or, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

C. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A customer with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or 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.

Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the customer for reasons relating to his or her disability, The United Way of Thunder Bay may request verification from the customer.

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.

Care and Control of the Animal:

The customer that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

Allergies:

If a health and safety concern presents itself for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, The United Way of Thunder Bay will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

D. Support Persons

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, The United Way of Thunder Bay will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

There may be times where seating and availability prevent the customer and support person from sitting beside each other. In these situations The United Way of Thunder Bay will make every reasonable attempt to resolve the issue.

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

Admission Fees:

If payment is required by a support person for admission to the premises The United Way of Thunder Bay will ensure that notice is given in advance by posting notice of admission fees for support persons where The United Way of Thunder Bay fees are posted.

E. 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 United Way of Thunder Bay. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customer's with disabilities rely on to access or use The United Way of Thunder Bay's 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.

Notifications will Include:

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

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

Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur The United Way of Thunder Bay 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 The United Way of Thunder Bay website;
- contacting customers with appointments;

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

F. Feedback Process

The United Way of Thunder Bay shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Feedback will be verbally either in person or by telephone, written either hand written, delivered, website or by email

Submitting Feedback:

Customers can submit feedback to:

- Robyn Rempel, Administrative Coordinator
- (807) 626-1753
- 1006-715 Hewitson Street, Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6B5
- rrempe@uwaytbay.ca
- www.uwaytbay.ca

Customers that provide formal feedback will receive acknowledgement of their feedback, along with any resulting actions based on concerns or complaints that were submitted.

G. Training

Training will be provided to:

- a) all employees, volunteers and other individuals who provide services to the public on behalf of The United Way of Thunder Bay and,
- b) those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training Provisions:

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 what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services.

- The United Way of Thunder Bay 's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

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

Referenced Documents:

- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
- Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07
- Blind Person's Rights Act, 1990
- Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562
- Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990