

# *Customer Service Standard*



*The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*

1-866-95-LEADS (1-866-955-3237)  
[www.leadsservices.com](http://www.leadsservices.com)

Interpreters are available if you need them / Des interprètes sont disponibles si vous avez besoin

## **Purpose:**

Leads Employment Services London Inc. (Leads) is committed to meeting and exceeding the requirements in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: Customer Service Standard (AODA). The AODA requires all businesses and service providers not in the public sector with more than 1 employee in Ontario to comply with the act by January 1, 2012 and public sector organizations by January 1, 2010. As such, Leads has developed the following policy to ensure compliance with AODA, customer service standard and to ensure an accessible office for its clients, employees, volunteers, visitors and suppliers.

## **Definitions:**

Client: Customers who receive services from Employment Specialists and Administration.

Guide dog: A dog trained as a guide for a blind person.

Service animal: Any animal that assists a person with a disability.

Support person: Another person who accompanies the person with a disability in order to help with community, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

Harassment: a course of comments or conduct consisting of words or actions that humiliate a person.

Bullying: The act of intentionally causing harm to others, through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other more subtle methods of coercion such as manipulation.

## **The Policies:**

### **1. Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures**

Leads will establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its services to persons with disabilities. They will use reasonable efforts to ensure

- Its policies, practices and procedures are provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The delivery of services to persons with disabilities must be integrated to those who do not have disabilities unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether it is temporary or permanent, to allow the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the service.
- Persons with disabilities are given equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the services.

### **2. Use of Service Animals**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, Leads will ensure that the person is allowed to enter the premises with the animal and keep the animal with him unless the animal is excluded by law from the premises.

If the animal is excluded from the premises by law, Leads shall take alternate measures to allow the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from Leads' services.

### **3. Use of Support Persons**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, Leads will allow both people to enter the premises and the person with a disability will have full access to Leads' services. If a fee is payable to allow the support person to access the premises, Leads will ensure that advance notice (if possible) be given about the amount payable in respect of the support person.

A confidentiality agreement must be signed by the support person before service can be provided to the person with a disability.

#### **4. Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

If there is a temporary disruption that affects the access to goods and services at Leads, Leads will give advanced notice to the public by various means to ensure all clients with disabilities have the opportunity to receive the notice. This includes providing audio and print versions of the notice through various communication technologies.

The notice of disruption will include the reason for the disruption and the anticipated duration of the disruption. Leads will also include description of alternative facilities and services, if any, that are available.

Notice may be posted on Leads' website, on the premise or by other methods as deemed reasonable in the circumstance.

#### **5. Training for Staff**

Leads shall provide the following persons training about the provision of its services to persons with disabilities;

1. Every person who makes contact with the public on behalf of Leads whether this person is an employee, agent, volunteer or other.
2. Every person who participates in developing Leads' policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training must include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this Regulation and instruction about the following:

1. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability.
2. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
3. How to use equipment or devices available on Leads' premises or otherwise provided by Leads that may help with the provision of services to a person with a disability.
4. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing Leads' service.

The training must be provided to each person as soon as s/he starts practicing his/her assigned applicable duties. Training must be provided on an ongoing basis in relation to changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of services to persons with disabilities.

#### **6. Feedback Process for Leads**

Leads shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the way it provides services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.

The feedback process must permit persons to provide their feedback through phone, writing, e-mail or other method deemed reasonable. The feedback process must specify the actions that Leads must take if a complaint is received.

#### **7. Notice of Availability of Documents**

Leads shall notify its clients that documents required by this Regulation are available upon request by posting the information at a noticeable place on the premise operated by Leads, on their website or by other methods that are reasonable depending on the circumstance.

