

Accessibility Standard for Customer Service Policy



**Board Approved June 2014/
Board Approved April 2016/
Board Approved: June 19, 2019**

The Stephen Lewis Foundation (SLF) is committed to diversity and social inclusion and to meeting, and striving to exceed, its obligations under Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination, by providing accessible customer service that respects the rights, the dignity and independence of every individual. The SLF is committed to ensuring that everyone receives customer service with the same quality and timeliness, whether their disability is physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or any combination of these.

The SLF understands that information about a disability is personal and private and must be treated confidentially.

This Policy is reviewed annually, and presented to the Board of Directors for approval every two (2) years or more frequently if there is a material change.

Communication

The SLF makes every effort to communicate with individuals in ways that take into account their abilities. To ensure the best possible service, SLF encourages open two-way communication with all persons to ensure the need for accommodation or assistance is met.

The SLF employees and volunteers are committed to interacting and communicating with others guided by the principles of dignity, independence and equality; persons who identify themselves as requiring alternative communication formats will be offered communication in a format that meets their needs as promptly as is feasible.

Assistive Devices

The SLF welcomes assistive devices that may be used while accessing our services. These devices may include, but are not limited to, walkers, canes, hearing aids, wheelchairs or oxygen tanks. We will ensure that our staff members are familiar with various devices that may be used in our office to access our services.

Service Animals

The SLF welcomes individuals accompanied by service animals and they will have access to all parts of our premises that are open to the public, unless otherwise excluded by law.

Support Persons

Individuals who are accompanied by a support person will be welcome to have that person accompany them in our office and will always have access to the support person while on our premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities, the SLF will notify the public promptly. The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative services, if available.

The notice will be placed at our official website at: <http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/> as soon as is reasonably practicable. If the disruption is with our buildings elevator we will also ensure that there is a notice posted on the ground floor in the lobby.

Training

The SLF provides training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public on our behalf. Training is also provided to people involved in the development of policies, plans, practices and procedures related to the provision of services.

New staff will be trained on accessible customer service within 1 (week) after being hired.

The SLF training includes:

- an overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of this policy;
- how to interact and communicate with people in a manner that takes into account their abilities;
- how to provide services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all individuals;
- how to interact with people who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- how to use equipment available on the Foundation's premises (or otherwise) that may assist with the provision of services (such as how to print in larger fonts and take calls from TTY providers); and,
- what to do if a person is having difficulty in accessing the Foundation's services.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

Feedback Process

The SLF encourages people to bring forward complaints, concerns or compliments, and to make suggestions on ways to improve our accessibility. Anyone who wishes to provide feedback on the way the SLF provides services can contact us at:

- By email: externalfeedback@stephenlewisfoundation.org
- By leaving a voice message on a dedicated voice mail box: 1-888-203-9999, ext 310
- By mail: 100 - 260 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, ON, M5T 2E4 (Attn: External Feedback)

All feedback, including complaints, will be reviewed by a SLF senior staff member, and every effort will be made to respond to any concerns in a timely manner in accordance to our External Complaints Procedure.