

PROCEDURE	
Section: Administration - Accessibility (AODA) Procedure: Accessible Customer Service	Number: AD-D-001 Page 1 of 5
Approved By: Paul Laperriere	Approval Date: June 2017
Next Review Date: June 2021	

1.0 Purpose

HandsTheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca (Hands) has an obligation to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

2.0 Scope

Procedure applies to: (Check all appropriate boxes for broad application)				
<u>Employees</u>	<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Board</u>	<u>Services (list)</u>	<u>Other (i.e. clients, visitors, contractors)</u>
x	x	x		x

3.0 Responsibility

- 3.1 **Employees** are required to participate in training and comply with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.
- 3.2 **Supervisors/Managers** are responsible to ensure all employees are trained in the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service requirements and comply with the policy, procedure and practices.
- 3.3 **Senior Leadership** is responsible to ensure all employees are trained in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and comply with the policy, procedure and work processes and establish policies and procedures which comply.

4.0 Definitions

Assistive Devices are auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (e.g., canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).

Disability, as per the Ontario Human Rights Code, means:

- a) 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical

PROCEDURE

Section: Administration - Accessibility (AODA)

Number: AD-D-001

Procedure: Accessible Customer Service

Page 2 of 5

reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- c) a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- d) a mental disorder; or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act.

Employees means every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of Hands, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

Persons with Disabilities are individuals who have a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Service Animals are animals individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

Support Persons are any persons, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend, who support a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.

Accommodation means taking steps to eliminate the different and negative treatment of individuals or groups protected under the *Canadian Human Rights Act*.

Reasonable Accommodation means taking steps to ensure that individuals who are otherwise able to work are not unfairly excluded from doing so when working conditions can be adjusted without causing undue hardship to the employer,

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Communications with a person with a disability will be conducted in a manner that takes the person's disability into account. Employees will be trained to interact and communicate with customers with various types of disabilities:

- fully accessible telephone service will be available to our customers with employees trained to communicate with telephone customers in clear, plain language speaking clearly and slowly
- customers will be offered communication by e-mail, TTY (text telephone), internet protocol relay service, if telephone communication is not suitable to

PROCEDURE

Section: Administration - Accessibility (AODA)

Number: AD-D-001

Procedure: Accessible Customer Service

Page 3 of 5

their communication needs or is not available.

- 5.2 Assistive devices** may be used as necessary by persons with disabilities to access Hands services. All customers and the broader public will be supported in their use of personal assistive devices by Hands employees and volunteers. Employees will be aware of various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.
- 5.3 Support Persons** upon which persons with disabilities rely are welcome onto parts of the agency's premises that are open to the public and other third parties. The support person could be a paid professional, a volunteer, a friend or a family member. They do not necessarily need to have special communication such as an intervenor, sign language interpreter, or a personal support worker providing physical assistance. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on our premises.
- 5.4 Service animals** are most commonly a dog but may be another animal, including a ferret or monkey, that a person with a disability uses for support. Such use is either readily apparent or is supported by a letter from a physician or nurse. It may be readily apparent that an animal is a service animal when its appearance or behaviour (e.g., wearing a harness or saddlebags) identifies it as such, or the owner has a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school. It may also be apparent if a person is using the animal to assist him or her, e.g., opening doors or retrieving items.
- 5.5** Hands welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public. If a service animal is excluded by law to be on premises, we will ensure that alternative means are available to enable the person with a disability to access our services.
- 5.6 Temporary disruption notice** will be provided in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services that will significantly impact access by people with disabilities. Reasonable efforts will be made to provide notice to customers by posting information in visible places on our premises or on the Hands website or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances. The notice will include information about the reasons for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- 5.7 Training**, initial and ongoing, will be provided 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,

PROCEDURE

Section: Administration - Accessibility (AODA)

Number: AD-D-001

Procedure: Accessible Customer Service

Page 4 of 5

practices and procedures related to the AODA Customer Service Standard.

- 5.8 Feedback** regarding the way Hands provides services to people with disabilities is welcome and appreciated. Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods. All feedback will be directed to the Human Resource Manager and within 30 days, a response (if required) will be provided.

Questions about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation will be provided by, or referred to, Hands' Human Resource Manager.

Complaints will be addressed according to complaint categories already established in our Hands' complaint management procedures (Insert appropriate reference)

5.9 Posting of Documents

Notices are posted informing the public that the documents required by the Customer Service Standard are available upon request and will be provided in a format that takes the person's disability into account.

When providing a document to a person with a disability, Hands will work with the individual to determine options in order to provide the document or the information contained in the document in a format that takes the person's disability into account.

A copy of the Accessibility policy/procedure is available upon request by contacting the Senior Manager of Human Resources. In addition, a copy of this policy is available on the Hands website at www.thefamilyhelpnetwork.ca under the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act.

5.10 Requests for Reasonable Accommodation

5.10.1 **Job Applicants** will be advised of Hands' accessibility policy and procedures and any stated needs for accommodation will be evaluated by the Human Resources Department. If a request for accommodation is denied, reasons will be clearly communicated to the applicant.

5.10.2 **Employees**, full or part-time, casual or contract, permanent and temporary, may make a request to their supervisor for accommodation any time during their employment. The request will be documented and any supporting detail requested. The employee supervisor will discuss the available options. Accommodation options may include, but are not

PROCEDURE

Section: Administration - Accessibility (AODA)

Number: AD-D-001

Procedure: Accessible Customer Service

Page 5 of 5

limited to: workstation adjustments; reassignment of job tasks; scheduling or hours of work changes; leaves of absence; and temporary or permanent reassignment. The employee's preference will be taken into consideration, but cost and ease of provision may influence the supervisor's decision. If the accommodation options could cause undue hardship to the agency, the supervisor will refer the matter to the Human Resources Department for collaboration with Directors and a final decision.

The employee may appeal the offered accommodation to the Human Resources Department. The HR Department will consult with Directors. An employee may also file a discrimination complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission.

6.0 Linkages (cross reference to Policies, other procedures, legislation, regulations)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

CS-A-002 Client Feedback and Complaints Procedure

<http://www.aoda.ca/a-guide-to-the-integrated-accessibility-standards-regulation/#sect1>

7.0 Policy Change History

Revision number	Date of Approval	Description of Change
		Revised to reflect...