

## **POLICY:**

Providing our customers with the highest quality of customer service is a matter of great importance to the CRC. The CRC shall ensure that products, services, and facilities are accessible to all customers, and will strive to promote equality, dignity, and respect for everyone. Treating staff, clients, and volunteers fairly is at the heart of our business, and we aim to make sure that everyone can enjoy the highest possible standards of service at all times. It is imperative that customers are greeted in a friendly manner and that they are provided with quality service each and every visit. Customers will be treated fairly, with respect, dignity, patience and understanding. CRC employees will respect customer privacy and handle confidential information in an appropriate way, take responsibility and be accountable for the accuracy and quality of our work and act with integrity at all times.

The CRC is committed to following the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity. The CRC will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that everyone is treated fairly and consistently
- allowing individuals with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace as long as this does not present a safety risk
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that individuals with disabilities have access to the same services and programs, in the same place and in a similar manner
- taking into account individual needs; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the individual's disability

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 sets various standards and deadlines to increase accessibility by 2025. This policy is intended to set a foundation of expectations while meeting the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. The CRC is committed to meeting all applicable deadlines and will be incorporating changes as indicated by the act.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

Assistive Device is a technical aid, communication device, or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a

wheelchair, a walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering, and/or reading.

Disability as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the Ontario Human Rights Code, refers to:

- 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 co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997

Guide Dog is defined as a highly-trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Persons' Rights Act, to provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service Animal is defined as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability

Service Dog is defined as a dog other than a guide dog for the blind if (reflected in Health Protection and Promotion Act, Ontario Regulation 562):

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- The person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

Support Person in relation to a person with a disability, is defined as another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal

care, medical needs, or access to goods and services (as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07).

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **i. Published Service Standards**

The CRC will:

- Publish details of core customer service standards and values in public offices and on the CRC's website.
- Monitor our performance against these standards and publish details of how the CRC is performing against them in a variety of ways.
- Review core customer service standards and values following ongoing feedback from our clients, our stakeholders, and our staff.

### **ii. Inform the Customer**

Information about CRC products and services will be accessible, accurate, and up to date. It will be made available in our offices and on our website. This information will contain relevant contact details including a telephone number, office address, and e-mail address.

The CRC will take steps to make sure that information provided is clear and straightforward so that it is easily understood. The CRC will provide information to the client in a manner that takes in to account possible disabilities, and CRC's commitment to accessibility.

The CRC will only use customer information in a lawful and fair manner as required by the Privacy Act and Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act.

### **iii. Service Accessibility**

The CRC will take all required steps to make sure our services and facilities are accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities. The CRC will comply with all applicable customer service accessibility legislation requirements; taking into account the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality.

#### **iv. Consulting with Customers**

The CRC will seek the views of our customers regarding the delivery of our services, the quality of our services, and the standards of service they expect from us. We welcome customers' comments or suggestions on how we can improve the quality of our service.

If a customer wishes to make a comment or has a suggestion on how we can improve the quality of service, we will provide the customer with a means to do so, or refer them to the website to make an online comment or suggestion. Multiple methods of providing feedback will be accepted to remain in accordance with the CRC's commitment to accessibility.

#### **v. Polite and Helpful Staff**

The CRC staff members shall be polite and helpful, act with integrity and discretion and treat customers with respect at all times.

The CRC staff shall be provided with appropriate customer service training to help them deliver our products and services in an efficient and professional manner.

The CRC staff shall take into account a customer's disabilities while communicating with them.

#### **vi. Feedback Procedure**

If a customer is unhappy, or has recommendations in regards to the quality or accessibility of services received, they may give feedback:

- In person at any of our locations;
- By letter, fax, e-mail, online; or
- By telephone or text-phone

The CRC will fully and fairly investigate the complaint(s) and offer the customer a full explanation of the circumstances and take appropriate action. As previously referenced, multiple methods of providing feedback will be accepted to remain in accordance with the CRC's commitment to accessibility.

The CRC will record and monitor complaints about the quality of service and try to address concerns. We want to learn from complaints so that we can improve the quality of services we provide.

### **vii. Service Disruptions**

In the event of a planned, or unplanned, disruption in the facilities or services usually used by Community Resource Centre's clients, CRC will provide notice including:

- Reason for disruption
- Expected duration of disruption
- Description of alternative services or facilities available

This notice shall be placed at all public entrances and on our website.

### **viii. Training**

In order to maintain the highest degree of accessibility in the delivery of services, all staff that work with clients, the public, or participate in the development of organizational policies, including volunteers and contract staff will, undergo a training program as soon as possible after being hired, starting a contract, or becoming a volunteer. The training program will:

- Outline the importance of accessible services
- Review the Accessible Customer Service Standard for Ontario, and related policies
- Provide best practices for interacting with persons with disabilities, including:
  - Support persons
  - Service animals
  - Assistive devices
  - Familiarize staff with accessibility tools available to staff, clients, and other members of the public
  - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the CRC's services

### **ix. Compliance**

In order to maintain compliance with this policy CRC shall ensure that all staff have access to a copy of this policy.

### **x. Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required. In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of services and

programs. For example, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, the CRC will look at alternative methods for providing services or programs. Employees or volunteers requiring accommodation should contact their immediate Supervisor.

#### **xi. Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs**

An individual with a disability that is accompanied by a guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to applicable premises unless otherwise excluded by law. Exclusion Guidelines:

- If a guide dog, service animal or service dog is excluded by law the CRC will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access services and programs, when possible (for example, securing the animal in a safe location and offering the guidance of an employee).
- If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the individual for reasons relating to his or her disability, Community Resource Centre may request verification. Verification may include:
  - A letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability;
  - A valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada; or,
  - A certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school

The individual that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog, and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.

If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, the CRC will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals.

#### **xii. Support Persons**

If an individual with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the CRC will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter applicable premises together and that the individual is not prevented from having access to the support person.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the individual, prior to any conversation where confidential information might be discussed.

In situations where current practice may create a perceived barrier, such as recruitment, training and testing, the CRC will consider other methods or options, when appropriate.

### **xiii. Information and Communication**

The CRC is committed to ensuring that our information, policies, programs and practices are available in formats that take into account the individual's disabilities. Individuals that require information in an alternative format, such as enlarged text or verbal assistance, should contact any CRC staff, or email:

[askus@crc-renfrewcounty.com](mailto:askus@crc-renfrewcounty.com)

### **xiv. Emergency Response Plan**

The CRC is dedicated to ensuring the health and safety of all of our employees, volunteers, visitors, customers and guests. As such, the CRC will provide the Emergency Response Plan in a format that takes into consideration individual and accessibility needs.

It is critical that all of our employees, volunteers, visitors, customers and guests know and understand our Emergency Response Plan. If the information provided to you is unclear or in a format that prevents you from fully knowing and understanding our process, please contact us as soon as possible by phone at (613) 757-3108, by email at [askus@crc-renfrewcounty.com](mailto:askus@crc-renfrewcounty.com) or in person at 15 Lake Street, Killaloe, ON K0J2A0

The CRC will work with the individual, as soon as practicable, to identify solutions and options that take into consideration their needs. Alternative options include but are not limited to:

- Enlarged text
- Communication support either in person or over the phone
- Documents provided via email.

If requested, and upon approval by the individual, the individual Emergency Response and Fire Evacuation Plan shall be shared with the person designated to provide assistance to the individual.