



# Volunteer Handbook

*last updated: December 2017*

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We have proudly adopted and been accepted by the



*Values, Guiding Principles and Standards of Practice*

The Toronto Vegetarian Association is proudly supported by a grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, which builds healthy and vibrant communities in this great province.



## Welcome!

Welcome to the Toronto Vegetarian Association's Volunteer Handbook. We would like to thank you for the time and effort that you have dedicated to the Toronto Vegetarian Association (TVA). We depend greatly on volunteers to achieve our mission: "to inspire people to choose a healthier, greener, more peaceful lifestyle". Volunteers like you allow us to offer resources and information to people in the Greater Toronto Area about the benefits of a vegetarian diet.

This handbook is designed to introduce you to TVA and give you more information about volunteering with us. In the next section, you'll learn about our vision and values, and how each of our programs helps us achieve our mission. Then you'll find some of our commonly used policies and procedures for volunteer involvement, concluding with TVA's statement of Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities.

After reading the handbook, please read and sign the Volunteer Agreement (page 9) with TVA staff, your program leader or a TVA board member (see APPENDIX A). A copy will be kept on file in the TVA office, and a copy will be provided for your own records as well. You also have the option of completing a Record of Volunteering (see APPENDIX B) for your own future use.

While the Volunteer Handbook provides some background information about TVA and our volunteer policies and procedures, it's by no means a complete orientation to volunteering with us. So if you have any questions, just ask! We're here to help, and have other documents available such as tabling orientation and FAQs.

We hope you enjoy volunteering with TVA, and thank you again for your contribution.

David Alexander  
Executive Director  
[dalexander@veg.ca](mailto:dalexander@veg.ca)

Diane Burgin  
President of the Board  
[dburgin@veg.ca](mailto:dburgin@veg.ca)

"As a volunteer-driven organization, the Toronto Vegetarian Association (TVA) is committed to providing volunteers with meaningful opportunities, as well as support and encouragement for the essential duties that they perform. Volunteers have always been the leaders of TVA, initiating new projects and ensuring the continued success of our core programs. It is through the work and commitment of TVA's volunteers that we are able to succeed in our mission to inspire people to choose a healthier, greener, more peaceful lifestyle."

–Approved by the TVA board of directors on February 10, 2009

## **Introducing the Toronto Vegetarian Association: Who We Are**

**Our Mission:** To inspire people to choose a healthier, greener, more compassionate lifestyle through plant-based eating.

**Our Values:** The Toronto Vegetarian Association will operate in a way that:

- Promotes the health of people, non-human animals, and the environment
- Provides expert information as Toronto's go to resource for all things veg
- Supports those interested in exploring plant-based living
- Celebrates Toronto's diversity and is respectful of people from all backgrounds
- Embraces our grassroots, volunteer-driven history
- Is fiscally responsible and forward-thinking
- Is socially responsible and eco-friendly
- Shows its appreciation of the contributions made by volunteers and staff
- Engages our stakeholders & audiences in constructive dialogue

### **Our Vision:**

We envision a future where people think critically about their food choices, where growing numbers of businesses, community groups, and organizations inspire people to make healthier, greener, more compassionate choices, and where nutritious, sustainable plant-based foods are accessible to all.

### **Our Core and Key Messages:**

1. TVA is a diverse community of individuals who are passionate about healthy eating, sustainable living and compassion for animals.
2. TVA is Toronto's go-to resource for all things veg.
3. The TVA Gives Back to Toronto.
4. TVA demonstrates that choosing a vegetarian diet is healthy, easy and delicious.
5. Vegetarian diets are not just nutritionally sound but have many health benefits that can help prevent and manage a number of chronic diseases and conditions.
6. By boycotting cruelty, vegetarians reduce animal suffering.
7. Cutting out meat and other animal products is the most powerful way for each of us to fight climate change and reduce our ecological footprint.

**Please contact us if you would like a copy of our detailed core and key messages, which includes sub-messages to go along with each of the above points.**

