

# EcoSpark Customer Service Standard and Accessibility Policy

September, 2018

## 1. Our mission

EcoSpark works with communities and schools, providing them with the knowledge and tools to monitor their environment and take action for positive environmental change. Such a mission requires EcoSpark to provide a large portion of our services and events in an outdoor setting.

## 2. Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, EcoSpark strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are committed to accommodating people with disabilities, within reasonable limits, and without compromising the integrity of EcoSpark's mission and programs.

## 3. Statement of policy

This Customer Service Standard and Accessibility Policy determines how EcoSpark (defined as a small organization) develops, implements and maintains policies governing how EcoSpark achieves accessibility as per the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, Board Members, and others who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of EcoSpark. The policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Directors and amended or expanded when necessary in accordance to the AODA.

## 4. Definitions

"customers" refers to people who receive goods or services

"disability" means,

(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;

“obligated organization” means the Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly, a designated public sector organization, a large organization and a small organization to which the standards in this Regulation apply; (“organisation assujettie”)

“small organization” means an obligated organization with at least one but fewer than 50 employees in Ontario, other than the Government of Ontario, the Legislative Assembly or a designated public sector organization. (“petite organisation”)

“staff” refers to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf of the EcoSpark

### **5. Providing goods and services to people with disabilities**

EcoSpark is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. As such, the information regarding programming, events and services, from or on behalf of EcoSpark, will be available in a variety of formats (e.g., telephone, email, hard copy and large print) upon request so that people with different disabilities can access the information. For additional communication formats EcoSpark shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Communication from EcoSpark regarding programming, events and services, will clearly outline what expectations need to be met in order to attend the event. Attendees with specific accommodation needs will need to communicate directly with EcoSpark to make appropriate accommodations within reason.

### **6. Use of service animals and support persons**

EcoSpark is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. All staff and volunteers will strive to act in an inclusive and appropriate manner with people with disabilities and their accompanying service animals.

We are also committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter EcoSpark’s premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to

his or her support person while on our premises and while attending an EcoSpark event, as long as it does not conflict with the policy of the insured party.

In the event that EcoSpark is engaged in an activity where admission fees are charged (i.e., open workshop, fundraiser, etc.), a person with a disability accompanied by a support person will pay full admission, while the support person will not be required to pay an admission fee.

### **7. Notice of temporary disruption**

EcoSpark will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

### **8. Training for staff**

EcoSpark will provide training to all staff, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, 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 (AODA), 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
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing EcoSpark's goods and services
- EcoSpark's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard

Applicable staff will be trained on policies, practices, and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

### **9. Feedback process**

The ultimate goal of EcoSpark is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way EcoSpark provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by e-mail or telephone. Other accessible formats and communication supports

can be requested. All feedback will be directed to the Executive Director. Customers can expect to hear back within five (5) working days.

#### **10. Modifications to this or other policies**

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities. Any policy of EcoSpark that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

#### **11. Questions about this policy**

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, the Executive Director of EcoSpark.