



POLICIES & PROCEDURES

AODA CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

The following are responsible for the development, review and oversight of this policy:

Staff: Executive Director

Department: Executive

Board Position: Chair,
Governance and
Administration

Board Committee: Governance and Administration

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Customer Service Standards Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in regulation 429/07 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and to establish a policy for Ve'ahavta that governs the provision of its good and services to persons with disabilities.

POLICY

Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, Ve'ahavta strives at all times to serve its stakeholders 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 and access to our services, and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other stakeholders.

Ve'ahavta uses reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following four principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equal opportunity

BEST PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

Ve'ahavta is committed to excellence in serving all stakeholders including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

Communication

- We will endeavor to do our best to communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- We will train staff and volunteers who communicate with stakeholders on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- When unsure, we will inquire with stakeholders about how we can best support them.

Telephone services

We are committed to improving accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in ways that are supportive, such as use of clear and slow communication when language is a challenge or a hearing impairment is present.

We will offer to communicate with customers in writing if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people who need assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

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 Ve'ahavta'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.

2. Notice of temporary disruption

Ve'ahavta will provide stakeholders 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.

3. Training for staff

Ve'ahavta will provide training to all employees 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, practices and procedures.

Training for employees 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
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Ve'ahavta services.

Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

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.

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS POLICY

Original Effective Date: June 19 2014

Last Update Date: June 2021

Review Period: Every two years

Board Approval Date: October 13, 2015

Date of Next Update: June 2023