

Policy Overview

This policy and its procedures address the accessibility requirements of Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The mission of The Centre for Skills Development & Training (The Centre) is to “provide people with opportunities to build a better future”. The Centre’s commitment to fulfilling its mission includes adherence to high customer service standards. In providing customer service, Centre staff shall follow the ideals of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity, meeting or exceeding all applicable legislation.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers at all sites.

Our Commitment

The Centre is committed to providing its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. The Centre is also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was created with the goal of developing standards that would improve accessibility for people with disabilities across the province. AODA allows the Provincial government to develop specific standards of accessibility to enforce them. The standards are made into regulations pursuant to the AODA.

Responsibility

It is the responsibility of Centre managers and/or immediate supervisors and/or department heads to ensure that all employees follow the guidelines set out in this policy.

All departments are responsible for:

- Providing documents in suitable formats upon request by a person with a disability
- Ensuring compliance with the Standards of Accessible Customer Service, Ontario regulation 429/07

- Communicating and coordinating, when applicable, with a person with a disability regarding the use of a support person or service animal
- Providing notifications of a service disruption

User (person with a disability) is responsible for:

- Supervising and keeping service animals in control when used to access The Centre
- Providing The Centre with a contact name and information should service disruption occur and notification is required

The Centre will ensure that all employees are trained under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service inclusive of this policy, practices and procedures.

Definitions

Accessible means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated, easy to get to, capable of being reached, entered or obtainable.

Assistive Devices is a technical aid, communication device, or medical aid modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).

Barrier as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, means anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

Disability, as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the Ontario Human Rights Code, is:

- 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 guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability.
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- A mental disorder or,
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

The Centre is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. This is reflected in the functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

Communication

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

The Centre will train staff and volunteers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

a) Telephone Service

The Centre is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. The Centre will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

The Centre will offer to communicate with customers by e-mail or mail if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

b) Information

The Centre is committed to providing information to persons with disabilities in a format that takes into account their disability. Upon request, information will be made available in an alternate format.

c) Billing

The Centre is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers and they will be provided alternate formats upon request. We will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or e-mail.

d) Workshops, Seminars, Events

The Centre is committed to holding all workshops, seminars and events in accessible venues.

Assistive Devices

The Centre is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. The Centre will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services.

The Centre will ensure that staff know how to use the following assistive devices available for customers:

- Elevator

- Wheelchair
- Phone
- Automated door at front entrance

Service Animals

The Centre is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. Where service animals are not clearly identified, we will ask the owner to provide appropriate documentation. We will also ensure that all staff and volunteers are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

Support Persons

The Centre is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Unless there is a genuine safety concern, support persons shall be allowed to accompany the customer at all times. If confidential information needs to be shared, consent will be obtained from the customer, prior to any conversation. At no time will a person with a disability be prevented from having access to his / her support person while on The Centre's premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

The Centre will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

The notice will be placed (as appropriate) at all public entrances and service counters and The Centre website.

In the event of an unexpected disruption, notice will be given as soon as possible.

Training for Staff and Volunteers

The Centre will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures.

Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the accessible 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.

- How to use the devices available at each site that may help with services for individuals with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing The Centre's services.
- The Centre's policies, practices and procedures relating to the accessible customer service standard.
- The Centre will keep records of the training provided and completed by staff.

All staff and volunteers will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff and volunteers will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of The Centre is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities.

Feedback from customers provides The Centre with opportunities to learn and improve. The Centre recognizes the rights to make a complaint or compliment or make suggestions on ways to improve our services.

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way we provide goods and services to people with disabilities can do so in writing, in person, via e-mail or telephone.

All feedback will be directed to:
Kathy Mills, CAO
The Centre of Skills Development & Training
860 Harrington Court
Burlington, ON L7N 3N4
Phone: 905-333-3499
Email: millsk@thecentre.on.ca

Customers can expect a response to their feedback within 30 business days.

Complaints will be addressed according to our usual complaint management procedure.

Policy Modifications

We are committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

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

Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, The Centre's Human Resources Department.