



## **Providing Goods and Services to Customers with Disabilities Policy**

### **Principles**

North York Harvest Food Bank (“NYHFB”) strives to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We will do so by giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access the NYHFB’s goods, and benefit from the same services, in a similar way as persons without disabilities. Further, NYHFB will ensure policies, procedures and practices are developed and applied to meet its obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)*.

Accessibility is a continuous process and policies, procedures, and practices will be reviewed and updated regularly and in response to new information or developments in the NYHFB’s understanding around providing goods and services to persons with disabilities.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the actions NYHFB will take to ensure alignment with our values, the principles of this policy, and the AODA when engaging with persons with disabilities.

### **Specifics**

Items and related actions addressed herein include the following: Communications, Assistive Devices, Service Animals, Support Persons, Training, Disruptions, Providing Feedback.

### **Communications**

In communicating with persons with disabilities in a way that considers their disability, NYHFB will do the following:

- train employees who communicate with customers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;



- train employees to communicate over the telephone in clear language and in such a way that is both accessible and preserves the dignity of persons with disabilities;
- upon request, provide alternative forms of communication that are accessible and meet the needs of persons with disabilities;
- upon request, provide accessible invoices to persons with disabilities and answer questions about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email;
- where emergency response information exists, and upon request, make it available in accessible formats to the public.

### **Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities are welcome to use their assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from NYHFB's goods and services.

Employees will be trained on how to use devices that may be used by persons with disabilities wishing to access NYHFB's goods or services.

Persons with a disability using their own assistive device unable to access NYHFB's goods and services will be offered use of assistive devices on NYHFB premises, where available. Employees are aware of and trained in the use of such assistive devices.

### **Service Animals**

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a service animal on the parts of NYHFB premises that are open to the public and other third parties. The person who is accompanied by a service animal is responsible for the care and control of the animal at all times.

NYHFB will ensure that all employees dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

If a health and safety concern for another person arises, for example, in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, NYHFB will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals. The person presenting the health and safety concern in relation to the animal may be required to provide a letter from a qualified medical practitioner.



## **Support Persons**

Persons with disabilities are welcome to have a support person accompany them and will be allowed to enter NYHB premises with their support person. The role of a support person is to assist the person with disabilities and may be a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member, or a friend.

At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on NYHFB premises.

## **Disruptions**

NYHFB will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities, or services, usually accessed 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.

Disruption notices will be placed at all public entrances and the reception counters of NYHFB premises.

## **Training**

NYHFB will train employees and volunteers, including Board members, who engage with the public on behalf of the organization on the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code, as they relate to respective roles and duties.

AODA-specific training will include the following:

- the purpose of the AODA and requirements of the Customer Service Standard,
- NYHFB's policies, practices, and procedures on providing goods and services for people with disabilities,
- how to interact with persons with various types of disabilities in such a way that preserves their dignity and independence,
- how to accommodate the use of assistive devices, service animals, and a support person.



Training will be provided to all new employees, volunteers, and on an ongoing basis in connection with any changes to the policies, practices, and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Those who are involved in the development or approval of the Accessible Customer Service Policy, and related practices and procedures will receive training as soon as is practicable and within the first six (6) months after new individuals commence their duties.

Records relating to training will be maintained by NYHFB.

### **Feedback Process**

Ultimately, the goal of NYHFB is to meet expectations while serving persons with disabilities. Comments on NYHFB's services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback may be provided in person, or by telephone to the general voicemail, or in writing by post or email. Requests for a copy of this policy and/or feedback should be directed via email to the Human Resources Specialist: [hr@northyorkharvest.com](mailto:hr@northyorkharvest.com). NYHFB will, in a timely fashion, reply to and act on any issues raised through the feedback process.

This policy is posted on NYHFB's website at [www.northyorkharvest.com](http://www.northyorkharvest.com). A hard copy of this policy is available for review by the public at the Health and Safety Board in NYHFB's office and program sites.