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**ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (AODA)  
INTEGRATED ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS REGULATION (IASR)  
CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS - PROCEDURES**

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**REFERENCES:**

- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\) - Policy](#)
- [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act \(AODA\) Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\) Customer Service - Training Materials](#)
- Service Accessibility Quick Reference – Training Material
- Accessibility Consent to Release of Information form – Training Material
- [O. Reg. 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards](#)

**PROCEDURES:**

These procedures were developed to reduce barriers and increase accessibility for persons with disabilities in the area of customer service.

**Application and Scope:**

As per Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) legislation, procedures shall apply to the provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities. However, Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin (FACS) provides services only and therefore procedures shall refer to services only going forward.

These procedures apply to every person who deals with members of the public or third parties on behalf of Family and Children's Services, whether the person does so as an employee, student intern, Board of Director, Volunteer, Resource Parent, consultant, contractor, agent, or otherwise. These procedures shall apply to any activities which could reasonably be associated with FACS, including social events, which may or may not occur during work time.

**Framework:**

Family and Children's Services of St. Thomas and Elgin (FACS) shall meet the requirements of *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, included in the Integrated Accessibility Standards O. Reg. 191/11 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.*

This shall be achieved by ensuring Family and Children's Services:

- provides services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- gives an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the services;
- integrates services, unless a temporary or permanent alternative measure is necessary, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services;
- permits use assistive devices and/or support persons to access services; and
- communicates in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

### **Definitions:**

***Accessibility Coordinator*** - The person appointed by Family and Children's Services as Accessibility Coordinator.

***Assistive Devices*** - Any auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, walkers, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).

***Barrier*** - defined by the AODA as, anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, architectural barrier, information or communication barrier, attitudinal barrier, a policy, procedure or a practice.

***Disabilities*** – Refers to the same definition of disability found in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*:

- 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 a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- A mental disorder.
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

***Persons with Disabilities*** - Individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

**Service Animals** - An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
  - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
  - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
  - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario;
  - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
  - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario;
  - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
  - A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
  - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario; or
  - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

**Support Persons** - Any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to services or facilities.

### **Responsibilities:**

#### **Managers shall:**

- participate in training;
- act in compliance with the expectations as outlined in the procedures and related legislation; and
- ensure their reporting staff act in compliance with the expectations as outlined in the procedures and related legislation.

#### **Employees, Student Interns, Board of Directors, Volunteers, Resource Parents, Consultants, Contractors, Agents shall:**

- participate in training and
- act in compliance with the expectations as outlined in the procedures and related legislation.

### **Assistive Devices:**

Family and Children's Services shall use reasonable efforts to allow persons with disabilities to use their personal assistive devices to access our services.

In cases where the assistive device presents a health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access to services.

FACS shall ensure that employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by persons with disabilities while accessing our services.

**Service Animals:** We welcome persons with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals shall be allowed access to our premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law or where there are overriding health and safety considerations.

Where an animal is excluded by law from our premises, the reason why the animal is excluded shall be explained to the persons with disabilities, and other reasonable arrangements shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.

#### Recognizing a Service Animal

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal for reasons relating to the person's disability, a request for documentation from a regulated health professional (as per definition above) may occur.

#### Care and Control of the Animal

The person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time. The person with a disability shall keep the service animal with him or her.

When a service animal is unruly or disruptive (jumping on people, biting, or other harmful behaviour) we may ask the person with a disability to remove the animal from the area or refuse access to services or facilities. In this event, other reasonable arrangements to provide services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.

#### Allergies

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

#### **Support Persons:**

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person shall be permitted to enter the premises together. The person with a disability shall not be prevented from having access to the support person while on FACS' premises.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent shall be obtained from the person with a disability, prior to any conversations of a confidential nature taking place with the support person present. The [accessibility consent to release of information](#) shall be acknowledged in writing by the person with a disability (taking into account their disability).

As per AODA legislation, in certain cases, Family and Children's Services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises. Before making a decision, FACS shall:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs;
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence; and
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and the health and safety of others on the premises.

If determined that a support person is required and the person with a disability has agreed to the accompaniment, FACS will not charge the support person any fees (if applicable).

### **Notice of temporary disruptions:**

Temporary disruptions to facilities or services that persons with disabilities rely on to access or use services may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Family and Children's Services.

In the event on any planned temporary disruptions (for example, repairs, renovations that limit access to an area or technology that may become temporarily unavailable), advance notice shall occur.

In the event of any unplanned temporary disruptions, notice will be done as quickly as possible.

Notifications will include information about services that are disrupted or unavailable, the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available or known.

### **Notifications Options include:**

- posting notices at the point of disruption, main entrance, reception and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or Family and Children's Services website;
- contacting individuals with appointments;
- verbally notifying individuals when they are seeking service or an appointment; or
- any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

### **Feedback Process:**

Family and Children's Services shall provide service users with the opportunity to provide feedback about the manner in which service is provided to persons with disabilities and whether

the feedback process is accessible. Feedback is welcomed and viewed as an opportunity to learn and improve accessibility.

Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and notice of the process will be made available, upon request, and publicized on the FACS website.

Family and Children's Services shall ensure the feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

Onsite feedback forms will be made readily available, upon request. Service users are invited to provide their feedback in writing (mail or fax), in person, by e-mail, by telephone or via agency website.

Their feedback can be brought to the attention of:

Accessibility Coordinator: Human Resources Coordinator

Mailing Address: 410 Sunset Drive, St. Thomas, ON N5R 3C7

In Person at: 99 Edward Street, St. Thomas, ON N5P 1Y8

Phone: 519-631-1492 Ext. 225

Confidential HR Fax: 519-931-2204

E-mail: [dsandhu@caselgin.on.ca](mailto:dsandhu@caselgin.on.ca)

The Accessibility Coordinator or designate will respond within 5 business days either in writing, in person, by e-mail or telephone acknowledging receipt of feedback and will set out the action to be taken in response to any concerns or complaints.

### **Training Requirements:**

#### Scope:

Family and Children's Services shall provide accessibility customer service training to all employees, student interns, Board of Directors, Volunteers, Resource Parents, consultants, contractors, agents and other persons who provide services on behalf of FACS. Training shall also be provided to any person who participates in the development of policies, procedures and practices.

#### Training Schedule:

This training shall be provided initially at orientation and shall be provided on an ongoing basis in the event of changes to legislation, policies, procedures and/or practices.

The method and amount of training shall be geared to the trainee's role in terms of accessibility.

### Training Provisions:

Regardless of the format, training will include:

- a review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the *Customer Service Standard*.
- policies, procedures, practices and training materials 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 assistive devices or require the assistance a service animal or support person.
- how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises that may help with providing services to persons with disabilities.
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services.

### Record of Training

FACS shall keep a record of training provided, including dates of when it was provided and the names and number of participants that were trained.

### **Notice of Availability and Format of Documents:**

Family and Children's Services will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available, upon request, by posting a notice on the FACS website and front entrance.

Family and Children's Services shall, upon request, provide a copy of document(s) to a person with a disability in an accessible format or with communication support in a timely manner and at no additional costs (if applicable). FACS will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the accessible format or communication support.

### **Review and Amendments:**

These procedures shall be reviewed on an ongoing basis and at a minimum interval of every two (2) years to ensure that it is reflective of Family and Children's Services current practices as well as legislative requirements. The Accessibility Coordinator shall be responsible for initiating this procedures review process and any subsequent amendments (including legislative changes) to this procedures document.

*Accessible formats of this document are available upon request.*