



STANDARD OF CONDUCT

Policy: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities

Policy Number: 4- 32

RevisionDate: November 12, 2015

Approved by:

BACKGROUND

As a requirement of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005, FreeFor All Foundation (FFAF) here summarizes our accessibility standards for customer service. Prior to the Act, and throughout our policies, FFAF has long affirmed the rights and dignity of each person and understood that living with a disability is a human rights issue. Our anti-oppression approach explicitly recognizes the personal and systemic discrimination faced by persons with disabilities and includes services and practices to support persons living with disabilities with the goal of equal participation of all members of the community in the economic and social life of society.

In recognition that discrimination on the basis of ability is unjust and unlawful, FFAF is committed to ensuring that no such discrimination exists within FFAF as a result of its policies or practices whether intentional or unintentional.

FFAF recognizes the definition of “disability” used in the Ontario Human Rights Code, including physical, mental health, developmental and learning disabilities. A disability may be visible or not visible.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Services to persons with disabilities will be integrated unless an alternative measure is necessary (temporarily or permanently) to benefit from the service.
- Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity, equal to that given to others, to use and benefit from all services.

- The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to use and benefit from all services will be recognized and supported.
- Persons with disabilities will receive communication on services, accessibility, and policies in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

PROCEDURE:

1. To ensure that we provide accessible programs and services, FFAF will actively consult the community on the major needs of the community on an on-going basis and identify any disability barriers that may limit access to our programs and services. FFAF will implement outreach and program strategies to correct any major imbalances in participation or barriers to access. FFAF will offer programs and services in locations that are decentralized and will include fully accessible locations. FFAF will advocate jointly with and on behalf of the diverse communities to ensure that their program needs are met.

Multiple parties within the organization will participate in this procedure. Managers and program staff will include this procedure in on-going and annual program planning and evaluation. The Board and Committees will review programs for service relevance and effectiveness and monitor the organization's strategic plan. Management and the Health & Safety Representatives will monitor locations for accessibility barriers and state of repair.

2. To ensure that **our programs and services are sensitive and responsive** to the groups we service, FFAF will take into consideration the demographic diversity of the community in all programs and the delivery of services. FFAF will accurately reflect the contributions and achievements of persons with disabilities in our programs and curriculum. FFAF will promote positive attitudes towards and respect for differences among the participants in our programs and users of our services. FFAF will review all resource materials (e.g. films, books, art that are used in FFAF programs), to ensure they encourage the promotion of diversity. FFAF will provide an environment where community members feel comfortable using assistive devices. Staff will provide assistive devices or special equipment where possible and appropriate and will continuously monitor the state of repair of these devices.

Persons with disabilities may enter our premises and access services accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or support person. There will be no fees incurred as a result of accompaniment by a support person. Where the role of a service animal is not readily apparent, a letter from a health practitioner confirming the need for the service animal may be requested. Assistive devices in this policy include elevators, automated doors, computer equipment, and adjustable phone sets.

3. In order to ensure that programs and services information are effectively communicated in an accessible and sensitive manner, FFAF will ensure that publications and promotional materials are available in multiple formats (ie. print and electronic) in plain language and using inclusive visual images that are reflective of the communities being served. FFAF will ensure that notices of program changes and closures are available in multiple formats (i.e. print signage and voicemail messages). It is our practice that if accessibility is limited by temporary disruptions (closures, repairs, etc) then we will post information including the reason for disruption, anticipated duration and alternatives to access services, if any. Such notices will be published in at least two of the following three formats – print signage, telephone voicemail, and website.
4. In order to ensure that current staff, Board members and volunteers receive training on the Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities Policy, FFAF will circulate the policy to all staff, Board members and volunteers. FFAF will hold a training session for all staff. FFAF will incorporate this training into program training and new staff orientation processes. All employees and volunteers must comply with the policy and failure to do so will have consequences including discipline. FFAF will work with persons with disabilities through specialized programming, public education and advocacy to improve the full participation in society of persons with disabilities.
5. In order to ensure that our policy is followed and customer service problems are addressed quickly and correctly, persons with disabilities and other allies are encouraged to use our Community and Service Complaints Policy or our Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy to assist in lodge complaints and seek resolutions including a written response. Persons with disabilities are welcome to make complaints or enquiries in a manner that takes into account their disability, including verbally in person, through a support person, by telephone, in writing, or by e-mail. All employees or volunteers are also obligated to report customer service problems or failures to follow this policy to their supervisor.

On request, this full policy will be available to anyone with reasonable notice. This policy will be posted on our website.