#### **8. Format of Documents**

If Leads needs to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, it will give the person the document in a format that takes into account the disability. The person with the disability and Leads may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

## Understanding Accessible Customer Service

### What is Accessible Customer Service?

Leads is committed to providing customer service to people with disabilities that:

- Respects their dignity and independence
- Is delivered to the highest standard possible
- Ensures an opportunity equal to that given to other customers to obtain, use and benefit our goods and services.

### Communication

In any type of interaction, address the person's service needs rather than focusing on the disability. This means saying "person with a disability" rather than a "disabled person". Always ask the person with a disability how you can help them, never assume!

### Definitions of Disabilities

Understanding the definition of customer service and disability terms will help you provide accessible customer service.

**Customer Service:** Procedures designed to enhance the level of customer experience and satisfaction.

**Disability** (as defined by the AODA):

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- A learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- A mental disorder
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

### Types of Disabilities

#### *Hearing Disabilities:*

Deaf: Severe to profound hearing loss.

Hard of Hearing: partial hearing or speech that a person uses to communicate.

Deafened: caused to hear poorly or not at all.

#### *How to Serve People with a Hearing Disability*

- Ask the customer how you can help or how they would like to communicate
- Get the customer's attention before speaking by using a polite gesture such as a gentle touch to the shoulder
- Look directly at the person
- Use pen and paper (if necessary)
- Speak clearly and keep your hands away from your face
- Reduce background noise
- Ensure appropriate lighting

Deafblind Disability: cannot see or hear to some degree and many will be accompanied by a support person.

How to Serve People with a Deafblind Disability

- Ask the customer how you can help
- Speak directly to your customer, not the support person
- Identify yourself to the support person

Intellectual or Development Disability: an intellectual development limiting a person's ability to learn, communicate, do everyday activities or live independently though it can be an invisible disability. However, they may understand you more than you know.

How to Serve People with an Intellectual or Developmental Disability

- Ask the customer how you can help
- Don't assume what a customer can or cannot do
- Use plain language
- Be patient
- Ask questions if you are unsure they understand you
- Provide one piece of information at a time
- Offer information in simpler concepts

Learning Disability: a persistent condition that affects how a person acquires, interprets, retains or takes in information. In many cases, the individual has average or above-average intelligence. This disability may affect language based learning, mathematics or writing and fine motor skills.

How to Serve People with a Learning Disability

- Ask the customer how you can help
- Be patient
- Demonstrate a willingness to assist
- Speak normally, clearly and directly to your customer
- Provide information in a way that works for your customer (ie: paper and pen)
- Be prepared to explain any materials you provide

Mental Health Disabilities: the absence of psychological well-being and satisfactory adjustment to society. Some common features of mental health disabilities are phobias, panic attacks, hallucinations, mood swings and bipolar disorders.

How to Serve People with a Mental Health Disability

- Ask the customer how you can help
- Treat customer with the same level of respect and consideration as anybody else
- Be confident and reassuring
- Do not be confrontational

- If the customer is in crisis, ask how you can help
- Take the customer seriously
- Don't take things personally

Speech or Language Disabilities: can involve problems communicating, difficulty pronouncing words, slurring or stuttering and may require using assistive devices to communicate.

#### How to Serve People with a Speech or Language Disability

- Ask the customer how you can help
- Don't assume
- Give whatever time they need to get their information across
- Ask "yes" or "no" questions
- Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences
- May have to use pen and paper
- Tell them if you don't understand something and ask them to repeat

Physical or Disabilities Affecting Mobility: movement that restricts a person in the following ways:

- Control of speed of movements
- Coordination and balance
- Ability to grasp some objects
- Ability to walk long distances
- Ability to sit or stand for prolonged periods

#### How to Serve People with a Physical or Disability Affecting Mobility

- Ask the customer how you can help
- Speak directly to the customer
- Respect personal space
- Don't move any items they may have moved accidentally
- Describe what you are going to do beforehand
- Don't leave your customer in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position

Vision Disabilities: Low or no vision that restricts the ability to read and may need to view written documents in large print or use a magnifier. A guide dog, service dog, support person or white cane may be necessary to aid vision disabilities.