## **Introducing the Toronto Vegetarian Association: What We Do**

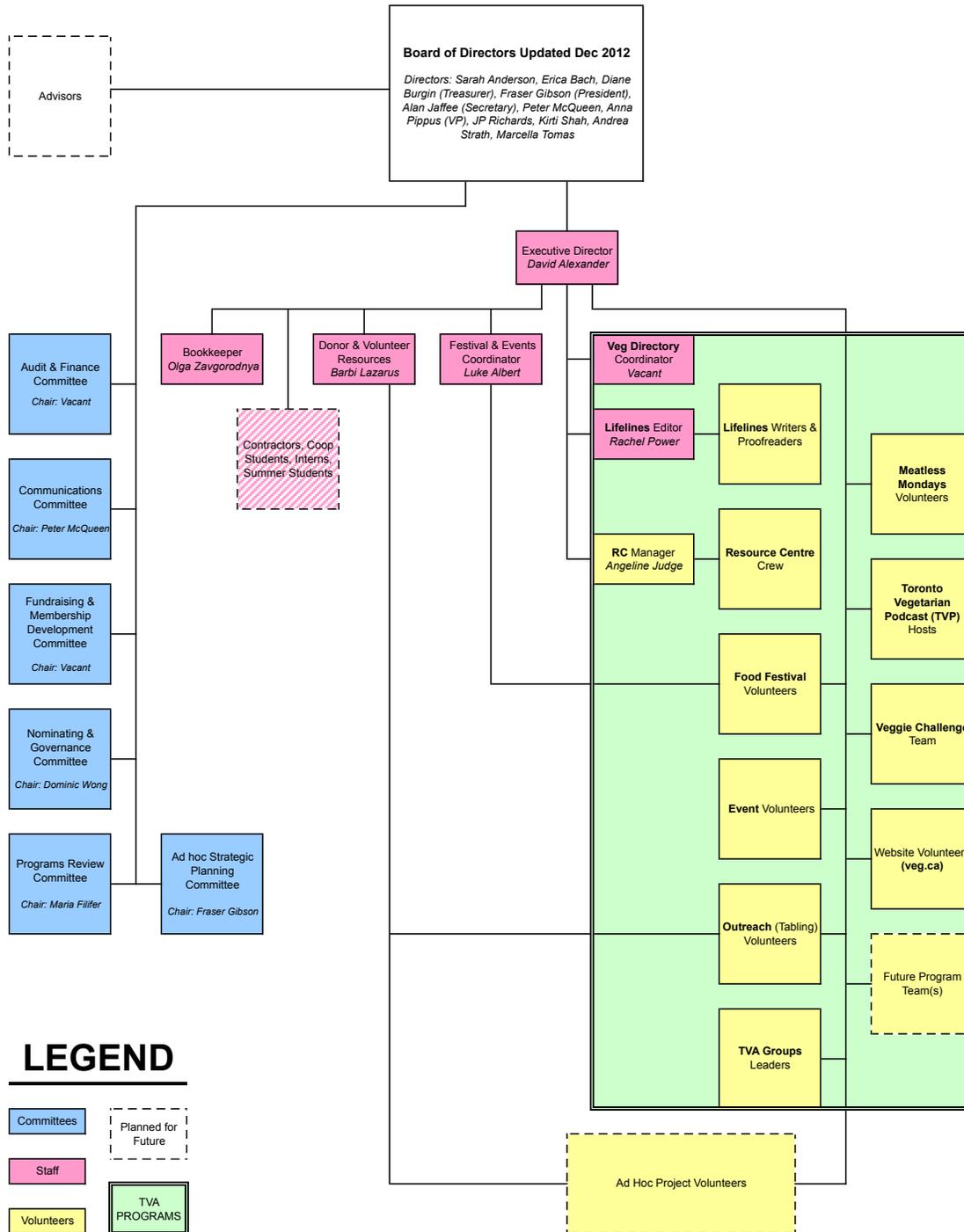
Founded in 1945, the Toronto Vegetarian Association is Canada's largest vegetarian organization. We are a registered charitable organization (charitable no. 11926 7532 RR0001).

TVA runs a variety of programs serving the Greater Toronto Area community and beyond:

- ***Lifelines:*** *Lifelines* is the Toronto Vegetarian Association's 16-page quarterly newsletter filled with news, articles, recipes, reviews, event information, and much more.
- **Outreach:** We staff tables and distribute materials and school, community and corporate events around the Greater Toronto Area. We also exhibit at consumer shows.
- **Resource Centre (RC):** Our downtown resource centre is open to the public and is staffed by friendly and helpful volunteers. We have over 400 titles of books and cookbooks, magazines, DVDs and other resources available for viewing, loan, or purchase.
- **Toronto Vegetarian Podcast (TVP):** Our Saturday resource centre crew hosts our popular weekly podcast, where we talk about what's new in the Resource Centre, what's coming up in Toronto for the week to come, and pretty much anything else veg-related (or not) that comes to mind!
- **TVA Groups:** From Halton-Peel to Durham, we host and support several vegetarian social groups across the Greater Toronto Area whose members share special interests or want to participate in local activities.
- **Vegetarian Directory:** This free print and web publication lists vegetarian-friendly restaurants, stores, cooking classes and more in the Greater Toronto Area. Updated annually.
- **Veg Food Fest:** Currently held each September at Harbourfront Centre, this celebration of all things vegetarian has grown to attract up to 40,000 people annually.
- **Veggie Challenge:** Open to anyone, this free web-based program provides daily support to people willing to challenge themselves to go vegetarian or vegan for seven days.
- **Website (veg.ca):** Our comprehensive website offers a wide range of vegetarian information, including restaurant listings, events, articles, fact sheets, recipe links, and much more.
- **Other programs and services:** From nutritional workshops to celebratory events and contests, we're committed to meeting the needs of the community by offering useful and relevant programs and services.

