



YES Policy: Providing Services for People with Disability

Approved by the Board of Directors, June 6th 2011.

Compliant with: *The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and meets the requirements of the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service*. YES is obligated to comply with the OADA Customer Service Standard by January 1, 2012.

Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 calls on us to make Ontario accessible by breaking down barriers.

Accessibility standards are the rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario will have to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

Ontario is developing standards in many important areas of life:

1. customer service
2. employment
3. information and communications
4. public transportation
5. built environment (buildings and other structures)

This Customer Service standard is simply about:

- Understanding that customers with disabilities may have different needs, and
- Finding the best way to help them access your goods and services.

This YES Policy Providing Services for People with Disabilities deals with the First Standard: Customer Service.

Introduction

YES affirms the rights and dignity of all individuals and supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities as set out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Ontario Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005.

Although focused on customer service with YES clients, this policy is consistent with the goal of an inclusive environment for employees, volunteers, donors and other stakeholders. Everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have

their need for accommodation respected whenever they interact with YES. This policy is intended to benefit all persons with disabilities, whether a person's disability is apparent or not.¹

Respect

1. YES strives at all times to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. YES is committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access services and to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other clients, unless an alternate measure is necessary (temporarily or permanently) to enable a person with a disability to access YES services.
2. YES will provide service in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain dignity, self-respect and the respect of other people.
3. YES recognizes that information about a disability is personal and private. YES will accept requests for accommodation from clients in good faith and only ask for proof of a disability when necessary to provide service.
4. YES respects independence and allowing a person with a disability to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration

5. YES will provide service to a person with a disability in such a way that they have an opportunity to access services equal to that given to others.
6. When planning a new initiative or when purchasing new equipment or technology YES will consider the impacts on clients with disabilities.

¹ Disability refers to (a) 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, (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, or (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. Source: Guide Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), p.5.

7. YES will ensure that programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities who use wheelchairs and other assistive devices such as walkers, white canes, oxygen tanks and electronic communication devices.
8. YES will welcome service animals used by a people with a disability, e.g. dogs used by people who are blind and hearing alert animals for people who are Deaf.
9. YES will welcome support persons accompanying a person with a disability e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time captioners and attendants such as a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member or a friend who helps the client with e.g. communication, mobility or medical needs. At no time will the person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while at YES.
10. In the event of an entry fee being charged for a YES event, the entry fee for a support person accompanying a person with a disability will be waived.

Communication

11. YES will make every effort to communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability, recognizing that different ways will work for different people and in different circumstances, e.g. writing, speaking, using pictures, in person, over the phone or online.
12. YES recognizes that the best way to determine a person's communication preferences is to find out directly by asking the client how to best communicate with them.
13. In the preparation of documents for public use on the website or in hard copy YES will use plain language for easier understanding.

Training

14. To ensure that current employees and volunteers who interact with clients receive training on the Providing Services for People with Disability Policy, YES will circulate the policy to all employees, Board members and volunteers. YES will also conduct a training session for all employees and volunteers and incorporate this training into all new employee orientation processes.
15. YES training in relation to providing services to people with disability will include:

- Familiarity with this policy for providing services for people with disability
- A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities including speaking over the telephone in clear and plain language clearly and slowly
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person and if and how to offer assistance to them when they are at YES
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing YES services
- How to respond to requests about obtaining a copy of this policy.

Feedback Process

16. YES will post on the website that YES strives to improve accessibility for clients with disabilities, and would like to hear comments, questions and suggestions about the provision of YES services to people with disabilities.
17. YES will invite feedback in person, by telephone, in writing, by email or by another method on how YES has provided services to people with disabilities and take action on complaints.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions of Services

18. YES will attempt to inform clients if any facilities that people with disabilities rely on to access YES services, are unavailable due to a planned or unexpected disruption, e.g. elevators, accessible washrooms. This will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities, if available. This information will be posted on the website or at relevant venues to reduce the inconvenience for people with disabilities.

Documentation

19. YES will post reference to this policy on the website and provide a copy of the policy to anyone who asks for it in the format that takes into account the person's disability.

20. YES is committed to developing client 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 other YES policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.