

POLICY ON ACCESSIBLE CLIENT SERVICE

PURPOSE

This policy establishes that goods and services provided by Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre shall be provided to all community members, including people with disabilities, according to the following principles

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Dignity

Service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

Independence

Service provision shall support the independence of the individual, respecting their right to safety and personal privacy

Equity/Equality of Outcome

The outcome of service is to be the same for all individuals regardless of disability

Integrated

People with disabilities fully benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar manner as all others, taking into account the potential disability-related needs

Sensitive

Service will be provided in a way that respects an individual's needs

Responsive

Service is delivered in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the accommodation required. For example, alternate formats for written material will be provided in a timely manner

This policy is delivered in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and is applicable to all policies, procedures and processes of Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre.

POLICY

1. Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use and benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices. In the event that a person with a disability is hindered or unable to access goods or services, and after consulting with the individual, Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, its staff, administrators, volunteers and contractors shall accommodate the individual by using any other assistive measures available, such as, but not limited to, providing temporary access to an alternative device or support person.

2. Service Animals

Service animals such as, but not limited to, guide dogs, service dogs, seeing or hearing support animals, or seizure animals and other certified animals shall be permitted entry to all premises of Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre facilities and meeting places that are open to the public.

A service animal shall be defined as “any animal where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person for reasons related to his or her disability and if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse or other government issued certification confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.”

Service animals are not permitted where food is being prepared or where otherwise disallowed by law. Where a service animal is to be denied access to a facility or meeting room, other accommodation will be afforded such as an alternate meeting format such as teleconference or videoconference where technology permits, service delivery at an alternate time or location, any other assistive measures available to ensure equality of service outcome.

Owners of service animals shall receive information from staff as to the location of fresh water for the service animal and where the service animal can be taken to relieve themselves.

3. Support Persons

Support persons shall be permitted entry to all premises of Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre facilities and meeting places that are open to the public.

If there is an event wherein admission fees are charged and payable to Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre, the fee shall be waived for the support person. If fees are charged by a third party, the support person assumes the responsibility for payment of the fee to the third party.

If a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises, the person shall be accompanied by a support person while on the premises.

The customer shall determine whether a support person is necessary, however where an employee believes that a support person should be present for the health or safety of the individual or others, a person will be designated by Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre to accompany the individual while on the premises. An employee can request the presence of a support person when; the risk is readily apparent (not just possible or presumed), the risk is greater than that posed to other clients, the risk cannot be eliminated or amended by other means.

4. Notice of Service Disruption

If a temporary service disruption occurs that would limit a person with a disability's access to the premises or inhibit their ability to use and benefit from a particular service, the office in

question will post notice, at the earliest possible time of the nature and duration of the service disruption. This shall be done in several ways including, but possibly not limited to, the agency's website, notice on entry doors, with all workers, on individual voicemails.

If an unexpected or sudden service disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated using any other means possible. Some other means might be, serving the client in an alternate location or area, with mutual agreement; serving the client over the phone, where feasible, any other ways available at the time.

All Notice of Service Disruption shall include a) the name of the service, facility or event, b) the service location being impacted, c) alternate service locations, d) alternate service methods, e) hours of service availability, f) contact information, g) any other information deemed by that department to be required.

5. Training

All employees and agents of Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre who are providing direct service to persons with disabilities shall be trained in all the aspects of accessible customer service.

All training shall cover content on people with disabilities, the purposes of the AODA, how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities, instructions on how to interact with people whose disabilities necessitate the use of a service animal or person or an assistive device, instructions on how to use assistive technologies, such as screen readers, voice recognition systems, and TTY, that exist at the agency, instructions on what to do when a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing agency services.

Training shall be mandatory for all new employees upon their initial orientation. In addition, all employees shall receive additional training every 5 years thereafter.

6. Feedback process

Feedback will be sought from people with disabilities who access services through DBNC. Feedback may be provided by the person with a disability in the way that is most convenient for them. This can be in person, by telephone, in writing, by text, email, by diskette or otherwise. Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider, who is then responsible for conveying the feedback to management, at: 3650 Dixie Road, Unit 103 Mississauga, Ontario L4Y 3V9. All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve overall customer service. In addition, the author of the feedback shall be provided a response in the format the feedback was received outlining the actions taken to address the feedback.

7. Notice of Availability of Documents

This policy and any other document deemed to be key in the delivery of accessible customer service will be made available upon request in the format that best accommodates the requester's disability.