To see how staff and volunteers work together to make these programs happen, please see the chart on the next page.

# Introducing the Toronto Vegetarian Association: How We Operate



## **Volunteering with the Toronto Vegetarian Association: Office and Resource Use Guidelines**

### **Booking Meetings**

Meetings in the Toronto Vegetarian Association office should be booked with staff at least one week in advance by telephone (416-544-9800) or email ([admin@veg.ca](mailto:admin@veg.ca)). Office bookings will be confirmed by staff. Meetings can also be booked for free at Metro Hall by TVA staff if given enough notice.

### **After-hours Office Access**

Volunteers (including those with keyholder and door-code privileges) may have after-hours access to the office only when permitted by TVA staff. Volunteers and staff may only use the TVA office after-hours for TVA purposes. Please ensure that all lights are turned off, and that both the office door and the door leading outside are locked before leaving.

### **Office Equipment Use**

TVA office equipment (including computers, telephones, appliances, etc.) is primarily for use by volunteers and staff working on TVA projects. Provided that this equipment is not being used for these purposes, it may occasionally be used by volunteers and staff for personal use at the discretion of TVA staff. When permitted by staff, the printer may be used to print no more than five (5) pages of personal documents.

Personal files should not be left on the hard drives of the computers. If found, these files will be deleted. When using computers for email and internet browsing, volunteers and staff are expected to exercise caution with respect to viruses. Volunteers and staff may not install any computer software or applications without the approval of senior staff.

Kitchen appliances may be used by all volunteers and staff. Dishes are also available for use by volunteers and staff. Please wash, dry, and put away all dishes immediately after use.

### **Food in the Office**

Non-vegetarian items (meat, fish, fowl and the flesh of any animal) may not be stored in the fridge, heated in the microwave, or consumed on the premises. Alcoholic beverages may not be consumed on the premises.

Coffee, tea and other beverages stored in the office or in the fridge are considered communal unless otherwise labeled.

### **Reimbursement Policy**

Volunteers and staff will be reimbursed for expenditures made on behalf of TVA, provided that expenditures are pre-approved by TVA staff or the treasurer, and provided that original receipts are presented within two (2) weeks.

TTC tokens are available for students or the unemployed who travel by TTC for their volunteering, on a request basis. If you require TTC tokens, please make sure to request them in advance.

## **Volunteering with the Toronto Vegetarian Association: Volunteer Code of Conduct**

Our Volunteer Code of Conduct provides volunteers with a set of clear expectations with regards to their volunteer involvement with the Toronto Vegetarian Association.

We ask all our volunteers to familiarize themselves with the Volunteer Code of Conduct and to follow these guidelines in their volunteer work with TVA. TVA staff share the responsibility of ensuring that the Code of Conduct is understood and followed by TVA volunteers, and that copies of the Code of Conduct are made available to all volunteers.

### **Commitment**

TVA volunteers are expected to complete their duties in the way that these duties are explained to them through their job description and by TVA staff or their program leader. While there is usually room for flexibility with volunteer positions, volunteers are expected to comply with recommendations made by their supervisor.

TVA depends on our volunteers, and therefore needs volunteers who are dependable. We understand unforeseen circumstances such as illness can arise, however frequent, unexplained absences or lateness is considered unacceptable, as it would be with any other organization. Volunteers are expected to be on time for their volunteer shifts and available for the full duration of their shift, unless alternate arrangements have been made with their supervisor prior to the shift. When unforeseen circumstances occur, volunteers should give notice as soon as possible.

Not arriving on time or not showing up at all for a volunteer shift three times may result in that person no longer being able to volunteer with the organization.

Some volunteer positions at TVA require volunteers to complete training and a minimum time commitment. Volunteers are expected to meet the commitments listed in their job description.

### **Representing the Toronto Vegetarian Association**

Volunteers are expected to represent TVA's Mission, Values and Vision (see page 3) to the public in a manner that is open and respectful to new ideas and people of all backgrounds.

