

## Disabled Customer Accessibility Policy

This Disabled Customer Accessibility Policy applies to all customer service facilities and associated grounds, and OptiNet products and services provided by BVU Authority of Bristol, Virginia, a political subdivision of the State of Virginia ("BVU") and doing business as OptiNet ("OptiNet").

### I. PURPOSE

BVU is committed to fostering a positive customer service environment in serving all customers, including those with disabilities. As such, this Policy is intended to meet the requirements of the *Americans with Disability Act of 1990*, and *Revised ADA Regulations implanting Title II and Title III* and the FCC's implementation of Sections 716 and 717 of the Communications Act of 1934, as Enacted by the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010. BVU will strive to provide facilities, products, and services in a manner consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

### II. SCOPE

- A. This Policy applies to employees, agents, and/or contractors who deal with the public or other third parties that act on behalf of BVU.
- B. The section of this Policy that addresses the use of guide dogs, service animals and service dogs only applies to the provision of goods and services that take place at premises owned and operated by BVU.
- C. This Policy shall also apply to all persons who participate in the development of BVU's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

### III. DEFINITIONS

**Assistive Device** – is a technical aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that customers bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

**Disability** – the term disability as defined by the *Americans with Disabilities Act*, refers to:

- 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;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder.

**Guide Dog** – is a highly-trained working dog that has been trained to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.

**Service Animal** –an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

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

**Service Dog** – a dog other than a guide dog for the blind is a service dog if:

- it is readily apparent to an average person that the dog functions as a service dog for a person with a medical disability; or
- the person who requires the dog can provide on request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires a service dog.

**Support Person** – a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services.

### **General Principles**

In accordance with the *Americans with Disability Act*, this Policy addresses the following:

- A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities;
- B. The Use of Assistive Devices
- C. The Use of Service Animals, Guide Dogs and Service Dogs
- D. The Use of Support Persons
- E. Notice of Service Disruptions
- F. Customer Feedback
- G. Training
- H. Notice of Availability

## **IV. DETAILS**

### **A. The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities**

BVU will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity by:

- ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality;
- allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways, at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk;
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner;
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services; and
- communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability.

## **B. The Use of Assistive Devices**

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by BVU. Personal assistive devices include but are not limited to; wheelchairs, walkers, personal oxygen tanks, or device to assist with hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

## **C. The Use of Service Animals, Guide Dogs and Service Dogs**

People with disabilities and accompanied by their service animals will be welcomed onto our premises. The person accompanied by a service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times, including ensuring the safety and clean-up of the animal.

## **D. The Use of Support Persons**

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 information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation where such information is disclosed ~~contained~~.

## **E. Customer Feedback**

BVU will provide customers the opportunity to give feedback on the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities. Feedback, including complaints, should be emailed to [customerservice@bvub.com](mailto:customerservice@bvub.com). Emails will be reviewed by our management staff; customers can anticipate a response with seventy two (72) hours.

## **F. Training**

BVU will provide training to employees, volunteers, and others, including third parties who deal with the public on our behalf. Training will also be provided to those involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures as well as OptiNet products and services offered to the public.

Individuals in the following positions, including the related management positions, will be trained: Product and Service Development Team, Customer Service Representatives, Cashiers, Network Support Specialists, and Receptionist. Training will be provided to staff on an annual basis.

Training will include:

- A review of the purpose and intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the requirements of the customer service standard and the Twenty-First Century Communications and Video Accessibility Act of 2010 ;
- BVU's plan related to the customer service standard and to providing accessible service to people with disabilities;
- Instructions on 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 a support person;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing BVU's services or products.

Employees will also be trained when changes are made to this Policy.

#### **G. Notice of Availability**

BVU will notify the public that accessibility policies and the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) Section 504 Programs & Accessibility Handbook are available upon request or by visiting the company website at [www.bvu-optinet.com](http://www.bvu-optinet.com).

#### **H. Physical Solutions**

- Convenient off-street parking designated specifically for disabled persons.
- Curb cuts and ramps between parking areas and buildings.
- Level access into our lobby.
- Fully accessible bathrooms, public waiting, access to pay your bill and speak with our Customer Service Representatives.

#### **I. Hearing/Speech Solutions**

- OptiNet services are compatible with TTY equipment.
- OptiNet services passes through 711 calls based on the customer's geographic location and telephone number.
- OptiNet will provide onsite technical support for hearing impaired customers to set up TTY equipment and Closed Captioning at no cost to the subscriber.

#### **J. Vison Solutions**

- OptiNet will provide at no cost, the calling feature for Automatic Recall which allows the subscriber to return the most recent incoming call, or to hear the last incoming caller's number and then optionally return the call.
- Subscribers may qualify for discounted local Directory Assistance (411).
- OptiNet can provide alternatives for billing, Welcome Kits and Channel Line Ups.
- When paying a bill by phone, our Customer Service Representatives will read you your bill and answer any questions.

## **V. MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES**

Any Policy of BVU that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

## **VI. NEW PRODUCT AND SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCT ENHANCEMENTS**

BVU is committed to making our products accessible to the widest possible audience. Current accommodations include access to programming with closed captions. As new products and services are developed, and existing product enhancements are designed, accessibility is a priority. To ensure our development teams consider the impact of design for our customers with disabilities, all new product and service proposals, as well as existing technology enhancements, will be modified to the fullest extent possible to make them accessible to all customers, regardless of ability.

**If you require aid, please do not hesitate to let the receptionist know, or contact Bridget Addington at email [baddington@bvua.com](mailto:baddington@bvua.com), or telephone 276-821-6229 or visit our website at [www.bvu-optinet.com](http://www.bvu-optinet.com).**

**OptiNet reserves the right to modify this Policy at any time in its sole and absolute discretion. Changes and modifications will be effective when posted and any use of OptiNet Services after the posting of any changes will be considered acceptance of those changes.**

*This Disabled Customer Accessibility Policy was revised February 21, 2018.*