

The Certified General Accountants of Ontario Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Accessible Customer Service Standard Policy

Introduction

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, (AODA) was passed in June 2005, with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards for Ontarians. The goal of the AODA is for Ontario to be fully accessible by January 1, 2025, by implementing a series of accessibility standards. These standards will focus on identifying, removing and preventing barriers for persons with disabilities. The five identified accessibility standards are customer service, employment, information and communication, built environment and transportation.

Certified General Accountants of Ontario (CGA Ontario) is committed to providing goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. This will be achieved by identifying and removing barriers that impede a person's ability to access goods and services, ensuring everyone is provided with equal opportunities whenever they interact with the Association.

This policy is intended to outline the practices and procedures in place at CGA Ontario to meet the first accessibility standard, *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, requiring all organizations in Ontario to make their customer service accessible as it applies to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Definition of Disability

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, uses the same definition as the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, which defines a disability as:

- 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; 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.

General Principles

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, our policies, practices and procedures will be achieved by addressing the following:

- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- The use of assistive devices.
- The use of service animals, guide dogs and service dogs.
- The use of support persons.
- Notice of disruptions in service.
- Feedback regarding the provisions of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- Training to employees, volunteers, contractors and third parties who deal with the public on behalf of CGA Ontario.
- Notice of availability and format of required documents.

The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

CGA Ontario will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the AODA principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

CGA Ontario will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability when providing goods and services. CGA Ontario will also ensure that all persons with disabilities receive the same value and quality of customer service, by allowing them to do things in their own way, and at their own pace when accessing goods and services. Alternative methods will also be used when possible to ensure that persons with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place and in a similar manner.

Assistive Devices

An assistive device is an auxiliary aid, communication device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of persons with disabilities. Examples of personal assistive devices may include a wheelchair, walker or a personal oxygen tank, and might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving, breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Persons with disabilities may use their own personal assistive devices as required when accessing goods and services provided by CGA Ontario. In cases where the assistive device is not permitted due to a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be provided.

Service Animals, Guide Dogs and Service Dogs

Service animals, guide dogs and service dogs are highly-trained to provide a variety of assistance including mobility aid, medical aid, safety and increased independence.

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a service animal, guide dog or service dog and allowed access to premises that are open to the public at CGA Ontario while accessing our goods and services, unless otherwise excluded by law.

Persons with disabilities that are accompanied by a service animal, guide dog or service dog are responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times. If the service animal, guide dog or service dog is excluded by law, CGA Ontario will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access goods and services, when possible.

If the use of a service animal, guide dog or service dog is not readily apparent for reasons relating to a disability, CGA Ontario may request verification, such as a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the animal is required for reasons relating to a disability.

Support Persons

Persons with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person to assist with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods and services on our premises in areas that are open to the public at CGA Ontario. CGA Ontario will ensure that both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the person with the disability is not prevented from having access to the support person. In situations where confidential information might be discussed in front of the support person, consent will be obtained from the person with a disability.

Admissions fees to conferences, events and workshops held by CGA Ontario, will not be charged to support persons accompanying persons with disabilities. We do however ask that persons with disabilities notify us during the time of booking if a support person will be accompanying them to ensure there is adequate space and resources. For further information or booking, please contact the program administrator at 416-544-4767, or contact centre (see Feedback Process section for contact details).

Notice of Disruptions in Service

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of CGA Ontario. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that persons with disabilities rely on to access or use CGA Ontario's goods or services, reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

In the event that a notification is posted, it will include information about the goods and services that are disrupted or unavailable, the reason for the disruption, the anticipated duration and a description of alternative services or options, if available.

Disruption in service notifications will be posted in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance, front reception and/or on the CGA Ontario website and any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Feedback Process

The public has the opportunity to provide feedback on the service provided by CGA Ontario. Feedback may be given verbally, in person or by telephone, in writing by letter or email, or by filling out an online feedback form. Upon receipt of your feedback, CGA Ontario will respond within 10 business days, and will respond if possible, in the same format that the feedback was received.

Feedback, as well as questions or concerns about this policy or its related procedures can be submitted to:

The Certified General Accountants of Ontario

Attn: AODA Committee

240 Eglinton Avenue East

Toronto ON M4P 1K8

Tel: 416-322-6520 or 1-800-668-1454

Fax: 416-322-6481

Email: accessibility@cga-ontario.org

Online Feedback Form: http://www.cga-ontario.org/contentfiles/AODA_feedback.aspx

Training

Training will be provided to all employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and third parties who deal with the public and act on behalf of CGA Ontario, and those who are involved in the development and approval of customer service policies, practices and procedures. This training will be provided as soon as practicable upon joining the Association, and revised training will be provided in the event of changes to legislation, policy, practices and/or procedures.

As reflected in *Ontario Regulation 429/07*, training will cover the following:

- A review of the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*.
- Instructions on how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.
- Instructions on how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device, or require the assistance of a guide dog, service dog or other service animal; or the use of a support person.
- Instructions on how to use equipment or devices that may help persons with disabilities.
- Instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing CGA Ontario's goods and services.
- CGA Ontario's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to persons with disabilities.

CGA Ontario will keep a record of training that indicates the date and training type provided, and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Notice of Availability and Format of Documents

This policy and other documents related to the *Accessibility Standard for Customer Service* will be made available upon request, and in formats that take into account the customer's disability.

This policy and its related procedures will be reviewed as required in the event of legislative changes.

Additional Information

For more information on accessibility, or the legislation and standards, please visit:

[Ministry of Community and Social Services, Accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities](#)

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#)

[Customer Service Standard](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code](#)