Volunteers may not advocate the consumption of meat, fish or fowl or the flesh of any animal while representing the Toronto Vegetarian Association or while otherwise on duty.

Media inquiries are best handled by TVA spokespeople specifically trained in media relations and briefed on the organization's formal position on various issues. We ask that if approached by the media while representing TVA, that volunteers speak explicitly of their own experiences, and not on behalf of the organization, unless requested to do so by senior staff. Volunteers may not describe the organization's position on specific issues, and are strongly discouraged from commenting upon controversial issues that could result in portraying a negative image of the TVA.

The following policy statement was approved by the Board of Directors, and may assist you in considering your interactions with the public.

***Celebrating Vegetarian Choices:*** *The Toronto Vegetarian Association is an organization that brings together vegetarians of various motivations to work towards a common goal: to inspire people to choose a healthier, greener, more peaceful lifestyle.*

*The TVA encourages, supports, and celebrates any and all vegetarian choices. These choices may include Meatless Mondays, the exploration of more plant-based meals, and any form of vegetarianism including veganism.*

*While our inclusive framework encourages all efforts to reduce animal consumption, the TVA believes that vegan diets offer the greatest potential benefits to human health, environmental sustainability, and ending animal suffering and exploitation.*

*We ask that volunteers remember that everyone comes to vegetarianism at different times and for different reasons. Our role is to provide positive encouragement and support to better enable others to make vegetarian choices.*

### **Anti-Racism, Access and Equity at TVA**

The Toronto Vegetarian Association's "Anti-Racism, Access and Equity Policy" confirms that TVA is an organization committed to ensuring the principles of equity, access, and anti-racism are integrated into our policies, programs, services and communication practices. We provide an environment and services that are free of racism, sexism, discrimination and bias, where all individuals are treated with respect and dignity.

As such, while volunteering for the Toronto Vegetarian Association, it is important that you:

- Demonstrate through your behaviour and language that TVA is an organization that values diversity of race, gender and sexual orientation
- Maintain a positive, comfortable and respectful environment for fellow volunteers
- Create a respectful, comfortable space that members of the public can approach at ease

More specifically, when volunteering for TVA it is **not** appropriate to:

- Make jokes at the expense of others
- Use crude, offensive or insensitive language
- Use disrespectful sayings regarding race, gender, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental abilities, etc.

If you feel that a fellow TVA volunteer has made inappropriate comments or gestures towards either TVA volunteers or the general public, please report the incident to TVA's Volunteer Resources Coordinator.

The Toronto Vegetarian Association has also created an Accessible Customer Service Plan. Please see Appendix C for an overview of the Accessible Customer Service Plan.

### **Confidentiality**

Confidential information such as membership records and volunteer contact information are to be kept private and secure. This information should not be shared with members of the public under any circumstances.

Contact information for TVA members and volunteers can only be disclosed to TVA volunteers for the purposes of the Toronto Vegetarian Association.

Personally identifiable information will only be used to provide a product, information, or service as requested, to send information about our products, information or services, or for processing pre-authorized payments.

For more information on TVA's Privacy Policy, speak with a staff or Board member.

**Conflict of Interest**

Volunteers are expected to reveal any potential conflict of interest where they might stand to profit directly or indirectly from the outcome of a decision, before participating in any discussion of this decision. Volunteers should not be involved as decision-makers where a conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict of interest, is found to exist.

## **Volunteering with the Toronto Vegetarian Association: Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities – Volunteer Copy**

TVA volunteers have the right to:

- Receive support and feedback from TVA staff and/or program leaders.
- Be given a copy of the TVA Volunteer Handbook and a description of their position.
- Be engaged in a way that is open to new ideas and respectful towards people of all backgrounds.
- Have the opportunity to confidentially note their concerns and ideas for improvement to volunteer policies and procedures.

TVA volunteers are expected to:

- Read and understand the Volunteer Handbook.
- Be open and respectful to new ideas and people of all backgrounds.
- Remember that we all come to vegetarianism at our own time and for different reasons, and to keep this in mind when representing TVA and promoting TVA’s mission.
- Follow the Volunteer Code of Conduct in the execution of their work with TVA.

### **Volunteer Agreement**

“I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the Volunteer Handbook. I agree to follow the Volunteer Code of Conduct in the execution of my work with the Toronto Vegetarian Association.”

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
TVA (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign the Volunteer Agreement with TVA staff, a TVA board member (see the list in APPENDIX A), or your program leader. One copy will be kept on file at the TVA office, and one copy is provided to the volunteer.

