

STATEMENT of POLICY and PROCEDURE			
Section:	CORPORATE	No.	B-12
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1 POLICY

- 1.01 Ottawa-Carleton Lifeskills Inc. (OCL) is committed to providing high-quality services that respect the dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity for customers, (as defined in 5.01) with disabilities and to ensuring that they receive accessible goods and services of the same quality and in a timely manner as other customers.

Note: For purposes of this policy, the clients who live in OCL residential group homes, those who attend OCL day programs, and those in OCL's Home Sharing and SIL programs do not fall under the definition of "customer" as they are covered by other OCL client-specific policies and procedures.

- 1.02 OCL will endeavour to eliminate and prevent barriers to accessibility and will provide accessible entrances to its physical premises (ie: wheelchair ramps, door handles/openers, etc.)
- 1.03 OCL is committed to communicating with customers in ways that accommodate their disability by providing accessible telephone and/or electronic services, and accessible services to those who use assistive devices, service animals and/or support persons.
- 1.04 OCL will provide training on customer service to all employees, students, volunteers and others who are involved in providing goods and services to customers as applicable.
- 1.05 OCL will review and update this policy and all related plans and procedures every 5 years or earlier as required.
- 1.06 This policy is available in alternate formats upon request.

2 PURPOSE

- 2.01 This policy is intended to benefit a full range of customers by endeavouring to ensure that they are treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome and have their need for accommodation respected whether a disability is apparent or not.

3 SCOPE

- 3.01 Applies to all employees, students, volunteers, and any other third party (ie: contractor, etc.) who may conduct business with OCL.

4 RESPONSIBILITY

- 4.01 EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS, and VOLUNTEERS are responsible for:

- a) Reading, signing off on, and complying with this policy.
- b) Consulting with a customer about the type of support they need within a timely manner and for providing that support at the same cost (if any) as for others.
- c) Knowing how to use assistive devices that are available within the various locations and for ensuring that all devices are in good working order at all times.
- d) Informing customers of the assistive devices that are available and for assisting customers as required.
- e) Communicating with customers over the telephone in plain language and for speaking clearly and slowly in a regular tone of voice.
- f) If a customer has a support person with him/her, for speaking directly to the customer and not to the support person.
- g) Offering to communicate with customers by other means of communication (ie: letter, email, TTY (text and voice telephones), relay services etc.)
- h) Not touching or moving any assistive device a customer brings with him/her without permission.
- i) Attending all training sessions as required.

- 4.02 SUPERVISORS are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that all employees, students and volunteers read and sign off on this policy.
- b) Providing training to all employees, students and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with customers.
- c) Ensuring that staff know how to use all assistive devices that are available within OCL.
- d) Providing customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in services.
- e) On rare occasions, when a Supervisor determines that a support person or a service animal cannot enter an area of the premises because of other laws

and/or regulations (ie: hospitals, kitchens etc.), the Supervisor will suggest appropriate alternatives and will provide assistance as necessary.

- f) Responding to any complaints and informing their Program Director of any issues and the follow up actions taken.
- g) Asking any Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Inspectors for identification before entering the premises and for recording what identification was presented.

Note: AODA inspections can occur anytime during regular business or daylight hours and AODA Inspectors do not need a warrant. However, they must provide identification prior to entering the premises.

- h) Immediately advising a Program Director of any AODA inspections.

4.03 PROGRAM DIRECTORS are responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that all Supervisors are trained on how to interact and communicate with customers and how to respond to any complaints.
- b) Providing the support or tools the Supervisors need in order to carry out their duties above (subject to the usual approval process).
- c) Responding to any complaints received.
- d) After consultation with the Supervisor, for providing documents, records and information to an AODA Inspector as required.
- e) Keeping the Executive Director informed of any complaints and/or inspections.

4.04 The EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that the Executive Assistant is trained on how to interact and communicate with customers.
- b) Ensuring that the OCL website or other electronic communication complies with this policy.
- c) Providing or arranging training for the Board of Directors.
- d) Responding to any complaints brought forward at the Executive Director level and for keeping the Board of Directors apprised as necessary.

4.05 HUMAN RESOURCES is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that the Human Resources Assistant is trained on how to interact and communicate with customers.
- b) Notifying job applicants about the availability of accommodation and for arranging when requested.

- c) Preparing employment plans by consulting the appropriate parties for anyone requiring accommodation.

4.06 The FINANCE Director is responsible for:

- a) Ensuring that all Finance employees are trained on how to interact and communicate with customers.
- b) Ensuring that all invoices and/or other finance documents are made available in accessible format when requested.
- c) Ensuring that any contractor or provider of services is aware of, and complies with, this policy.

5 DEFINITIONS

5.01 Customer: Any person coming onto OCL premises other than an OCL client.

5.02 Accessibility: Removing barriers that keep customers with disabilities from participating in all aspects of life including physical accommodations (ie: installing wheelchair ramps, door handles, etc), and administrative measures such as providing documents in accessible formats, etc.

5.03 Disability: Any degree of physical disability, condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, learning disability or mental disorder.

