

TOTAL COMMUNICATION ENVIRONMENT

Section K: ***AODA***

Accessibility Policy & Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Policies and Procedures

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ACCESSIBILITY FOR ONTARIANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (AODA) -

K.1. ACCESSIBILITY POLICY & ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Total Communication Environment (TCE) is committed to providing services and practices that emphasize customer service, independence, dignity, integration and equal participation for all persons with disabilities.

TCE's Accessibility Policy will be in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Regulations 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and with the Ontario Human Rights Code.

K.1.1 PURPOSE:

Accessibility is an issue of concern for those with both physical and intellectual (visible and non visible disabilities). Barrier free environments are not just about wider doors and ramped entrances. It is also about attitude. This policy aims at providing a welcoming experience for people with disability by providing services in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and Regulations 429/07 and Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. TCE will ensure all persons with disabilities will be given every opportunity to participate in services offered by TCE and is committed to excellence in serving all persons with disabilities.

This policy applies to all employees, agency personnel, volunteers, student placements, contractors, consultants and board members.

For the purpose of this policy the following definitions have been taken from the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and Ontario Regulation 429/07.

K.1.2 DEFINITIONS:

Accessibility

"Accessibility" means the degree to which persons with disabilities can access a device, service or environment without barriers. Accessibility is also a process — it is the proactive identification, removal and prevention of barriers to persons with disabilities.

Customer

A "customer" is a person who use or purchase TCE's products or services. As well, agency partner representatives who support TCE's work may be considered TCE's customers.

Disability

"Disability" is defined 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 a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.
- A mental disorder.
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

K.2. PROCEDURES:

TCE will ensure all persons with disabilities will be given every opportunity to participate in services offered by TCE. TCE is committed to the excellence in serving all persons with disabilities and will carry out TCE's functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

K.2.1 ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

- Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others will be included unless a different alternate is required, whether it is temporary in allowing a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities will be given an equal opportunity to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from goods and services.

K. 2.2 ASSISTIVE DEVICES

- Assistive devices is anything that is developed, made, designed or adapted that helps an individual with a disability do everyday tasks.
- TCE welcomes the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to use and benefit from. All services will be recognized and supported.
- Examples of personal assistive devices include, but are not limited to adjustable phone sets, telephone devices for the deaf, computer equipment, wheelchairs, scooters, speech generating devices, digital audio players, augmentative alternative communication, elevators and automated doors.
- Staff will be provided with assistive devices or special equipment where possible and appropriate. Staff will continuously monitor the state of the devices and will inform their supervisor of any required repairs needed for the devices.
- Each TCE location will maintain an inventory of assistive devices available within their program area/department. This inventory will be reviewed annually at the beginning of each fiscal year.

When interacting with a person with a disability who may use one or more assistive devices, TCE employees will:

- Ensure that the person is able to enter TCE's premises with the device and to use the device to access goods or services.
- Ensure that the person with the disability is aware of the assistive devices available at TCE.
- Offer an assistive device in a manner that respects the person's dignity and independence.
- Offer assistance with an assistive device to the person with a disability in a respectable manner.
- Remove potential barriers for the use of assistive devices where possible.
- Ensure to get directions on the use of the assistive device from the person prior to assisting with the device.

K.2.3 COMMUNICATION

- TCE will provide communication regarding their services, accessibility and policies in a manner that takes into account the person's disability. The use of jargon free plain language will be promoted within the agency.
- TCE will ensure that agency publications, information and any disruptions to services is provided in a variety of formats, to include but not limited to electronic, voice message, print signage, agency website or publications.
- TCE will provide fully accessible telephone services to the person with a disability, and if required alternative forms of communications will be offered (email, TDD or email services).
- TCE will train all TCE employees' on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

K.2.4 SUPPORT PERSONS

- TCE is committed to welcoming people with disabilities along with their support person to any TCE property or program.
- The Customer Service Standard defines a "support person" as anyone who accompanies a person with a disability to assist them with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to goods or services. At no time would a person with a disability not be permitted to enter public space within TCE's property.
- There will be no additional fees incurred as a result of accompaniment by a support person.
- Confidential information will only be discussed in front of the support worker if consent has been provided by the person with a disability

K. 2.5 SERVICE ANIMALS

- TCE is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service dog on parts of the premises that are open to the public and other third parties.

- Service animals are prohibited from TCE where there is preparation and storage of food. As well, when the presence of a dog would be a serious risk to another person.
- In the event of either situation, TCE will find alternative means to accommodate the person with the disability.

K.2.6 NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION

- In the event that there will be temporary disruption (closures, repairs, etc.), TCE will post information including the reason for the disruption, anticipated duration and alternatives to access services, and contact information.
- When a disruption of service was planned, a “Notice of Disruption of Service” will be posted 2 weeks prior to a service disruption whenever possible. Unexpected disruptions in service shall be posted as soon as possible.
- Notice of these disruptions will include, but not limited to TCE’s head office telephone voicemail, TCE’s website, email and or posted signage.

K.2.7 TRAINING

- All TCE employees, new and existing, will be provided with training on this policy.
- The training will be incorporated into program training for existing employees and new employees will be trained during the New Hire Orientation process by completing the **Serve-ability: Transforming Ontario’s Customer Service on-line training**, www.mcass.gov.on.ca/mcass/serve-ability/splash.html.
- Training will include, but not limited to Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act, 2005(AODA) and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Ontario Regulation 429/07.
- All TCE employees must adhere to this policy, and failure to do so will result in disciplinary action.
- All TCE contractors, consultants, agency personnel, students and or volunteers must adhere to this policy, and failure to do so may result in termination of services.

K.2.8 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK PROCESS

- In the event that there is a customer service problem, TCE will ensure that this complaint is addressed and resolved quickly as per TCE’s Compliant Policy and Procedures.
- Persons with disabilities are encouraged to make complaints or inquiries in a manner that takes into account their disability. This would be done verbally in person, through a support person, by telephone, in writing by completing the Customer Feedback Form, or other available written methods, i.e. via email.

- All TCE employees, agency personnel, students, volunteers, consultants and contractors are obligated to inform TCE of any customer service complaints. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of their contract with TCE.

K.2.9 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK FORMS

- Customer Feedback Forms will be kept at TCE's front desk head office facility.
- Upon arrival to TCE's head office facility, the receptionist will provide each visitor a feedback form to complete.
- Feedback forms will be reviewed by management on a monthly basis during the Director's meeting.
- Feedback will be shared quarterly on TCE's website.

K.2.10 NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

This document and other policies and practices related to the provision of goods and services for people with disabilities are advertised through a variety of methods to ensure the public of their existence.

This policy is available in alternate formats upon request.

K.3. NON-COMPLIANCE IMPLICATIONS

Section 37. (3) of the Act, Penalties:

- (3) Every person who is guilty of an offence under this Act is liable on conviction,
 - (a) to a fine of not more than \$50,000 for each day or part of a day on which the offence occurs or continues to occur; or
 - (b) if the person is a corporation, to a fine of not more than \$100,000 for each day or part of a day on which the offence occurs or continues to occur

K.4 EVALUATION:

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by Management.

K.5 REFERENCES:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
The Ontario Human Rights Code

K.6. *APPENDIX:*

- Accessibility Feedback Form
- Training & Policy Acknowledgement Form
- Notice of Scheduled Service Disruption Form
- Notice of Unexpected Service Disruption Form
- Employee Information Emergency Sheet
- Individual Employee Emergency Plan
- Annual Status Update