**Please feel free to list your skills and interests below, which may help in determining future volunteer opportunities suited to you with the Toronto Vegetarian Association.**

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## **Volunteering with the Toronto Vegetarian Association: Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities – TVA Office Copy**

TVA volunteers have the right to:

- Receive support and feedback from TVA staff and/or program leaders.
- Be given a copy of the TVA Volunteer Handbook and a description of their position.
- Be engaged in a way that is open to new ideas and respectful towards people of all backgrounds.
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
TVA (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Please sign the Volunteer Agreement with TVA staff, a TVA board member (see the list in APPENDIX A), or your program leader. One copy will be kept on file at the TVA office, and one copy is provided to the volunteer.

**Please feel free to list your skills and interests below, which may help in determining future volunteer opportunities suited to you with the Toronto Vegetarian Association.**

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## APPENDIX A: 2016-17 TVA Board of Directors and Staff

### Board of Directors

Sid Seth, <a href="mailto:sseth@veg.ca">sseth@veg.ca</a>	Ariane Bobiash, <a href="mailto:abobiash@veg.ca">abobiash@veg.ca</a>
Diane Burgin, Treasurer, President <a href="mailto:dburgin@veg.ca">dburgin@veg.ca</a>	Kevin Downing, Vice President <a href="mailto:kdowning@veg.ca">kdowning@veg.ca</a>
Gyanesh Paliwal, <a href="mailto:gpaliwal@veg.ca">gpaliwal@veg.ca</a>	Peter McQueen, <a href="mailto:pmcqueen@veg.ca">pmcqueen@veg.ca</a>
Fraser Gibson, <a href="mailto:fgibson@veg.ca">fgibson@veg.ca</a>	Cayley Montmarquette, <a href="mailto:cmontmarquette@veg.ca">cmontmarquette@veg.ca</a>
Scott Garant, <a href="mailto:sgarant@veg.ca">sgarant@veg.ca</a>	Rita Haddad, <a href="mailto:rhaddad@veg.ca">rhaddad@veg.ca</a>
Annette Wiegand, <a href="mailto:awiegand@veg.ca">awiegand@veg.ca</a>	

### Staff

David Alexander, Executive Director <a href="mailto:dalexander@veg.ca">dalexander@veg.ca</a>	Barbi Lazarus, Donor and Volunteer Resources Coordinator <a href="mailto:blazarus@veg.ca">blazarus@veg.ca</a>
Emily Thompson, Food Festival and Events Coordinator <a href="mailto:festival@veg.ca">festival@veg.ca</a>	Andrea DeVries, Vegetarian Directory Coordinator <a href="mailto:directory@veg.ca">directory@veg.ca</a>

# APPENDIX B: Record of Volunteering

\*This is an optional form for those wanting a volunteer record for personal use, such as required high school hours, resumes, etc.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Volunteer Position</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b>	<b>Skills Required</b>	<b>Date Range</b>	<b>TVA Signature</b>

## **APPENDIX C: Accessible Customer Service Plan**

*TVA volunteers must be familiar with the plan, and all volunteers interacting with the public must complete training re: how to provide our services to people with disabilities.*

### **Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities**

Toronto Vegetarian Association (TVA) is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

#### **Assistive devices**

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

#### **Communication**

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

#### **Service animals**

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

#### **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.

We will notify customers of any potential fees for the support person through a notice posted on our premises, website and event marketing and throughout the registration process.

#### **Notice of temporary disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with Disabilities, the Toronto Vegetarian Association (TVA) will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed at the Toronto Vegetarian Association headquarters, website and site of the disruption.

## Training for staff

The Toronto Vegetarian Association (TVA) will provide training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf.

Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

- Employees;
- Volunteers;
- Board members;

This training will be provided to staff upon hiring (employees) and upon recruitment during orientation (for volunteers). Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Toronto Vegetarian Association's plan related to 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 a support person
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Toronto Vegetarian Association's goods and services.

## Feedback process

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way the Toronto Vegetarian Association provides goods and services to people with disabilities can:

- Telephone
- E-mail [aodafeedback@veg.ca](mailto:aodafeedback@veg.ca)
- Complete a Feedback form [www.veg.ca/aoda/feedback](http://www.veg.ca/aoda/feedback)
- Mail

All feedback will be directed to the Chair of the Nomination and Governance Board Committee. Customers can expect to hear back in 3 business days.

Complaints will be addressed according to our organization's regular complaint management procedures.

## Modifications to this or other policies

Any policy of the Toronto Vegetarian Association (TVA) that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.