#### How to Serve People with a Vision Disability

- Ask the customer how you can help
- Don't assume the customer can't see you

- Speak directly to the customer
- Offer your elbow to guide but wait for permission
- If they accept, walk slowly
- Identify landmarks
- Be precise and descriptive with information
- Don't leave customer

No matter what type of disability your customer has, relax! People with disabilities generally are aware that they may need some accommodations and will work with you. In all cases, ask how you can help and follow their instructions. If you are in doubt, seek assistance from another team member or a manager.

*Etiquette when Interacting with People with Disabilities using Assistive Devices*

*Customers using Assistive Devices:*

- Don't lean on or reach over them
- Ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the device and use it unless excluded by law
- Remove potential barriers for the use of assistive devices where possible
- Ensure the people with disabilities are aware of assistive devices that are available to them by the service provider
- Assistive devices must be offered in a manner that respects the person's dignity and independence

*Customers with Service Animals:*

- Allowed anywhere customers normally have access
- Customer is responsible for the care and supervision of the Service Animal
- Avoid talking to or touching the Service Animal
- Customers are permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is excluded by law

*Customers with Support Persons:*

- Both persons are permitted to enter the premises together
- The person with disabilities is not prevented from having access to the Support Person while on the premises
- Consent is required if confidential information is going to be shared when a Support Person is present
- Speak directly to the customer, not the Support Person

## Anti-harassment Policy

### **Purpose:**

Harassment at Leads is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All clients, visitors and employees of Leads are entitled to a healthy, comfortable atmosphere.

If a person believes they have been treated in an improper and offensive manner, the designated Leads personnel should be contacted or submit a request/complaint to [customerservice@leadsservices.com](mailto:customerservice@leadsservices.com). Appropriate action will be taken to resolve the matter.

### **The Policies:**

#### Leads has a responsibility to:

1. Provide an environment that encourages prospective complainants to report all incidents of harassment or discrimination.
2. Provide a mechanism to handle and investigate harassment and discrimination complaints.

#### Management has a responsibility to:

1. Respond immediately to complaints.

#### Employees have a responsibility to:

1. Ensure that their environment is free from harassment and discrimination for their co-workers and clients.
2. Refrain from engaging in any behaviour that may be perceived as harassment or discrimination.
3. Report incidents of harassment and discrimination or retaliation.

#### Procedure:

1. A client who feels they are being harassed should make his/her disapproval known to the harasser and request all offensive behaviour to stop.
2. The complainant should maintain a personal written record of the alleged nature of the harassment/discrimination, date(s), time(s), behaviour and list of witness(es).
3. If the harassment/discrimination has not ceased, the complainant is encouraged to make a written complaint to Managers or Executive Director or a personnel delegated by the Board of Directors.
4. All complaints and investigations will be handled appropriately under the circumstances. Leads shall make every effort to safeguard the confidentiality of all records relating to complaints, including contents of meetings, interviews, results of investigations and other relevant materials.
5. The Complainant will receive a response to the report of the event within 15 working days of the report. The delegated personnel will review all the relevant information and decide on the course of action.

<b>Section:</b>	<b>No.:</b>
<b>Issue Date: April 1st 2012</b>	<b>Revision Date: April 1st 2012</b>
<b>SUBJECT: Conflict/Complaint Resolution Process and Policy</b>	

All service providers that are funded, licensed or operated by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services (MCYS), Service Canada, Ontario Works, Ministry of Colleges, Training and University (MTCU) are responsible for providing a procedure and policy on the Conflict Resolution Process for all individuals accessing Leads services. Leads Employment Services ensures that the Conflict Resolution Process and Policy is consistent with relevant legislation, regulations and/or policy.

**Introduction:**

A complaint/feedback process is an important part of providing quality service and support that is responsive to people’s needs and that supports are continuous improvement in service delivery. The information that is received through a complaint/feedback process can assist an organization to take steps to better support individuals and/or improve organizational practices.

