

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY: CUSTOMER SERVICE

Issued By: Tenant and Member Services Department	Effective Date: December 1, 2019
Approved By: Gautam Mukherjee, Executive Director	Revision Date:

POLICY

Mainstay Housing recognizes and values the rich diversity of Canadian society including individuals who experience homelessness, complex mental health challenges, addictions, and income insecurity. Mainstay is committed to working from an inclusive, holistic, anti-oppression framework to assist individuals from various cultures, racialized groups, abilities, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation and gender identities with their housing, mental health, and, or substance use concerns.

Mainstay’s customer service policy will follow the ideals of dignity, independence, equal opportunity and integration. We are committed to meeting or exceeding all applicable legislation regarding the provision of customer service.

DEFINITIONS

Persons with Disabilities: A “disability” is defined as it is by the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC). The OHRC indicates that “disability” should be interpreted in broad terms. It includes both present and past conditions, as well as a subjective component based on perception of disability.” Its definition also includes people with mental illness. For a more detailed definition of “disability” please refer to the OHRC at <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/policy-and-guidelines-disability-and-duty-accommodate/2-what-disability#sthash.2v3pojg8.dpuf>.

Support Persons: Any person that accompanies and assists a person with a disability.

Service Animals: Animals specifically trained to assist a person with a disability.

PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES

Service Animals

Service animals will be allowed access to our premises, except in areas where otherwise prohibited by law (e.g. food preparation areas). Staff may ask the owner for appropriate documentation where service animals are not clearly defined.

Support Persons

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Support persons are welcome to support tenants with disabilities when participating in programming or visiting Mainstay. A tenant with a disability who is accompanied by a support person is encouraged to enter Mainstay facilities with their support person. A tenant with a disability who is accompanied by a support person always has access to their support person while on our premises. If confidential information needs to be shared, consent will be obtained prior to any communication.

Assistive Devices

We work closely with tenants to determine how we can best support them and what assistance we can offer to accommodate their participation in services and facilities we offer. Assistive devices include wheelchair/mobility aids, respiratory equipment, visual and communication aids, etc.

Communication

We communicate with tenants with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We train staff on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. Methods of communication include telephone, in person, in writing, through email.

Intake Services

When possible, our staff determines which individuals will need support with their disability prior to their arrival on site and arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of Mainstay is to meet and surpass individual's expectations while serving those with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Mainstay provides services to people with disabilities can be made in-person to any staff member, over the phone, or by e-mail. Individuals can expect a prompt response where a response is requested.

Complaints are addressed according to our complaint policy and process already established in our organization's complaint management procedures.

Notice of Disruption in Service

Mainstay will provide timely notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the services and facilities we provide. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. Notice of service disruption will be posted in writing at all entrances, and at the point of disruption, as applicable.

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Staff Training

Mainstay provides training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Training is provided during new staff orientation, and on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities (AODA 2005).

Responsibilities

Management

Management is required to:

- a) Provide tenants and interested parties with a copy of this policy when requested.
- b) Make this policy available in a disability appropriate format when requested.
- c) Ensure all staff members are appropriately trained regarding the customer service accessibility act.
- d) Ensure notice is provided for any disruption of service.
- e) Collect and follow up on all customer service feedback.

Employees

All staff are required to:

- a) Attend and complete customer service accessibility training.
- b) Consistently provide high levels of customer service to all tenants.
- c) Apply the skills and knowledge offered in the customer service accessibility training.
- d) Promptly inform management of any issues regarding accessibility, or disruptions in service.
- e) Adhere to customer service accessibility policy at all times.

Modifications to the Policy

Note that this policy may be revised as other standards are introduced under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of Mainstay that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed. This policy compliments and supersedes any other policies related to accessibility at Mainstay.

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Questions about this Policy

If anyone has a question about the policy, they can contact Mainstay Housing for more information.