5.04 Customer Service Standards: Encompass the four principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity to ensure that customers with disabilities can obtain, use, benefit from the services, and enjoy that benefit seamlessly.

5.05 Service Animal:

Animals that are individually trained to perform tasks for people with disabilities such as guiding people who are blind, alerting people who are deaf, pulling wheelchairs, assistance dogs for people with mobility impairments, special skills dogs that detect oncoming seizures, or animals trained to offer specific emotional support to those with diagnoses that benefit from having a service or therapy animal assist them.

5.06 World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0:

Ensures that the technology used works with assistive technologies and the accessibility features of operating systems, browsers, and other user agents.

6 REFERENCE and RELATED STATEMENTS of POLICY and PROCEDURE

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms
Ontario Human Rights Act
Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001

Ontario Regulation 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards
Pets and Service/Therapy Animals Policy D-17
World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0

7 PROCEDURE

TRAINING:

- 7.01 Staff will be trained on policies, procedures, practices and assistive devices on an ongoing basis when changes are made. All trainings will be documented with date, time, trainer and attendees.
- 7.02 Training shall include:
- a) A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005 and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (regulation 429/07) and this policy.
 - b) How to interact and communicate with customers with various types of disabilities and with those who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
 - c) How to use equipment or devices (ie: TTY, wheelchair lifts, etc.) that may be available on OCL's premises.
 - d) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing OCL's services.
- 7.03 All training for new employees must be completed by the end of their probationary period.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 7.04 OCL will promote inclusive design of information and communication platforms in its web site, brochures, flyers, invoices, order forms, feedback forms, complaint forms, newsletter, telephone calls, marketing materials, intranet, employee emails, etc.
- 7.05 Upon request, OCL will provide Information (data, facts and knowledge) that exists in any format (text, audio, visual, images, etc.) in accessible formats such as large print, recorded audio, electronic formats, Braille, etc. and, in communication supports such as captioning, sign language, plain language, etc. according to the needs of the customer.
- 7.06 OCL will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports in accessible formats. Emergency information that is available to the public (ie: emergency procedures, plans, public safety information, etc.) will be available in accessible format.
- 7.07 Internet and Intranet websites shall comply with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 as per: [http:// www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/)

- 7.08 OCL's website will provide alternatives for any non-text content so that it can be changed into other formats such as large print, Braille, speech, symbols, separating foreground audio from background audio, making all functionality available from a key board and by not having content designed in a way that is known to cause seizures.
- 7.09 Written information must be:
- In clear plain language
 - Technical terms are explained
 - Clear plain fonts are used (ie: no small fonts)
 - Left alignment is used
 - Italicizing is avoided
 - Animated/flashing text is avoided
 - Text transcripts are provided for imbedded sounds
 - A plain text version is available for Braille transcription and screen readers

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

- 7.10 All Assistive Devices must be maintained in good and working condition at all times.

SERVICE ANIMALS AND SUPPORT PERSONS

- 7.11 Service animals will be welcome at all OCL premises except where prohibited by law (ie: hospitals, kitchens). If prohibited by law, OCL will provide alternate means for the customer to access OCL services. OCL reserves the right to ask for verification that an animal is a service animal.
- 7.12 Consideration will be made for staff and/or clients who have allergies to a service animal through making alternate arrangements for the customer wherever possible.
- Refer to OCL's Pets and Service/Therapy Animals Policy D-17 for additional information.
- 7.13 Any customer who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter OCL premises with his/her support person. At no time will a customer who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his/her support person while on OCL premises.

BILLING

- 7.14 Upon request, invoices will be provided in the most suitable format for the customer (ie: hard copy, large print, email, scanned, etc.). Questions from customers about the content of the invoice will be answered by telephone, email or other suitable manner.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

- 7.15 OCL will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in services (ie: program closures). The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

- 7.16 Comments on the services OCL provides to customers are welcome and appreciated. Feedback may be made by any appropriate means ie: oral or written, and should be directed to Management. All oral feedback must be documented.
- 7.17 Complaints will be addressed immediately however, some complaints may require more time while the facts related to the complaint are being reviewed. As a minimum, within 2 business days of receipt of the complaint, the customer will receive acknowledgement and assurances that OCL is looking into the matter. Feedback/response must be documented and OCL will endeavour to ensure that it is in a format that is accessible to the customer.
- 7.18 Questions about this policy, or if the policy is not understood, should be directed to Management.

MODIFICATION TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

- 7.19 No changes will be made to this policy before considering their impact on customers. Any policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of customers will be modified.

REPORTING

- 7.20 An annual Accessibility Standard Report shall be filed with the government or at such other time as required. The report shall be available to the public.
- 7.21 Reports shall include:
- a) General policies regarding the provision of goods and services to customers.
 - b) Policies on the use of assistive devices including what devices are available.
 - c) Policies on permitting services animals and support persons.
 - d) Steps that will be taken to provide notice of temporary disruption.
 - e) Summary of the training program and when it was provided.
 - f) Process for receiving, accepting and responding to feedback.

8 ATTACHMENTS

None