



Version	Last Review	Board Date of Approval
3	July 15, 2026	Mar. 26, 2026
Accessible Customer Service Policy		

Intent

Forward House is committed to providing services to persons with disabilities in a way that is consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity. Our goal is to provide all clients, including those with disabilities, with the same opportunity to access and use Forward House's services. If a barrier to accessing our services cannot be removed, we will seek alternative ways to access the services.

This Accessible Customer Service Policy applies to the delivery of all goods and services by Forward House in the Province of Ontario. This policy applies to all Forward House employees and volunteers who work in Ontario, as well as third parties who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of Forward House.

The following policies and practices are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and its Customer Service Standards.

Communication

Forward House will communicate with clients with disabilities in ways that take their disability into account.

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities will be permitted to obtain or use goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices. If an assistive device may pose a risk to health and safety of the client or others on the premises, Forward House will accommodate the client by providing an alternative where possible.

Forward House will ensure that our employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by clients with disabilities when visiting our facilities.

Service Animals

Forward House welcomes service animals that accompany people with disabilities. Service animals are free to access all areas of our premises that are open to the public except as otherwise disallowed by law.

If a service animal is excluded from the premises by law, then Forward House will ensure other measures are made available to enable the client with a disability to access or use the goods and services.

Forward House will ensure all staff dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

A service animal for a person with a disability if:

1. The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
2. The person provides documentation from a member of one of the following regulated health professional colleges confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario;
 - College of Chiropractors of Ontario;
 - College of Nurses of Ontario;
 - College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario;
 - College of Optometrists of Ontario;
 - College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario;
 - College of Physiotherapists of Ontario;
 - College of Psychologists of Ontario; or
 - College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

Eg: Guide dog:

A highly trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people who are blind.

Allergies and Other Health and Safety Concerns

If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example, in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, Forward House will make all reasonable efforts to meet the needs of all individuals. Pursuant to the company's obligations under the *Human Rights Code* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, each customer's accommodation needs will be considered on a case-by-case basis, up to the point of undue hardship.

Due diligence needs to be paid to address health and safety requirements. For example, if a person's health and safety could be seriously affected by the presence of a service animal on the premises open to the public, management must fully analyse all options for safely accommodating the service animal. Options could include creating distance between the two individuals to eliminate in-person contact, changing the time the two individuals receive service, or using air purifiers and other measures that could allow the person to use their service animal on the premises.

In very exceptional circumstances where a service animal becomes out of control, causing a clear disruption or a threat to the health and safety of others, and the animal's behaviour is not corrected by the owner, a person with a disability can be asked to remove their service animal from the premises.

As a courtesy, particularly if the person and service animal have been in attendance on the premises for a long time, staff may ask whether the animal requires water, may designate an area in which the service animal can relieve itself, or ask whether the staff can be of assistance pertaining to the service animal.

Support Persons

Support persons that accompany someone with a disability are permitted the same access to our facilities as the person they are accompanying. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Forward House's premises with their support person. 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 Forward House Premises.

In the event that a fee is charged in relation to a support person's presence on Forward House's premises, advance notice of the fee will be provided.

Notice of Temporary Service Disruption

If any services to accommodate disabled clients are interrupted in a way that would limit them from gaining access to Forward House's facilities or services, clients will be notified. Notice of the temporary interruption will be placed on Forward House's website and/or another conspicuous location, and include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Training

To create awareness and ensure compliance, Forward House will provide customer accessibility training to all of its employees and volunteers who work in Ontario and provide services, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person.
- How to use personal assistive devices on premises to help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing Forward House's goods and services.
- Forward House's policies, practices and procedures relating to accessible customer Service.

Training will be provided during orientation and on an annual basis and/or when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Feedback

All documents relating to accessible customer service will be made available, upon request, in a format that takes into account the customer's disability needs.

Clients may provide feedback about the accessibility of our goods, services and facilities by contacting Forward House using one of the following methods:

M. Gowing, Executive Director
519-455-0020 ext. 231
Westmount Commons, Suite 229
785 Wonderland Road South
London, Ontario
N6K 1M6
mgowing@forwardhouseoflondon.com

Forward House will respond to feedback requests within ten (10) business days.