

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy Statement

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the AODA) is a provincial act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service and the provision of goods and services to the public.

Oshawa Community Health Centre (OCHC) is required to meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by the AODA. This policy applies to all OCHC staff, volunteers and similar parties who deal with the public on behalf of OCHC.

In accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07, OCHC is committed to removing and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities in the area of receiving OCHC client-service.

Definitions

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

Assistive Devices shall mean a personal auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs hearing aids etc.) used, designed, made or adapted to assist persons with disabilities in performing various, everyday tasks to access and benefit from the goods and services provided at OCHC.

Barrier shall mean anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of the disability. Barriers may include physical, architectural and attitudinal barriers as well as, any information or communication barriers, technological barriers, or a policy, procedure or practice.

Disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical 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 impairment, 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,
- b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability
- c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- d) A mental disorder,
- e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act*, 1997

Guide Dog means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the Blind Persons' Rights Act R.S.O. 1990, c. B.7, s. 1 (1).

Service animal is an 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/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.

Support person shall mean any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability to aid him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods and services.

Practice & Procedures

OCHC is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service for its customers and shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, procedures and practices are consistent with the **following principles**:

- (a) Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the ***dignity and independence to all clients***.
- (b) The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be ***integrated*** wherever possible.
- (c) Persons with disabilities will be given an ***opportunity equal to*** that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of OCHC.
- (d) Persons with disabilities are entitled to use personal assistive devices while accessing any service at OCHC, excepting in situations where the use of the device contravenes policies and/or legislation governing the delivery of particular services. There are circumstances under which, with advanced notice and preparation, assistive devices may be made available to persons with disabilities to enable them to access OCHC's goods and/or services (e.g., assistive listening devices).
- (e) Persons with disabilities are entitled to confidentiality and the protection of their privacy and are not required to disclose information about their disability unless such information is required by OCHC for the purposes of implementing and individualized accommodation plan.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

- a) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal (e.g., guide dog), the OCHC will ensure that the person is permitted to enter an OCHC facility with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Where a service animal is excluded by law, OCHC will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use and benefit from the Company's goods and services. The service animal must be under the care and control of the individual at all times.

- b) If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, OCHC will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter a Company facility, and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person. OCHC may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when in a Company facility, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others in the facility. If an amount is payable by a support person for admission, or otherwise, to a premise, OCHC will ensure notice is given in advance about the amount.

Use of Assistive Devices

Staff and other individuals engaged in the delivery of a service on behalf of OCHC (e.g., guest speakers, third-party contractors, etc.) are required to cooperate with the use of a personal assistive device for reasons improving access to OCHC's services or goods (e.g., cooperation when asked by a client to wear a microphone or an assistive listening device).

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

OCHC shall provide notice of disruption of services to the public.

Any Notice of Disruption will contain the following:

- Reason for the disruption
- Anticipated duration
- Alternative facilities or services

OCHC staff will provide such notice in at least one of the following three methods:

- Notice physically posted at the site of the disruption
- Notice on Company website
- Notice in local newspaper

Training for Staff

Every person who deals with members of the public or who participates in developing OCHC's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to the public; including OCHC's staff, students, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who provide service on behalf of OCHC will receive training regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

The training will include the following information:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities,
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
- How to use equipment made available by the agency to help people with disabilities to access goods and services
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the agency's goods and services
- Training will be provided to each person according to his or her needs and duties and as soon as is practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities. A record of the dates on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided will be kept.

Feedback Process

OCHC accepts feedback from the public in a variety of methods including:

- Phone
- In person
- Fax
- Email / website
- And, through feedback forms

Complaints are investigated and follow up is provided to the client if requested.

Notice of availability of documents

OCHC will provide the public notice of the availability of the documents, required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, (O. Reg 429/07) upon request. Notice of availability will be provided on the OCHC web site and through other printed methods.

Availability of Documents Required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

Documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service are available upon request. When providing a document to a person with a disability, OCHC will work with the individual to determine options in order to provide the document or the information contained in the document in a format that takes the person's disability into account.