



**AODA Accessibility Standards for
Customer Service
Policy**

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AODA Accessibility Standards for Customer Service: Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Preamble

Colleges Ontario is the advocacy organization for the province’s 24 colleges of applied arts and technology. The CO is committed to the future strength of the province and we are dedicated to the delivery of excellent customer service. We are aware of the importance of clearly defined values that guide our work in advancing policies and awareness campaigns to ensure Ontario produces a highly skilled workforce that is necessary in a global market. In this regard we are dedicated in sustaining high quality excellent service delivery as well as promote a positive and equitable work environment.

Objective

The objective of this document is to highlight the quality standards adopted by Colleges Ontario and the principles and practices to ensure excellence in the delivery of customer service. In order to maintain this level of service, Colleges Ontario is committed to monitoring and regularly reviewing our processes to enable us to continue to improve our services.

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) was enacted in 2005 in order to facilitate the development of standards with respect to improving accessibility across the province. Ontario’s first accessibility standard, the customer service standard, came into force on January 1, 2008. The standard outlines what organizations must do in order to ensure that customer service is accessible to everyone and that our service delivery model is one that demonstrates inclusive practices.

Colleges Ontario is committed to excellence in serving all customers including persons with disabilities in agreement with this regulation

Communication

- We are committed to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.
- We are driven by the guiding principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.
- We use reasonable efforts to ensure all of our policies; practices and procedures adhere to the key principles.
 - **Dignity:** Colleges Ontario is committed to delivering services in a manner that respects the dignity of our customers with disabilities.

- **Independence:** Our employees have been trained to know that people with disabilities should have the freedom and opportunity to access services on their own and should not be influenced by others in accessing our services.
- **Integration:** At Colleges Ontario we are committed to creating an inclusive environment and thereby ensure our services are integrated. Our customers have equal access in benefiting from the same services in the same place and in the same or similar manner as all of our customers.
- **Equal Opportunity:** Colleges Ontario recognizes the importance and value in ensuring our customers with disabilities have the same benefits and results from accessing our services.

We will provide alternative methods of communication and technology upon request as promptly as feasible.

Assistive devices

At Colleges Ontario we are committed to ensuring that our employees are trained and made aware of various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our services. Our customers are allowed to bring their personal devices when accessing services and our employees recognize the wide range of devices that may be used. While we do not have any devices on our premises, we are committed to supporting our customers in accessing services through the provision of other assistive measures. Our employees are trained to ensure that in the absence of assistive devices, our customers can expect that we will provide alternative service methods if necessary and if practical. These may include third service providers such as ASL interpreters or real-time captioning services that are requested in advance.

Service animals

We welcome persons with disabilities who are accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in all areas of our premises that are open to the public. For the purposes of this regulation, “guide dog” means a guide dog as defined in Section 1 of the *Blind Person’s Rights Act*, and that has been trained in one of the facilities listed in *Ontario Regulation 58* under the *Blind Person’s Rights Act*. For the purpose of this standard a “service animal” means an animal described in subsection (9) of this regulation.

Our employees receive training on best practices when providing services to persons who are accompanied by a guide dog or service animal. In rare situations, where another person’s health and safety may be impacted by the presence of a service animal or guide dog, our employees are trained to take into consideration all relevant factors and options in finding a solution.

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. At Colleges Ontario our employees are trained on best practices when providing services to persons accompanied by a support person.

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event a planned or unplanned disruption to services or facilities (as it relates to the space occupied by Colleges Ontario) for customers with disabilities, Colleges Ontario will notify customers promptly by posting a notice. 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. In the case of unexpected disruptions to services, Colleges Ontario will notify customers if possible.

The notice will be placed at the impacted area(s) in advance of the disruption if possible, as well as in the 'accessibility' section of our website (www.collegesontario.org/colleges-ontario/Accessibility.html).

Training for staff

Colleges Ontario provides training to employees about providing appropriate customer service to persons with disabilities. This training is provided as part of new employees' orientation. The training is given to everyone in our organizations who deals with members of the public as well as to all of our administrators tasked with the governance of our policies, practices and procedures.

CO uses the following training tool which was designed to meet the compliance requirements of O. Reg. 429/07:

Serve-Ability Training Tool: <http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcsc/serve-ability/splash.html>

Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/regs/english/elaws_regs_070429_e.htm, or plain language overview <http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/en/mcsc/programs/accessibility/index.aspx>.
- The requirements of the customer service standard http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm
- **Colleges Ontario's** accessible customer service plan.
- Guidelines on interacting and communicating with persons with various types of disabilities
- Guidelines on interacting with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- Awareness of various assistive devices

- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing **Colleges Ontario's** goods and services

Training records shall be maintained in Colleges Ontario's Finance/Human Resources Department. Any department that utilizes the services of volunteers or any other third parties are responsible for ensuring that those individuals have received training and are responsible for forwarding these records to the Finance/Human Resources Department for reporting purposes.

Feedback process

Colleges Ontario recognizes that customer feedback is a way to ensure our continued success in service delivery. To this regard, we are committed to ensuring that this process is accessible and customers who wish to provide feedback on the way Colleges Ontario provides goods and services to persons with disabilities can contact us at accessibility@collegesontario.org or by calling 647-258-7678. A feedback form is also available on our website at: <http://www.collegesontario.org/colleges-ontario/Accessibility.html>. If a customer requires submitting feedback in writing or by USB drive/CD, he/she can do so in person or by mailing feedback to: 1600 – 20 Bay Street, Box 88, Toronto, ON M5J 2N8.

Customers can expect a response within 5 business days.

Modifications to this or other policies

Any policy of **Colleges Ontario** that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities will be modified or removed.