

# **BIG BROTHERS BIG SISTERS OF PEEL**

## **Accessible Client Service Policy**

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

### **1. PURPOSE AND POLICY STATEMENT**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel is committed to excellence in providing service to individuals, including people with disabilities. The objective of this policy is to ensure we meet the accessibility requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Customer Service Standard) under the *Act*.

Reasonable efforts shall be made to provide all persons equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel services. To ensure that services are provided in a manner and format that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities, the provision of such services shall be:

- a. Part of standard business operations, whenever possible,
- b. Accessible through the use of assistive devices, service animals and support persons unless prohibited by law or for reasons of health and safety,
- c. Reinforced through training of personnel on accessibility requirements; provision of service disruption notification, when required; and, access to a feedback process.

### **2. DEFINITIONS**

- a. *Assistive Device* - is a technical aid, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. An assistive device may be provided by the individual or may be provided by TAB in the form of lifts, ramps, wheelchair, audio and visual enhancements, etc.
- b. *Barrier* - as defined by the Act means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.
- c. *Disability* - as defined by the Act and the Ontario *Human Rights Code*, is:

- i. 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 co-ordination, 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,
  - ii. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
  - iii. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
  - iv. a mental disorder, or
  - v. An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.
- d. *Service Animal* - As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07 - an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- e. *Support Person* - As reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07 - a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

### **3. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a. All employees and departments are responsible for:
  - i. Providing documents in suitable formats, upon request by a person with a disability.
  - ii. Ensuring compliance with the Standards of Accessible Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Act.
  - iii. Notifying the Program Manager and Executive Director of any service disruption.
  - iv. Reporting to the Program Manager any feedback received from clients regarding the accessibility of the Agency's services.
  - v. Notifying the Executive Director of any additional budgeting or training requirements in relation to compliance with the Act.

- b. The Program Manager is responsible for:
  - i. Providing notice to our clients of any service disruption, in compliance with this policy and the Act.
  - ii. Managing the receipt of feedback from clients and forwarding to the Executive Director for response.
  
- c. The Executive Director is responsible for:
  - i. Monitoring and reporting on compliance measures.
  - ii. Updating and interpreting this policy.
  - iii. Communicating the accessible customer service procedures to all relevant parties.
  - iv. Confirming all staff and volunteers receive training, in accordance with the Standards of Accessible Customer Service.
  - v. Maintaining training records.
  - vi. Administering the feedback process and responding to clients.
  - vii. Providing individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability, where necessary.

#### **4. PROVIDING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

##### **Assistive devices**

We will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

##### **Communication**

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

##### **Service animals**

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

##### **Support persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel's events. We will notify clients of this through a notice on all web-site announcements advertising upcoming events.

## **6. TRAINING FOR STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel will provide training to all employees. Volunteers who provide service to the public on the agency's behalf will receive training.

This training will be provided to new staff upon hiring and given to new volunteers prior to them engaging in service provision to our clients.

Training will include:

- a. An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- b. Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel's Accessible Client Service Plan.
- c. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- d. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- e. How to use assistive devices, if applicable, which may be available at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel facilities.
- f. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel's goods and services

Staff and volunteers will receive additional training when changes are made to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel's Accessible Client Service plan.

## **7. NOTICE OF TEMPORARY SERVICE DISRUPTION**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel will notify clients promptly in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for clients with disabilities, including: access to the office; the agency phone service; or the agency internet service.

This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

This notice will be placed on all other alternate forms of contact for our clients, including at the front door of the office, on the agency's automated telephone system, and on the agency's web-site.

## **8. FEEDBACK PROCESS**

Individuals who wish to provide feedback on the way Big Brothers Big Sisters of Peel provides goods and services to people with disabilities can complete the form on our web-

site, complete the hard-copy form available at the front desk of the office, or call the Program Manager, who will complete the form on behalf of the individual.

All feedback will be directed to the Executive Director. Clients can expect to hear back within ten business days. Complaints will be addressed according to our organization's regular complaint management procedures.

## **9. MODIFICATION TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES**

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