

<b>POLICY</b>	
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>ACCESSIBILITY</b>
<b>Effective Date:</b>	Dec 8 <sup>th</sup> 2014
<b>Policy References:</b>	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms Human Rights Code of Ontario Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
<b>Administrator:</b>	

### INTENT

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves.

Canadian Organic Growers will strive at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other clients.

### SCOPE

- a) This policy applies to the provision of goods and services at premises owned and operated by the organization.
- b) This policy applies to employees, volunteers and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of the organization, including when the provision of goods and services occurs off the corporation's premises.
- c) The section of this policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises owned and operated by the organization.
- d) This policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of the organization's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

## DEFINITIONS

**Disability:** as defined by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to:

- a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device
- b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) a mental disorder, or
- e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”)

**Assistive Device:** is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading, such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank, etc.

**Guide Dog:** is a highly trained working dog that has been trained to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

**Service Animal:** an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Service Dog:** a dog, other than a guide dog for the blind, is a service dog if:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- the person who requires the dog can provide, on request, a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

**Support Person:** in relation to a person with a disability, is another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Canadian Organic Growers is committed to serving all individuals including people with disabilities and will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas;

### 1) Communication

When providing information to, or communicating with, a person with a disability, we will provide the information and communication in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

### 2) The Use of Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by the organization. In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access of goods and services. For example, where elevators are not present and an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

### 3) The Use of Guide Dogs, Service Animals and Service Dogs

A person with a disability that is accompanied by guide dog, service animal or service dog will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law.

#### Recognizing a Guide Dog, Service Dog and/or Service Animal:

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, COG may request verification from the person.

Verification may include:

- a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability
- a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada, or
- a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

#### Care and Control of the Animal:

The person that is accompanied by a guide dog, service dog and/or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all time.

### 4) The Use of Support Persons

If a customer with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the company will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the customer is not prevented from having access to the support person.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any confidential information being discussed.

#### 5) Notice of Disruptions in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of the organization. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use the organization's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice.

##### Notifications will include:

In the event that a notification needs to be posted the following information will be included unless it is not readily available or known:

- goods or services that are disrupted or unavailable
- reason for the disruption
- anticipated duration
- a description of alternative services or options

##### Notifications Options:

When disruptions occur COG will provide notice by:

- posting notices at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and on the website
- contacting customers with appointments
- verbally notifying customers when they are making an appointment, or
- by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

#### 6) Customer Feedback Process

Canadian Organic Growers shall provide customers with the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided to customers with disabilities. Information about the feedback process will be readily available to all customers. Feedback forms along with alternate methods of providing feedback such as verbally or written, will be available upon request.

#### 7) Training

Training will be provided to all employees, volunteers or other third parties that act on behalf of the organization and will be in a way that best suits their respective duties.

##### Training Provisions:

Training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*.
- A review of the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with people with disabilities who:

- use assistive devices
- require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal, or
- require the use of a support person
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing your services.
- The organization's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities.

Record of Training:

A record of the training will be kept for each employee.

8) Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

Notification of the availability of documents related to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service will be posted at all organization facilities, on the website and/or by any other reasonable method.

9) Providing Feedback

Canadian Organic Growers welcomes feedback about the services we provide to persons with disabilities. Feedback can be directed to COG National Staff by email at: [office@cog.ca](mailto:office@cog.ca), toll free by phone at 1-888-375-7383 or by writing to 7519-1145 Carling Ave, Ottawa, ON K1Z 7K4.

Those submitting feedback or complaints can expect a response within 10 business days. Please indicate your preferred method of communication when submitting your comments. COG takes seriously any complaints about the services we provide to persons with a disability and will take reasonable actions to rectify any deficiencies in our services.

## APPLICABILITY

This policy and its sub-policies apply to:

- All staff, volunteers, students, contractors, consultants and others working on behalf of Canadian Organic Growers and who provide client services
- Staff, board members, volunteers and others who are involved in developing policies and procedures regarding the standard.

In addition, all employees, volunteers and contractors are required to successfully complete the eLearning training module relating to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and provide a "Proof of Completion certificate" to their supervisors. The module can be found at the following link <http://www.accessforward.ca/>



The components of the training module will be completed by these individuals respectively;

1. **General Requirements Training** – all existing and new employees and volunteer, those participating in development of organization policies and other people who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of your organization
2. **Information and Communications Standard Training** - all existing and new employees and volunteers who provide goods, services, or facilities on behalf of your organization
3. **Employment Standard Training** – those involved in the recruitment and selection of new employees

#### DOCUMENT APPROVAL

<b>Approved by:</b> (Signature on original copy)	
	
President	Date: Dec 8 <sup>th</sup> , 2014