

## **Accessible Customer Service – Service Animals**

### **1.0 Purpose**

To ensure that people with disabilities seeking/using goods and services provided by Cornerstone continue to have the assistance of their service animal/guide dog.

### **2.0 Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:

- (i) A "guide dog", as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights' Act; or
- (ii) A "service animal" for a person with a disability.

For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

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

### **3.0 Policy**

Cornerstone acknowledges the vital relationship and dependency which exists between a person with disabilities and their service animal. Cornerstone is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of the premises that are open to the public and other third parties. This includes tenants, staff, and visitors to our premises.

The tenant/customer when accompanied by a service animal will be allowed to enter the premises with the animal and keep the animal with him or her at all times, unless the animal is excluded by law from the premises.

The tenant/customer is responsible for the care, supervision and control of their service animal while on the premises.

### **4.0 Responsibilities**

Board of Directors/Property Manager/Other Designated Manager will ensure all staff, contractors, volunteers and others dealing with the public (tenants/customers):

- are trained on how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal/guide dog;
- know when it is appropriate to request documentation verifying that the animal is required for reasons relating to a disability and what to do if required documentation is not available;
- know the responsibilities of staff and tenant/customer in relation to the care, supervision of the service animal.

### **5.0 Procedure and Practices**

- Staff will allow individuals with a disability who are accompanied by a service animal to enter the premises and keep their service animal with them as they use all parts of the premises open to the public or third parties and where not excluded by law. This includes common areas such as lobby, hallways, laundry facilities, indoor and outdoor facilities, the building office, common eating areas, meeting rooms etc.
- Staff will allow people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal to enter the premises and keep their animal with them during a unit showing.
- Staff/volunteers/contractors will not touch a service animal without permission and will not speak to a service animal while it is working.
- Staff/volunteers/contractors will be trained on rules and regulations regarding service animals so that they can answer questions from other tenants in an informed and accurate manner, if they arise.
- If a woman uses a service animal, at the time of lease signing, she will be asked how she wishes to handle evacuation in the case of an emergency, for example in the case of a fire. This information will be maintained with the building's emergency evacuation procedures only for as long as the individual is a tenant and uses a service animal.
- Staff will request documentation from visitors who use a support animal only if there is a policy prohibiting visitors from bringing pets into the building, and if it is not 'readily apparent' that the visitor's animal is a "support animal". This would include situations when the animal is not wearing a harness, collar, sign or vest identifying them as a service animal and when it is not readily apparent that the animal is being used by the person for reasons relating to their disability.
- If it is unclear an animal is a service animal, staff can request documentation in the form of a letter from a doctor or nurse that says the animal is needed because of a disability. Other acceptable documentation includes: a certificate or identification card from a service animal training school, or an identification card from the Attorney General of Ontario.
- If required documentation is not available when requested, staff is not obligated to allow entry of the animal onto the premises until such documentation is available. Staff shall use discretion on this issue recognizing that visitors may not be aware of the building's policies.
- Staff will notify tenants who use a service animal of areas designated for service animals to relieve themselves and communicate the policy that the tenant/customer is responsible for supervision and care of their service animal.