



Consolidated Accessibility Policy: Engaging Volunteers & Customer Service

Purpose:

To ensure that volunteers of any ability are engaged and recruited by MY MS FAMILY and that all volunteers are equipped to work and provide service to clients with disabilities.

Policy Statement: MY MS FAMILY strives to ensure that our service delivery supports the core principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA): independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity. Volunteers receive appropriate training on the AODA, its Customer Service Standard and the knowledge to effectively serve all members. Volunteers are engaged in an accessible recruitment process and are encouraged to identify any accommodations needed to fulfill their role effectively.

Definitions:

“Disability” refers to mental, physical, learning disabilities, chronic illness, mental illness and anything that would be prescribed as disability from an insurer.

“Customer” is similar to client for non-profit organizations, and refers to anyone receiving a service.

“Accessible” refers to spaces, communication and information that can be accessed by anyone regardless of ability. Examples include accessible washrooms which remove barriers for physical disabilities or exclude any gender identities; or an accessible website with screenreading technology and adaptable font size.

“Accommodation” is the action that can be taken, when possible, to meet the ability needs of a client, volunteer or staff-person. For volunteers, accommodations will allow for the completion of non-essential duties when possible.

Responsibilities:

All guidelines and policies are created in accordance with AODA to ensure all services can be delivered to all members, including those with disabilities. This consolidated policy mirrors the BOARD-focused Human Resources policy on Accessibility and supports the Volunteer Screening policy.

Volunteer Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of volunteers to follow the AODA requirements and the procedures of this policy in providing service to members.

BOARD Responsibilities It is the responsibility of volunteer BOARD recruiting, engaging and working with volunteers to be mindful of accommodations required by applicants who may have disabilities.

Their screening process should be respectful of volunteers with disabilities. Training of volunteers should include a portion on the AODA to ensure members can receive uninterrupted service.

Feedback from volunteers and members will be connected via the MY MS FAMILY website and emails to ensure that support and volunteer engagement is accessible.

Procedures:

Volunteer Board shall:

- Be asked to assess & identify the actual abilities needed for a volunteer position when posting opportunities.
- Ensure that volunteering premises are accessible and provide an accessible washroom; this applies to on-site and off-site facilities.
- Ensure that outreach, recruitment and other initiatives take place in accessible facilities and consider possible accommodation needs to communicate with those attending
- Check appointment, interview and registration information for accommodations of volunteers or members ahead of meetings, sessions or other events.
- Provide training to volunteers on the AODA via the Government of Ontario “Access Forward” online training module. This training addresses techniques and knowledge required to effectively serve members with disabilities, along with an orientation to MY MS FAMILY practices.
- Ensure volunteers complete this training within their first month, and record their completion.
- Include statement of accommodation on all position descriptions to ensure potential volunteers are aware that their needs will be accommodated. Volunteers shall be trained and effectively prepared to:
 - Allow members with disabilities to use assistive devices to access our services and provide other measures wherever possible and when needed.
 - Encourage anyone with a disability to have their support person accompany them to attend and support group visit, training session or special event – support persons are welcomed and not charged for event admissions.
 - Make adjustments to shared space (training room, waiting area, interview room) for assistive devices, a service animal or a support person.
 - Communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability, including alternate forms of communication (verbal, written, digital) based on individual need

BOARD MEMBER SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____