Personnel Policy & Procedures
Accessible Customer Service

Policy Statement:

In fulfilling our mission, NHCIA 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 customers.

NHCIA is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

NHCIA understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

NHCIA is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities.

Our accessible customer service policy is consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

Procedures:

Providing goods and services to people with disabilities

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

Information and Communications

NHCIA communicates with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. Upon request, NHCIA will provide information and or documents in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- in a timely manner, considering the person's accessibility needs due to disability
- at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible

- a summary of the unconvertible information or communications

NHCIA notifies the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on NHCIA's Website

Feedback process

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

Feedback and Concern reports regarding the way NHCIA provides goods and services to people with disabilities are available on NHCIA's website and can also be made by e-mail, verbally and/or written. All feedback will be directed to the Executive Director or designate. Customers can expect to hear back in 2 business days.

NHCIA ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Complaints will be addressed according to complaint categories already established in our agency's complaint management procedures.

Training

NHCIA is committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

In addition, we will train:

- all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies
- all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization

Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

Training will include the following:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- 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 assistive device available on the provider's premises or otherwise that may help with the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities

- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing NHCIA's goods and services or facilities
- NHCIA's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Assistive devices

- We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services
- People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities
- In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities
- We ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or that we provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services or facilities
- We will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them

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 3rd parties. We will 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.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario

- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

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 NHCIA's premises with their support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on our premises.

Notice of temporary disruption

NHCIA will provide customers 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.

This notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counter on our premises.

Services/Facilities include:

Administration Offices at 2 Alice Street and 113 Hastings Street

The notice will be made publicly available on NHCIA's website

Modifications to this or other policies

NHCIA is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of NHCIA that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request

This policy is reviewed annually for changes to the law as it pertains to AODA and the Human Rights Code. Any changes will be communicated with all staff and volunteers

Employment

We notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that consider an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that considers the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- when the employee moves to a different location in the organization
- when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed
- when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers 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 Executive Director.

Appendix A

North Hastings Community Integration Association

Notice of Temporary Disruption of Services

Reason for the disruption**:**

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_____

_____

_____

_____

Anticipated length of disruption:

_____

_____

_____

Anticipated return date: _____

Temporary Service will be provided at

_____

_____

Or call**:** _____

Sorry for any inconvenience