

Section B: Accessibility

POLICY STATEMENT: Accessibility

Adopted by the Board of Directors 02/23/2017

It is the policy of Open Options to promote accessibility and the removal of barriers for persons we serve, our employees, and all other stakeholders to enhance the quality of life for those served and practice nondiscriminatory employment. Open Options will make every reasonable effort to ensure through regular efforts and periodic review that:

1. All programs, services, and activities of the organization are accessible to people with disabilities and are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
2. The organization is committed to and involved in ongoing efforts to remove architectural, attitudinal, environmental, financial, employment, technology, transportation, communication, community integration, and any other barriers to people with disabilities that are identified by the persons served, outside stakeholders, or employees.

The leadership shall periodically review the efforts of the organization and make recommendations to improve accessibility, which includes at least the following areas:

- a) The physical accessibility of the administrative offices and buildings housing program services for otherwise qualified persons;
- b) Any program expansion into buildings owned or leased by the organization addresses physical accessibility;
- c) Administration of personnel practices (including recruitment, hiring, and compensation) which do not discriminate against persons with disabilities;
- d) Recruitment of Board members and other volunteers with disabilities; and/or family members or other representatives of persons with disabilities;
- e) Identification of and removal of barriers to persons receiving services, employees, volunteers and other stakeholders, including barriers in community settings utilized by persons receiving services.
- f) Employee and organization involvement in community organizations which promote social and economic opportunities for people with disabilities, as well as advocate for increased public funds.

ACCESSIBILITY

PROCEDURE - All Programs

In accordance with the established policy guidelines, all persons involved with the organization shall ensure through regular efforts and periodic review that:

- a. Reasonable accommodations are made to enable persons with disabilities to participate in all organizational activities;
- b. Employees, volunteers, and persons served participate in community activities that promote opportunities for people with disabilities, including but not limited to public information campaigns, involvement in community organizations, etc.;
- c. All core services are made available to persons with disabilities who meet the organization's eligibility criteria;
- d. An accessibility plan is in place with timelines and action steps that addresses efforts to improve attitudinal, architectural, environmental, financial, employment, technology, transportation, communication and community

- integration barriers, and other barriers as identified;
- e. Through both organizational efforts and individual planning, actions are taken to support people receiving services in becoming members of their chosen communities, including participation in culturally diverse opportunities as applicable.
 - f. A regular review of the organization's efforts to improve accessibility is conducted by the leadership of the organization, including assessing the accessibility needs of persons served, personnel, and other stakeholders.

RELAY PHONE SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENTS

PROCEDURE - All Programs

Missouri or Kansas residents who are deaf, or have hearing or speech impairments may use state relay services for telephone communication. A Federal Relay service is also available for out-of-state individuals. Employees and persons served may initiate and receive calls from individuals with hearing impairments by using the relay systems.

For TTY Users: A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, or has a speech disability uses a TTY (text telephone) to type his/her conversation to a CA (communication assistant), who then reads the typed conversation to the hearing person. The CA relays the hearing person's spoken words by typing them back to the TTY user.

For Voice Users: Standard telephone users can easily initiate calls to TTY users. The CA types the hearing person's spoken words to the TTY user and reads back the typed replies.

For Voice Carry Over Users: Voice Carry Over (VCO) allows hard-of-hearing users to speak directly to a hearing person. When the hearing person speaks, a CA will serve as the other person's "ears" and type everything said on a TTY or VCO phone.

VCO With Privacy: This is similar to the standard VCO feature, however the CA will not hear the caller speaking through the relay system, and will only type voiced responses back to the VCO user.

RELAY SYSTEMS DO NOT PROVIDE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE, but merely relays the emergency call which slows down the response time. Use 911 or other existing emergency numbers when possible in crisis situations.

All calls handled by relay are strictly confidential. Relay agents cannot disclose any information from a conversation, and records of conversations are not kept.

Numbers to call:

Relay Missouri

Dial 7-1-1 – anywhere in Missouri on any type of phone. Customer service for Relay Missouri is 800-676-3777

Kansas Relay Center

Both speech / hearing disabled and hearing users call: 1-800-766-3777

Federal Relay Service for out-of-state calls:

TTY: 1-800-877-8339

Voice Carry Over (VCO): 1-877-8776280

Speech-to-Speech: 1-877-8982

Spanish: 1-800-845-6136