



Accessible Standards for Customer Service Policy

Purpose:

To ensure all Family Counselling and Support Services (FCSSGW) programs and services are accessible to everyone in the community in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, the Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Policy Overview:

This policy and procedures apply to all services that are delivered by FCSSGW. This policy applies to FCSSGW employees, volunteers, board of directors and third parties who deal with the public, on behalf of FCSSGW.

Policy:

In keeping with its mission of *“supporting, strengthening and enriching individual, couple and family life by providing counselling, educational, support and advocacy services that meet the needs of the community”*, FCSSGW is committed to providing services that are accessible to all.

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- a) That services be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- b) The provision of services to people with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services;
- c) Persons with disabilities will be given equal opportunity to use and benefit from the services.

Procedures:

FCSSGW will implement the following procedures and practices:

- a) When communicating with a person with a disability, communication will be conducted in a manner that takes into consideration the person’s disability;
- b) All employees, volunteers, board members and others who deal with the public on behalf of FCSSGW will receive appropriate training on providing accessible customer service, policies, procedures and practices related to Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07;
- c) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal are welcome in those areas of the premises owned or operated by FCSSGW;
- d) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person are welcome to be accompanied by that support person on FCSSGW premises;
- e) Prior notice is provided by FCSSGW for admission fees applicable to the support person who accompanies a person with a disability;
- f) Persons with disabilities are welcome to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from the services offered by FCSSGW;
- g) Notice is provided when it is known that facilities or services that persons with disabilities rely on to access FCSSGW services are temporarily disrupted;
- h) A process is established that allows people to provide feedback on how FCSSGW provides services to persons with disabilities;



Accessible Standards for Customer Service Policy

- i) FCSSGW policies, practices and procedures related to providing accessible customer service are available to the public.

I. Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, FCSSGW will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Persons with disabilities may request accommodations and/or alternate formats of documents. These alternative formats may include, but are not limited to, providing documents with large font, colour contrast between font and background and audio version of a text document. Alternative formats are available upon request only, and FCSSGW will work together with the individual to agree upon the format.

The timeframe attached to the process to convert a FCSSGW document to an alternative format may vary depending on the media, the size, the complexity, quality of the source documents and number of documents to be converted.

II. Training

FCSSGW shall provide training to:

- Employees
- Volunteers
- Board of Directors' members
- Third parties that interact with the public on behalf of FCSSGW
- Anyone involved in developing policies, practices and procedures

The required training will include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a) The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA);
- b) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- c) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- d) How to use equipment or assistive devices available on FCSSGW premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with a disabilities;
- e) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing FCSSGWs goods or services;
- f) FCSSGW policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

The training will also include the core principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity, and discuss the barriers experienced by persons with disabilities.

Training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable upon hire or commencement of their duties. Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to applicable legislation, and/or changes to policies, procedures and practices governing the



Accessible Standards for Customer Service Policy

provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities

FCSSGW will keep records of the training provided including dates and the number of individuals trained.

Third party contractors and organizations that provide goods or services on behalf of FCSSGW shall ensure that its employees, agents, subcontractors, etc. receive training in accordance with this policy and the Accessible Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 and upon request provide the training records to FCSSGW.

III. Service Animals

For the purpose of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:

- a) A 'guide dog' as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*; or
- b) A 'service animal' used by a person with a disability, including, but not limited to, a dog, if:
 - i. It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons related to his or her disability;
 - ii. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

FCSSGW welcomes a person with a disability accompanied by a service animal on all FCSSGW premises and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Should a service animal be excluded from the premises, then FCSSGW shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the good and/or services.

IV. Support Persons

For the purpose of this policy, a 'support person' is defined as, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to services.

FCSSGW is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. 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 the premises.

If there is an admission fee for a support person to attend a FCSSGW event, advance notice will be provided.

V. Assistive Devices

For the purpose of the policy, 'assistive devices' are defined as any piece of equipment or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

FCSSGW is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain,



Accessible Standards for Customer Service Policy

use or benefit from its services. FCSSGW will ensure that all employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people accessing its services.

VI. Service Disruptions

For the purposes of this policy, a 'service disruption' is defined as planned or unplanned unavailability of facilities or services operated by FCSSGW, including, but not limited to, washroom facilities and elevators that are inoperable due to maintenance and websites that are temporarily unavailable.

The notice of temporary disruption to services or facilities used by persons with disabilities will include the reason(s) for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

If there is ample warning of the disruption, the notice will be posted at the applicable location(s), any other conspicuous places, and on the FCSSGW web site and in the media as appropriate.

In the event that the disruption is unplanned, FCSSGW will give as much notice as possible.

VII. Feedback

FCSSGW is committed to continuous improvement. To this end FCSSGW values all comments or complaints from members of the public about the manner in which it provides services to persons with disabilities. Feedback may be submitted verbally, in writing, online, by telephone, TTY or through any other methods. A simple to use, accessible process for clients and visitors to provide feedback or complaints is in place.

Anyone wishing to provide feedback may do so by contacting the Communications Officer at the addresses below or by completing the feedback form online at:

www.familyserviceguelph.on.ca

All feedback will be acknowledged by the Coordinator of People and Learning, in writing. Any action taken as a result of a feedback will be communicated to the person as soon as possible.

Coordinator of People and Learning
Family Counselling and Support Services for Guelph-Wellington
109 Surrey Street East
Guelph, ON N1H3P7
Phone: 519-824-2431
Fax: 519-824-3598
Email: info@familyserviceguelph.on.ca