

THE AGENCY FOR CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING

POLICY MANUAL

DATE ISSUED:

November 2017

NUMBER:

2.7.1

REPLACING ISSUE OF:

November 2014

CROSS REFERENCE:

2.1: Client Service and Satisfaction Standards,
2.3.1: Communications,
2.6.1: Complaints and Dispute Resolution,
2.6.2: Staff Guidelines for Handling Disputes, 2.7.2 Staff
Guidelines for Serving Persons with Disabilities

REVIEW CYCLE:

3 years

AUTHORITY:

Board of Directors

DUE FOR NEXT REVIEW:

November 2020

SUBJECT:

Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Agency interacts in various ways with housing co-operatives and their residents, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, members of the general public seeking information, and other stakeholders, such as federations of housing co-operatives. The Agency's principal clients are housing co-operatives with CMHC operating agreements.
- 1.2 A client-centred service strategy is at the heart of the Agency's business model. Staff strive to understand our clients, anticipate their needs and respond in a timely and effective way. While the Agency does not have individuals as clients, we make contact with the organizations we serve through their designated individual representatives, who may be persons with disabilities. There may also be persons with disabilities among the Agency's employees and suppliers.

2. Communications

Where the Agency has been advised of an individual's disability, staff will communicate with them in ways that take their disability into account. For example, if the communication needs of a client's primary contact cannot be met by telephone, Agency staff will offer the alternatives of communication by e-mail, facsimile or regular post. On request, written documents, notices and invoices will be provided by alternative means, such as in large print or by telephone.

3. Training

3.1 General

The Agency will ensure that all staff receive training on serving customers with disabilities as required under the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Act* (Ontario Regulation 429/08). Such training will address

- the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*;
- the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/08)*;
- the Agency's policies, procedures and guidelines pertaining to its services to people with disabilities;
- guidance on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our services or resources.

Training will be provided to new employees within a reasonable time after their initial hiring and to all employees whenever there are changes to the Agency's policies, practices or procedures. The Agency's human-resources staff will maintain a record of all training provided, including the dates on which sessions are held and the names of persons in attendance.

3.2 Assistive Devices

The Agency will make reasonable efforts to facilitate the use of assistive devices so that persons with disabilities are able to access the Agency's services and facilities. As necessary, it will ensure that staff are trained to work with those devices.

3.3 Support Persons and Service Animals

Service animals and support persons accompanying persons with disabilities are welcome on Agency premises. The Agency will ensure that staff members who deal with the public or representatives of Agency clients are prepared to interact with persons who rely on a support person or service animal. If an employee or another event participant is allergic to the service animal, alternative arrangements will be made.

4. Temporary Disruptions

During any disruption in the facilities or services normally used by persons with disabilities, a notice will be posted as soon as possible at the elevators or the reception area in the Agency's premises giving the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and

information on any alternative services available. The sign or posting will be clearly laid out and of sufficient size to be easily readable.

5. Feedback on Service to Persons with Disabilities

- 5.1 Client representatives, stakeholders and members of the public are invited to submit feedback to the Client Service Champion or any other Agency employee on the Agency's service to persons with disabilities.
- 5.2 Any person who has difficulty accessing Agency information or services, or feels they have not been treated fairly or respectfully, may file a complaint with our Client Service Champion. The Agency is committed to dealing with all complaints in a fair, timely and respectful manner and in accordance with our Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy, which is posted on our public website.
- 5.3 The CEO will be notified of any complaint about the Agency's accessibility, and of its resolution.
- 5.4 Upon request, information about the Agency's complaints or feedback process will be made available in an accessible format by telephone, by e-mail, in large print or in a modifiable format.

6. Staff with Disabilities

Employees are invited to advise the Agency's human-resources staff if, owing to a disability, they need individualized emergency-response procedures. Any staff member with special needs will be accommodated with a written plan that covers their requirements for additional assistance during a fire, a health crisis, a pandemic or any emergency where their disability places them at risk.

7. Employment

The Agency is committed to fostering and sustaining an inclusive and accessible workplace that allows all employees to contribute to the full extent of their abilities. Our human-resources staff will incorporate accessibility considerations within their recruitment and hiring practices and procedures.