

Accessibility Policy (OP 5)

Version: 4

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A. Purpose and Background

Your Support Services Network is committed to upholding and exceeding Ontario’s legislation intended to remove barriers to accessibility for persons with disabilities. This includes providing equal access to employment, information and services, and treating persons with disabilities with dignity and respect in a way that takes their different abilities into account.

B. Scope

This policy applies to all YSSN employees, students, volunteers, Board members and any other people who interact with the public, including clients and family members, on behalf of YSSN.

C. Definitions

Disability – The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act’s (AODA) definition of “disability” is consistent with the *Human Rights Code*.

Section 2 of the AODA defines “disability” as:

- (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* (“handicap”).

In addition, note that the legal definition of disability includes visible, non-visible and episodic disabilities.

Assistive Devices – Devices that assist persons with disabilities carry out activities or access services covered by the Customer Service Standard. Assistive devices may include, but are not limited to: wheelchairs, screen readers, recording machines, hearing devices, canes and communication boards

Barrier – Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. (s. 2, AODA)

Dignity – Treating persons with disabilities as customers and clients who are as valued and as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer

Independence – The freedom from control or influence of others or the freedom to carry out activities in the person's own way

Integration – Enabling persons with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers

Service Animals – Animals, most often dogs, used by persons by persons with disabilities to assist with sight, hearing or cognitive functions

Support Persons – Persons relied on by persons with disabilities for assistance with certain services or activities.

D. Policy

YSSN will make every reasonable effort to meet the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*, including all applicable elements of the *Integrated Accessibility Standards*.

1. Information and Communication
2. Employment
3. Customer Service
4. Design of Public Spaces
5. Transportation

YSSN will provide training to all employees, volunteers, and independent contractors to ensure they are familiar with policies, practices, and procedures for communicating with and providing services to persons with disabilities.

Information and Communication

YSSN will deliver alternate formats of information to clients, upon request. If a particular material cannot be converted into an accessible format that meets the needs of the person requesting it, YSSN will provide details of

why it cannot be converted and provide a summary of the information or communication in another way that is suitable to the person requesting it.

This extends to any emergency procedures or safety information prepared by YSSN.

Employment

YSSN welcomes and encourages employment applications from people with disabilities and will endeavor to make hiring and employee support practices more accessible by providing accommodation during all stages of recruitment, hiring, and employment.

If an applicant requests accommodation, YSSN will consult with the applicant and provide suitable accommodation that takes the person's accessibility needs into account.

When making offers of employment, YSSN will notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

New employees will be reminded about the organization's job accommodation policies as soon as possible upon being hired and notified when any future changes are made to policies. Policy and practice information will include available employment accommodations that will be provided for job related matters such as performance management, career development, emergency response plans, and return to work information.

YSSN will consult with an employee who requests it, to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports that take the employee's needs into account when providing information that is needed to perform the employee's job, and information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

Customer Service

YSSN will provide customer service in a manner that removes barriers for people with disabilities according to the following key principles of the AODA:

- Services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Service to people with disabilities will be integrated with others, unless an alternate way of providing the service or facility is required by the person with the disability.
- Persons with disabilities will be given equal opportunity to use and benefit from the services or facilities the organization has to offer.
- YSSN will communicate with people with disabilities in a way that takes the individual's different abilities into account.

Assistive Devices, and Service Animals, Service Dogs or Guide Dogs

Persons with disabilities who use an assistive device will be permitted to use their own device to access YSSN services.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, YSSN shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

Support Workers

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, YSSN will ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

YSSN will ensure that notice is given in advance if admission fees will be charged to support workers for accessing services in their role as support person, including how much the fee will be.

Service Interruptions

If there is a temporary disruption in any of our services either in whole or in part, YSSN will provide notice of the disruption to the public via as many channels as possible, in accessible formats, where available. We will physically post notices where the disruption is taking place as well as through any other channels that are appropriate such as email, phone, text, social media, or on our website.

Notice of the disruption will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Process for Receiving Feedback

YSSN will accept feedback about the way in which it provides services to persons with disabilities in person, by phone or email, or in another way that is suitable to a person with a disability.

When a complaint is received about the way YSSN provides services or facilities to persons with disabilities, YSSN will follow the “Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Process” and let the person who submitted the feedback know about the actions the organization will take to resolve the issue.

Transportation

YSSN does not provide conventional or specialized commercial transportation services to passengers and is not required to adhere to the Transportation Standard.

Design of Public Spaces

If YSSN redesigns or redevelops an outdoor public space such as a parking area, outdoor eating area, exterior path of travel, or an indoor or outdoor service counter or waiting area, it will do so in accordance the Design of Public Spaces Standard of the AODA. YSSN will also ensure any newly redesigned or redeveloped areas are maintained in accordance with the rules set out by the AODA.

Training

All YSSN employees, students, volunteers and other people who interact with the public on YSSN's behalf will receive training on providing customer service to persons with disabilities and on the Human Rights Code. Additional training will be completed by all YSSN representatives (management and senior level employees) involved in the development of policies, practices and procedures on providing YSSN services.

Trainings will be completed within 1 month of joining YSSN via webinar at:

https://www.ocapdd.on.ca/Forms/Volunteer/SAE/HTML_Eng/index.html

[Certificate Version | Ontario Human Rights Commission \(ohrc.on.ca\)](#)

Training will be recorded via a Certificate of Completion with original housed within the Human Resources Personnel file with electronic copies distributed to employees and their supervisors.

Document Accessibility

This policy as well as any other policies, practices and procedures will be available on YSSN's website in formats accessible to persons with disabilities. Such documents may also be provided to clients, families and visitors in alternative formats upon request.

YSSN will post notice that such documents are available on its website in formats accessible to persons with disabilities.

E. Responsibilities

It is the expectation that all YSSN employees, students, volunteers and any other people who interact with the public on behalf of YSSN ensure that the provision of services to its clients are in accordance with the requirements outlined in Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and in the Human Rights Code.

F. References

Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Ontario Human Rights Code

Compliments, Concerns and Complaints Process

YSSN Multi Year Accessibility Plan