

Accessible Customer Service

Statement of Commitment

St. Lawrence Youth Association is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.

We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by doing our best to remove and prevent barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under Ontario's accessibility laws.

Background and Purpose:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is a provincial Act for the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing standards that enhance the ability of persons with disabilities to access all available opportunities.

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service is the first standard to be passed as a regulation and become law in Ontario. Under this standard designated private (non-profits and businesses) as well as public sector organizations must develop policies, procedures and practices pertaining to customer service to persons with disabilities.

What is Accessible Customer Service?

Persons with disabilities may require assistance or accommodation in the way that goods and services are provided to them. The type of accommodation provided may vary depending on the client's unique needs.

General Principles

The Provision of Services to Persons with Disabilities

St. Lawrence Youth Association will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its services are provided in a way that:

- Respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- Provides services to persons with disabilities in an integrated manner with those who do not have disabilities, unless an alternative accommodation is necessary;
- Provides persons with disabilities with an opportunity equal to that given to others.

When communicating with a person with a disability, St. Lawrence Youth Association will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Service Animals

Persons with disabilities may use service animals to assist them in accessing St. Lawrence Youth Association's services. Persons with disabilities will be permitted to enter premises owned and/or operated by St. Lawrence Youth Association with their service animal if the public has access to these areas. They will be permitted to keep the service animal with them, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If it is not obvious that the animal is a service animal, you may ask the person to provide documentation from a regulated health professional, such as a psychologist, optometrist, and mental health therapist. The documentation must confirm that the person needs the service animal for

reasons relating to their disability, or a valid identification card/training certificate from a recognized service animal training school.

It is the responsibility of the client to ensure that their service animal is kept under control at all times.

Support Person

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person while on St. Lawrence Youth Association premises or in our programs for health and safety reasons. Before making a decision, St. Lawrence Youth Association must: consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs. Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence. Determine if there is another reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises. If no, waive any admission free or fare for the support person.

Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter St. Lawrence Youth Association's premises with his or her support person, where approval has been granted by the Executive Director or in areas accessible to the public

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices to access St. Lawrence Youth Association's services. These can include, but are not limited to, walkers, canes, or speech amplification devices. Do not touch assistive devices without permission or move them out of the reach of the client unless it becomes a health and safety issue. Additionally, inform clients of accessible features at St. Lawrence Youth Association and/or the immediate environment, if you feel that they would be useful to them.

Summary of Accessible Customer Service Requirements

Personal Assistive Devices: Allow people with disabilities to use assistive devices to access services.

Service Animals: Allow people with disabilities to bring their service animals onto the premises, unless the animal is excluded by another law (i.e. food preparation area).

Support Persons: Let people with disabilities bring their support persons with them when accessing services and while in those areas of the premises that are open to the public or other third parties.

Service Disruption Notice: Inform the appropriate authorities when facilities or services regularly used by people with disabilities are temporarily unavailable.

Communicate: Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.

Feedback: Receive and respond to feedback on services to people with disabilities.

Conference/Workshop/Admission Fees: Let people know ahead of time what the fee, if any, is charged for a support person.



Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

The proper operation of our services and facilities is important to the clients. However, temporary disruptions in St. Lawrence Youth Association services and facilities may occur. These disruptions may be unplanned, or involve planned maintenance and repairs, or occur for other reasons.

If an unplanned temporary disruption occurs to services usually used by people with disabilities, notice will be provided as soon as reasonably possible. When the temporary disruption is planned, notice will be provided in advance.

When temporary disruptions occur to our services or facilities, St. Lawrence Youth Association will provide notice to the appropriate authorities, or in other ways considered reasonable under the circumstances. Notices will provide information about the reason for disruption, its expected duration, and other methods of accessing the services or facilities if they are available.

Training

All staff, volunteers, Board Members, and others who work for St. Lawrence Youth Association or on its behalf will receive information and/or training as required by the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*. This training includes, but is not limited to, *St. Lawrence Youth Association AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Policy* pertaining to the provision of services to clients with disabilities; and how to assist clients with disabilities in accessing our services. Training records are available on request.

Availability, Document Formats

St. Lawrence Youth Association AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Policy will be available to any person upon request. When providing these documents or the information contained in them, to a person with a disability, they will be given in a format that takes the person's disability into account.

Notice of the Availability of Documents

Notice of the availability of documents required by the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* will be posted on our website and available through St. Lawrence Youth Association's main office.

Your Feedback is Important to Us

Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage service improvements.

Feedback may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, or in electronic format.

If feedback is received regarding the accessibility of St. Lawrence Youth Association services it will be reviewed by the relevant division or department for the purpose of resolving any issues and improving our understanding of the needs of people with disabilities.

If you would like a copy of *St. Lawrence Youth Association AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act Policy*, please contact:

Administration
admin@slya.ca
1-613-542-9634 ext. 222
www.slya.ca



St. Lawrence Youth Association will make this brochure available in alternative formats upon request.



Accessible Customer Service



St. Lawrence Youth Association is committed to providing quality services that are accessible to all.