

Meeting guide for supervisors

A guide dog resource

History of this project

B.C.'s Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) was approached by Blind and visually impaired people who use guide dogs who shared their experiences of discrimination in trying to access everyday services. They told us about frequently being denied access to services like public transit, taxis, stores, restaurants and cafes. They described these experiences as frustrating, dehumanizing and sometimes even dangerous. One of the places they reported being denied service most frequently was when trying to access restaurants and cafes.

Like all people living in British Columbia, people with disabilities have the right to access services like cafes and restaurants without experiencing discrimination. This right is protected in B.C.'s [Human Rights Code](#) and includes people with disabilities who use guide dogs and service dogs. Denying a person with a disability who uses a guide dog or service dog access to a service because of their dog is discrimination.

To help raise awareness about this issue, BCOHRC worked with guide dog users and servers to create resources to help servers provide excellent, accessible customer service and meet their legal responsibilities under B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*. These resources also explain the human rights of people who use guide dogs and service dogs and help servers provide discrimination-free service.

To learn more, please visit our website: bchumanrights.ca/guide-dogs

Who is this guide for

This guide is designed to be used by anyone who supervises and/or trains front of house staff, including servers. This can include team leaders, owners, managers, supervisors, human resources personnel and/or training personnel in the restaurant and hospitality industry. It can also be used by servers to train other servers.

Purpose of this guide

The purpose of this guide is to provide a framework for discussing accessibility, customer service and human rights when serving customers who use guide dogs and service dogs. This guide can help you prepare and run a meeting to introduce these resources to front of house staff and answer any questions that may arise.

Setting up your meeting

Option 1

Share resources with staff in advance of the meeting via email and/or in printed format available in common areas like employee lounges, staff rooms, meeting rooms and locker rooms. Invite employees to review the materials and bring their questions to the meeting for discussion.

Option 2

Introduce the resources at the meeting. Please note that you may need to allocate more time for this option.

Start the meeting

Introduce the project

British Columbia's Office of the Human Rights Commissioner (BCOHRC) has created education resources to help educate servers about their human rights responsibilities. These resources include an infographic designed to be kept in an easily accessible front of house location and a poster designed to be posted in common areas at work like a break room.

This BCOHRC project started when some community members who are Blind or visually impaired and use guide dogs shared their experiences of discrimination in trying to access everyday services. They told us that they often experienced being denied access to services like public transit, taxis, stores, restaurants and cafes. They spoke about being denied access to restaurants and cafes because of their guide dogs. They described these experiences as frustrating, embarrassing, dehumanizing and sometimes dangerous.

Like all other people living in British Columbia, people with disabilities have the right to access services available to the public. This right is protected in B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*. As service providers, servers have a legal obligation not to discriminate against people with disabilities.

BCOHRC worked with guide dog users *and* servers to create resources for servers to help them understand the human rights of people who use guide dogs and service dogs, recognize servers' legal obligations to provide discrimination-free service and provide tips to provide excellent and accessible service.

Servers told us that they want to provide excellent and accessible service to Blind and visually impaired customers but are often unsure how to do that and worried about saying or doing the wrong thing. They also told us that they needed resources designed for the fast-paced high-stress environment of a restaurant, bar

or cafe. So, we developed a highly visual, easily understood infographic that can be kept by a till or side station for easy and quick access when needed and a poster for break rooms or back of house areas.

To learn more about the project, visit our website: bchumanrights.ca/guide-dogs

Why is this important to you as front of house staff and servers?

- Under the B.C.'s *Human Rights Code*, restaurants and their staff have a legal duty to accommodate people with disabilities.
- People who use guide dogs and service dogs have disabilities.
- Refusing to allow a person who uses a guide dog or service dog to access the service you are providing to the general public—simply because they use a guide dog or service dog—is discrimination.

Introduce resources

Infographic

The infographic is designed to be kept at a workstation for easy access when needed. Inform staff where it will be kept in their workplace. Please review the document with staff.

Posters

Posters cover the same information as the infographic. Inform staff where it will be posted in the workplace.

Frequently asked questions

The FAQ can be used to answer questions at this meeting and posted for staff to reference in a common area. Inform staff where it will be posted in the workplace.