

**PARTICIPATION SUPPORT SERVICES  
POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL**

<b>SECTION: GENERAL</b>	
<b>TITLE: AODA Customer Service Policy</b>	
<b>CATEGORY: Policy</b>	<b>NUMBER: I (7.2)</b>
<b>ISSUED BY: Executive Director</b>	<b>ISSUED: Mar. 29/ 23</b>
<b>APPROVED BY: Board of Directors</b>	<b>REPLACES: Dec. 22/ 17</b>

**Commitment to Accessibility**

In keeping with our values Participation Support Services is committed to providing services in a manner consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for all persons, including persons with disabilities. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

**Scope**

This policy applies to:

- Board members, employees, volunteers, and contractors who deal with the public on behalf of Participation Support Services.
- The provision of goods and services at premises owned/operated by Participation Support Services as well as any interactions between our employees and people served in the community, over the phone, via email or by mail.

**Assistive Devices**

Participation Support Services recognizes that some people with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services. In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern, or may not be permitted for other reasons, we will take other reasonable measures to ensure that the person with a disability can access our services.

Participation Support Services will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices (e.g. mobility devices, hearing aids, magnifiers, etc.) which may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

**Communication**

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

**Service Animals**

Participation Support Services welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public. If the service animal is legally excluded from some part of the premises,

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Participation Support Services will explain why the animal is excluded and provide alternate measures to enable the person to access our services.

When we cannot easily identify that the animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional (e.g. physician, nurse, optometrist, audiologist, etc.) that confirms that the person requires the service animal for reasons related to their disability.

When visiting Participation Support Services, it is the responsibility of the person with the service animal to care for and control the animal at all times. In the event that a Participation Support Services staff member or person served is allergic to the service animal, alternative arrangements will be made.

**Support Persons**

Persons with a disability who are accompanied by a support person are welcome on our premises and may have access to that support person at all times.

When necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or others, Participation Support Services may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on our premises.

Participation Support Services requires prior consent from the person with a disability before communicating confidential information about that person in the presence of their support person.

**Notice of Temporary Disruption**

Participation Support Services will make a reasonable effort to notify clients with disabilities about any planned or unforeseen disruptions to our services or facilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated disruption and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

**Staff Training**

Participation Support Services will provide accessible customer service training to all employees and volunteers, anyone involved in developing our policies, and contractors acting on behalf of Participation Support Services to provide services to people we support.

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Training will include:

- The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- Participation Support Services policies related to 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 use of a service animal or a support person.
- How to use equipment or devices that we have on site or might have access to that might help people with disabilities.
- How to respond to an individual with a disability who is having difficulty accessing our services
- Any changes or subsequent updates to the requirements of this legislation

Participation Support Services will provide training as quickly as possible to current board members, employees, volunteers, and contractors providing service on behalf of the agency. Training to new board members, employees, etc. will be provided as part of the orientation process. Training will be updated to reflect legislative changes, or changes in our policies.

Participation Support Services will maintain training records including training dates and the names of persons trained.

**Transportation**

Participation Support Services owns and operates wheelchair accessible vans to facilitate resident access to medical appointments and structured programs. Participation Support Services' staff members will assist residents in accessing accessible community-based transportation (Brantford Lift, Taxis, etc.) for individual outings or when Agency transportation is unavailable.

**Feedback**

Participation Support Services welcomes feedback, including feedback on the provision of service to persons with disabilities. We ask that you first bring your question or concern to the attention of the manager or in charge of the service you are accessing. If she or he is unable to address your concern, please feel free to contact Drew Shinder Director of Support Services by:

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- Telephone - (519) 756-1430 extension 222
- Email – [ashinder@pssbrantford.org](mailto:ashinder@pssbrantford.org)
- Mail - Participation Support Services, 10 Bell Lane P.O. Box 2048, Brantford, Ontario, N3T 5W5

**Modifications to This or Other Policies**

Any policies of Participation Support Services that do not respect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

**Notice of Availability of Documents**

Participation Support Services will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available upon request, and where possible, in a format that takes into consideration their disability. Copies of this policy will be available at our locations, on the Participation Support Services Website and on our employee intranet.