

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Purpose

To ensure that volunteers of any ability are engaged and recruited by Smooth Rock Falls EDC and that all volunteers are equipped to work and provide service to clients with disabilities.

Policy Statement

Smooth Rock Falls EDC strives to ensure that our service delivery supports the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA): independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity. Volunteers receive appropriate training on the AODA, its Customer Service Standard and the knowledge to effectively serve all clients. Volunteers are engaged in an accessible recruitment process and are encouraged to identify any accommodations needed to fulfill their role effectively.

Definitions

“Disability” refers to mental, physical, learning disabilities, chronic illness, mental illness and anything that would be prescribed as disability from an insurer.

“Customer” refers to anyone receiving a service.

“Accessible” refers to spaces, communication and information that can be accessed by anyone regardless of ability. Examples include accessible washrooms which remove barriers for physical disabilities or exclude any gender identities; or an accessible website with screen reading technology and adaptable font size.

“Accommodation” is the action that can be taken, when possible, to meet the ability needs of a client, volunteer, or staff-person. For volunteers, accommodations will allow for the completion of non-essential duties when possible.

Responsibilities

Service delivery guidelines and policies are created in accordance with the Customer Service Standard of AODA to ensure all services can be delivered to all clients, including those with disabilities.

Volunteer Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of volunteers to follow the Customer Service Standard requirements and the procedures of this policy in providing service to clients.

Volunteer Coordinator Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of volunteer coordinators recruiting, engaging and working with volunteers to be mindful of accommodations required by applicants who may have disabilities.

Training of volunteers should include a portion on the Customer Service Standard of the AODA to ensure clients can receive uninterrupted service. Feedback from volunteers and clients will be connected via the Smooth Rock Falls EDC website and in-office drop box to ensure that service delivery and volunteer engagement is accessible.

Procedures

Volunteer coordinators shall:

- Be asked to assess & identify the actual abilities needed for a volunteer position when posting opportunities.
- Ensure that volunteering premises are accessible and provide an accessible washroom; this applies to on-site and off-site facilities.
- Ensure that outreach, recruitment and other initiatives take place in accessible facilities and consider possible accommodation needs to communicate with those attending
- Check appointment, interview and registration information for accommodations of volunteers or clients ahead of meetings, sessions or other events.
- Provide training to volunteers on the Customer Service Standard via the Government of Ontario ["AccessForward" online training module](#). This training addresses techniques and knowledge required to effectively serve clients with disabilities.

- Include statement of accommodation on all position descriptions to ensure potential volunteers are aware that their needs will be accommodated.

Volunteers shall be trained and effectively prepared to:

- Allow clients with disabilities to use assistive devices to access our services and provide other measures wherever possible and when needed.
- Welcome guide dogs or other certified service animals to accompany clients in any area of the premises open to the public.
- Encourage anyone with a disability to have their support person accompany them to attend an office visit, training session or special event – support persons are welcomed and not charged for event admissions.
- Make adjustments to shared space (training room, waiting area, interview room) for assistive devices, a service animal or a support person.
- Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person's disability, including alternate forms of communication (verbal, written, digital) based on individual need.