



Accessibility Policy

1.0 PURPOSE

Smiths Falls Community Food Bank (SFCFB) is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain *their* dignity and independence. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. This includes providing equal access to employment, information, goods, and services, and treating persons with disabilities with dignity and respect in a way that takes their disability into account.

2.0 POLICY

SFCFB will make every reasonable effort to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*, including all applicable elements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*:

1. Information and Communication
2. Employment
3. Customer Service
4. Design of Public Spaces
5. Transportation

In addition, “accessibility” at SFCFB is the work we do to ensure people with disabilities can access our services equally with others. It includes ways to remove barriers to access, including physical barriers, attitudes, communication, systemic, technology and sensory considerations.

SFCFB will provide training to all volunteers and/or staff to ensure they are familiar with our policies, practices, and procedures for communicating with and providing services to persons with disabilities.

3.0 PROCEDURE

3.1 Information and Communication

- 3.1.1 When requested, SFCFB will provide information and communications materials in accessible formats or with communication supports. This includes publicly available information about our goods, services and facilities, as well as publicly available emergency and safety information.
- 3.1.2 SFCFB will consult with people with disabilities to determine their information and communication needs.



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3.2 Employment/Volunteer Opportunities

- 3.2.1 SFCFB welcomes and encourages volunteer applications from people with disabilities and will do its part to make hiring and volunteer support practices more accessible by providing accommodation during all stages of the volunteer process.
- 3.2.2 If a volunteer applicant requests accommodation, SFCFB will consult with the applicant and provide suitable accommodation that takes the person's accessibility needs into account.
- 3.2.3 New volunteers will be reminded about SFCFB's job accommodation policies as soon as possible upon starting and notified when any future changes are made to policies. Policy and practice information will include available accommodations that will be provided for volunteer related matters such as emergency response plans, health and safety requirements and other applicable legislation.
- 3.2.4 SFCFB will consult with a volunteer who requests it, to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports that take the volunteer's needs into account when providing information that is needed to perform their tasks/job, and information that is generally available to others in the workplace.

3.3 Customer Service

- 3.3.1 SFCFB will provide customer service in a manner that removes barriers for people with disabilities according to the following key principles of the AODA:
 - Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
 - Service to people with disabilities will be integrated with others, unless an alternate way of providing the goods, service or facility is required by the person with the disability.
 - Persons with disabilities will be given equal opportunity to use and benefit from the goods, services, or facilities an organization or business has to offer.
 - We will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes the individual's disability into account.
- 3.3.2 SFCFB supplies food on an emergency basis to promote a healthy and strong community. We support and assist persons in need of safe and



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nutritious food using available food supplies and resources. An individual or family in need qualifies for help twice a month.

3.3.3 Assistive Devices

- Persons with disabilities who use an assistive device will be permitted to use their own device to access the goods and services of SFCFB.
- We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are to be vested and are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law, such as in food preparation areas.

3.3.4 Support Workers

- A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.
- In situations where confidential matters will be discussed, the role of the support person may need to be agreed to in advance of the meeting.

3.3.5 Notice of Temporary Disruption

- In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, SFCFB will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- The way we provide notice will be determined by the nature of the problem.
- The notice will be made publicly available at the following locations: Food Bank entrance door, Facebook and local media.
- We will try to make alternative arrangements to provide service where possible.

3.3.6 Process for Receiving Feedback

- Clients and/or others who wish to provide feedback on the way SFCFB provides goods and services to people with disabilities can provide feedback in the following way(s): in person, by telephone/TTY, in writing or by email.



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- All feedback, including complaints, will be handled in the following manner: reviewed by the Executive Director and, if necessary, reviewed by the Board of Director's Chairperson. Any complaints received will be responded by following the Complaints Policy

3.4 Design of Public Spaces

- 3.4.1 If SFCFB redesigns or redevelops its outdoor public space such as a parking area, or an indoor space such as a service counter, waiting area or queuing line, it will do so in accordance the Design of Public Spaces Standard of the AODA.
- 3.4.2 SFCFB will also ensure any newly redesigned or redeveloped areas are maintained in accordance with the rules set out by the AODA.

3.5 Transportation

- 3.5.1 SFCFB does not provide conventional or specialized commercial transportation services to clients and is not required to adhere to the Transportation Standard.

4.0 TRAINING

- 4.1 SFCFB will provide training to its staff and volunteers on Ontario's Accessibility laws and on accessibility aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that apply to persons with disabilities.
- 4.2 The Executive Director or a Board of Directors designate will provide accessible customer service training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf. Training will also be provided to people involved in the development of policies, plans, practices and procedures related to the provision of our goods and service.
- 4.3 Individuals in the following positions will be trained: Board of Directors, all staff, all volunteers.
- 4.4 Individuals will be trained on Accessible Customer Service within 30 days after starting their Food Bank position.
- 4.5 Training will include:
 - An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
 - SFCFB's plan related to the customer service standard.



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- 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 the equipment or devices available on-site that may help with providing goods or services to people with disabilities. This includes client service counter.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing SFCFB's goods and services.

4.6 Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service plan.

5.0 ACCESSIBILITY PRACTICES AT SFCFB

Some accessibility practices we encourage and will strive towards at SFCFB include:

5.1 Physical Accessibility Practices

- Ensuring an area where an accessible taxi can safely drop someone off.
- Ensure the entryway to the food bank is accessible to wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers.
- Ensuring there is designated accessible parking available in front of the building.
- Ensuring a rest area is available for folks with health conditions that limit their ability to stand for extended periods.
- Ensuring there is an area to wait in, protected from weather and the elements.
- Ensuring washrooms have grab bars.

5.2 Attitude Accessibility Practices

- Greeting clients as they enter the space.
- Collecting client feedback.

5.3 Communication Accessibility Practices

- Offering options for non-verbal communication.
- Communicating changes to stakeholders.



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5.4 Systemic Accessibility Practices

- Ensuring service hours are sufficient to reduce wait times and crowding.
- Communicating the complaint process and how to report an accessibility issue.
- Ensuring employees and volunteers understand and agree with The Ethical Foodbanking Code.
- Ensuring volunteers are trained in de-escalation or other methods for holding safe space.
- Providing choice to clients whenever possible.
- Providing cooking suggestions for items that may be unfamiliar to clients.

5.5 Technology Accessibility Practices

- Ensuring websites are accessible to screen readers
- Ensuring website graphs and charts have text to explain them

5.6 Sensory Accessibility Practices

- Accommodating food restrictions as much as possible
- Ensuring sufficient lighting allows someone with low vision to navigate the space.
- Avoiding floors and wall colour contrasting with busy patterns

6.0 Modifications to this or other Policies

The Executive Director will monitor any legislative updates through a subscription to receive notifications about AODA deadlines and policy changes from the Ontario Government at

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-rules-businesses-and-non-profits>

Revisions to this policy will be made as needed and shared with relevant stakeholders, clearly outlining any changes made.

Any policy, practice or procedure of SFCFB that does not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

7.0 REFERENCE

7.1 Supporting Documents



Accessibility Policy

- <https://www.aoda.ca/free-online-training/>
- <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>

7.2 Cross Reference Policies

- Complaints Policy