**Definitions:**

A complaint/feedback about the services and supports that a service agency provides, may be received from the following:

1. An individual that receives services from the service provider
2. A person acting on behalf of an individual receiving services from the service provider
3. General Public

**Feedback** may be positive or negative (including complaints) and is related to the services and/or supports that are provided by a service agency. Feedback may be solicited (such as a satisfaction survey or comment box) or unsolicited (such as a letter from a person, family member about the services and supports that the agency provides). Feedback may be formal (like a survey or letter) or informal (verbal complaint expressed to a staff).

**Complaint** is an expression of dissatisfaction related to the services and/or supports that are provided by a service agency. A complaint may be expressed by a service user or a person acting on their behalf, or by the general public regarding the services and supports that are provided by the service agency. A complaint may be formally made (such a letter written to the agency) or informally (such as a verbal complaint expressed to a staff person. A complaint does not include feedback on matters unrelated to the agency and the services and supports that it provides.

**Purpose:** The purpose of the policy directive is to set out the requirements for service agencies to develop written policies and procedures for a process to receive and address complaints and other feedback about the services and supports that they provide. An agency’s complaints/feedback process is separate and apart from other means to express concern, either at the local level, or more broadly, such as the Ombudsman of Ontario or the Human Rights Commission.

**Policy:** A complaints/feedback process should be readily available and easily understandable to those who wish to submit a complaint or provide feedback, and set out the way in which the service agency will provide a response to the complaint/feedback in a timely manner.

Service agencies must also comply with the requirements for a feedback process that are set out in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services, Ontario Regulation 429/07, made under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

A service agency must provide a copy of its written policies and procedures to any person who requests it.

The policies and procedures should identify:

- How the service agency receives and documents complaints/feedback
- The process for investigating the matter (if applicable) that must be free of conflict of interest
- Expected time period for the complaint/feedback processes
- The process for responding to complaints/feedback
- Consideration for the role and any responsibility of persons who receive service from the agency, in the complaints/feedback process
- The role and responsibilities of the Board of Directors in the process
- How to avoid conflict of interest that may arise between the person who makes the complaint/feedback and those who may be involved in the review, documentation, investigation, resolution and notification/confirmation.
- How to ensure that the review process is free of any coercion or intimidation or bias either before, during or after the review.

The service agency shall receive, document and review all feedback/complaints. Wherever possible, the service provider shall make reasonable efforts to resolve or address the matter to the mutual satisfaction of both the person who has made the complaint and the service provider.

The service agency shall take all complaints seriously, and review and investigate all matters. A service agency is not, however, expected to attempt to resolve complaints that it may determine to be frivolous or vexatious.

A service agency shall ensure that a person who submits a complaint or provides feedback is not at risk of having his/her services and supports negatively impacted or withdrawn, as a consequence of submitting the complaint/feedback.

Where necessary, (such as Quality Assurances Measures, CAS) a service agency may be required by law to report to the Police and Ministry.

In order to promote continuous quality improvement, a service agency shall conduct a review and analysis of the complaints and feedback received to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies and procedures on an annual basis. A service agency shall conduct a review and analysis of the complaints and feedback received to consider the need to revise any other policies and procedures that the agency may have in place.

A service agency shall share information about its complaint/feedback process, upon request of the funder/Ministry.

## Complaint Resolution Procedure/Policy

- Leads' takes all complaints/feedback seriously.
- If you have a complaint about Leads services, please tell a Leads employee or submit your complaint in writing, to the attention of your Employment Specialists' Manager and the Executive Director.
- An employee of Leads will respond to your complaint within 5 working days of receiving the complaint.
- If you are unsatisfied with the outcome, you will have 15 business days to appeal the decision in writing.
- You will receive a response from Leads to your formal appeal within 5 working days of receiving your appeal. This will include a plan of action for next steps.