

Subject: Customer Service Policy: Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities	Policy Number: N/A
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1. Our mission

The mission of Summit Housing & Outreach Programs (Summit) is to provide leadership in supportive housing, case management and systemic advocacy for people with mental illness.

2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Summit strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other service users.

3. Providing goods and services to people with disabilities

Summit is committed to excellence in serving all service users including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

3.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will train staff and volunteers who communicate with service users on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

3.2 Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our service users. We will train staff and volunteers to communicate with service users over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with service users by email, text, TTY and relay services if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

3.3 Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff and volunteers are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by service users with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

We will also ensure that staff and volunteers know how to use any assistive devices available on our premises for service users.

3.4 Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our service users. For this reason, invoices will be provided in the following formats upon request: hard copy, large print and e-mail, etc.

We will answer any questions service users may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

3.5 Service Delivery

As we are a community based organization, if a customer is not able to access our offices, we will meet them in their home, in an accessible location in the community or via virtual care such as telephone or secure videoconferencing.

4. Use of service animals and support persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Summit's premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to Summit's activities and premises. Service users will be informed of this by a notice that will be posted in Summit's premises and our website.

5. Notice of temporary disruption

Summit will provide service users with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

6. Training for staff

Summit will provide training to all employees, volunteers, contractors, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained: volunteers, students, Outreach Caseworker, Residential Caseworker, Nurses, Social Workers, Specialist Workers, Peer Support, Coordinators, Program Assistant, Financial Administrative Assistant, Accounting Assistant, Senior Administrative Assistant, Managers, Directors, Executive Director and Board of Directors.

This training will be provided during the orientation week after staff/volunteers commence their duties.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- How to use the equipment or devices available on provider's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Summit's goods and services
- Summit's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Staff and volunteers will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

7. Feedback process

The ultimate goal of Summit is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving service users with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Summit provides goods and services to people with disabilities, and on our feedback process itself, can be made by e-mail, verbally, via virtual suggestion box and paper feedback form. All feedback will be directed to the relevant Program Manager. Service users can expect to hear back in 5 days.

8. Modifications to this or other policies

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 Summit's that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

9. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to service users with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to the Director of Client Service and Quality.