

## CORPORATE POLICY MANUAL

<b>Title</b>	<b>Policy Number</b>
Accessibility Standards for Customer Service	CP-02-020
<b>Distribution</b>	<b>Effective Date</b>
All Employees	05 Dec 2012

### BACKGROUND

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

This policy applies to all employees performing work on behalf of TransForm Shared Service Organization (TransForm).

### Application of Standards:

- Allows our customers to maintain their independence and dignity while ensuring our customers receive the same level of service. This may mean letting our customers do things in their own way and making sure all our customers receive the same level of service.
- Gives our customers with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services as other customers.
- Allows customers with disabilities to access our goods and services in a manner that is integrated with other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary.
- Allows or offers assistive devices for people with disabilities to access our goods and services. Consideration will be given to alternate service methods that enable them to access our goods and services if no devices are available.

### POLICY

TransForm strives to provide our products and services in a manner that is accessible to all our customers and respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

TransForm is committed to offering equal opportunity to access our products and services and to providing the benefit of the same services, in the same place and in a similar way to all customers.

### Providing products and service to persons with disabilities:

TransForm is committed to excellence in serving all clients including persons with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

#### *Communication*

TransForm will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disabilities. TransForm will train those who communicate with clients on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

#### *Telephone Services*

TransForm is committed to providing accessible telephone service to our clients. TransForm will train those who communicate with our clients over the telephone in plain language and to speak clearly and slowly. TransForm will offer to communicate with clients in an alternate format if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

### *Assistive Devices*

TransForm is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our products and services. TransForm will ensure there is awareness that assistive devices may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our products and services and we will respond appropriately.

### *Written Communication*

TransForm is committed to providing accessible communication to all of our clients.

### **Service Animals and Support Persons**

TransForm is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal and/or a support person on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. TransForm will also ensure all those that deal with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal or support person.

### **Notice of Temporary Disruption**

TransForm will provide clients with notice if there is 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.

Where appropriate, a notice will be placed on our website at: [www.transformssso.ca](http://www.transformssso.ca)

### **Training**

TransForm will provide training to all employees who deal with the public or third parties. TransForm will require outsourced service providers who deal with the public or third parties on our behalf to comply with accessibility legislation.

This training will be provided within a reasonable period of time after their contract begins. Training will include the following:

- The purposes and requirements of relevant Accessibility legislation;
- How to interact and communicate with people with disabilities;
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our products and services; and,
- Our policies, practices and procedures relating to client service.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. Training will be included in new employee orientations.

### **Feedback Process**

Feedback regarding the way we provide products and services to people with disabilities can be made by contacting the Human Resources Manager:

### **Questions about this Policy**

Contact Human Resources regarding questions about this policy, or if the purpose of the policy is not understood: 770 Richmond Street, Unit D, Chatham, Ontario, N7M 5J5

Email: [hr@transformssso.ca](mailto:hr@transformssso.ca)

Phone: (519) 437-6220

## DEFINITIONS

**Accessible:** Customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, or entered; obtainable.

**Disability:** Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device; a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability; a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language; a mental disorder; or an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

**Barriers:**

Attitude is perhaps the most difficult barrier to overcome because it is hard to change the way people think or behave. Some people do not know how to communicate with those who have visible or invisible disabilities — for example, assuming someone with a speech problem has intellectual limitations and speaking to them in a manner that would be used with a child; or forming ideas about the person because of stereotypes or a lack of understanding. Some people may feel they could offend the individual with a disability by offering help, or they ignore or avoid people with disabilities altogether. Remember, attitude is a major barrier that is within our power to change.

Architectural or Structural barriers may result from design elements of a building such as stairs, doorways, the width of hallways and even room layout.

Information and Communication barriers can make it difficult for people to receive or convey information. For example, a person who is deaf cannot communicate via standard telephone. Things like small print size, low colour contrast between text and background, confusing design of printed materials and the use of language that is not clear or easy to understand can all cause barriers to accessibility.

Technology, or lack of it, can prevent people from accessing information. Everyday tools like computers, telephones and other aids can all present barriers if they are not set up or designed with accessibility in mind.

Systemic barriers can result from an organization's policies, practices and procedures if they restrict people with disabilities, often unintentionally — for example, a clothing store with a "no refund" policy and no way for someone in a scooter to enter the change room.

**Dignity:** Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

**Independence:** When a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without necessary help or interference from others.

**Integration:** Service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

Equal Opportunity: Service is provided to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access goods or services equal to that given to others.

**REFERENCES**

1. Legislation / Regulations ([www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws\\_regs\\_070429\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_070429_e.htm))
2. Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 ([www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_05a11\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm))
3. Ministry of Economic Development, Trade & Employment (<http://www.mcass.gov.on.ca/en/mcass/programs/accessibility/>)

**Category:** Corporate Overview

**Distribution:** All Departments

**Originator:** Human Resources Manager

**Date:** (mm/yy) 12/13 (R)

**Approval:** Chief Executive Officer

**Signature:**

