

PROCEDURE	
Section: Administration - Accessibility (AODA) Procedure: Accessible Customer Service - Use of Support Persons or Service Animals	Number: AD-D-003 Page 1 of 3
Approved By: Trish Mintz	Approval Date: reviewed July 2023 scheduled for revision
Next Review Date: July 2027	

1.0 Purpose

Hands TheFamilyHelpNetwork.ca (Hands) has an obligation to ensure that customers and the broader public who use support persons or service animals are able to access its facilities, goods and services as required by 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 facilitate access to Hands premises and services by persons with disabilities, in compliance with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.
- 3.2 **Supervisors/Managers** are responsible to ensure all employees are trained to facilitate access to premises and services by people with disabilities who use supports persons or service animals, in compliance with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service and Hands' policies, procedures and practices.
- 3.3 **Senior Leadership** is responsible to ensure policies and procedures are established that comply with Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.

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4.0 Definitions

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

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.

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

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.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Access

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person or service animal is welcome at Hands premises and events with his or her support person or service animal. Access will be in accordance with normal security procedures.

Unless otherwise excluded by law, the customer service standard requires that a person is permitted to be accompanied by his or her guide dog or other service animal in the areas that are open to the public or third parties. As such, Hands employees should allow persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal unless the animal is excluded by law.

Service animals are permitted in most public situations. Some laws generally prohibit animals in certain areas, such as food preparation areas. However, service animals are permitted in most public situations. For example, a service animal would not be allowed in a restaurant kitchen, but is allowed in the restaurant itself.

In the event that a law excludes a service animal, the reason why the animal is excluded should be explained to the individual, and other reasonable arrangements to provide goods and services should be explored with the assistance of the person with the disability.

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5.2 Fees

Support Persons

In the event that a fee is charged in relation to a support person's presence on Hands premises or to attend a Hands sponsored event, advance notice of the fee will be provided.

Service Animals

Service animals are non-participants and should be granted free admission to the goods and/or services being accessed by the person with a disability they are accompanying.

5.3 Communication

All communications should be directed to the individual and not the support person.

5.4 Confidentiality/Disclosure

Consent of Disclosure

It may also be necessary to first obtain consent of disclosure from the individual prior to discussing or releasing confidential personal information in the presence of a support person. If the individual uses a different support person for subsequent confidential meetings, a new signed consent may be required. Please refer to the confidentiality consent form for that purpose.

5.5 Confidentiality

Where confidentiality is important because of the kinds of information discussed, the support person may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the disclosure of information. A copy of the signed confidentiality agreement should be retained at the Hands office.

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

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07

7.0 Policy Change History

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