

Customer Service Policy for Providing Services to Persons with Disabilities

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Last reviewed November 18, 2024

Introduction

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) is a landmark legislation passed by the Ontario legislature to improve accessibility standards across the province. Enacted in 2005, the AODA mandates the development and enforcement of specific accessibility standards to ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to services, facilities, and opportunities. These standards are detailed in regulations and are designed to remove barriers and promote inclusivity in key areas such as customer service, information and communication, employment, transportation, and the built environment.

The Career Foundation is committed to complying with the AODA and ensuring that our services are accessible to all individuals, including those with disabilities.

The Career Foundation's Statement of Commitment

The Career Foundation is dedicated to providing equal access to our services. Our vision and goal in this regard is to be accessible to everyone who requires our services.

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), The Career Foundation has developed this policy to ensure that our services are equally accessed by persons with disabilities.

We are committed to providing customer service excellence, including meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner.

The services provided by The Career Foundation to persons with disabilities will be provided with the following key principles:

- **Dignity:** Services will be provided in a manner that takes into account the needs of the individual.
- **Independence:** Services provided to persons with disabilities will be provided in such a way that respects their independence.
- **Equal opportunity:** The goal-oriented outcomes of our services will be set in the same fashion for persons with disabilities as they are for persons without disabilities.
- **Integration:** Except when alternate measures are necessary to meet the needs of people with disabilities, persons with disabilities will benefit from our services in the same place and in the same way, or similar way, as persons without disabilities.

Assistive Devices

Persons with disabilities are permitted to access our services with the use of their own assistive devices. Some examples of assistive devices include wheelchairs, canes, hearing aids, and laptops with screen-reading software or communication capabilities.

Some of our offices provide assistive devices such as computers with ZoomText software and computer stations that are wheelchair accessible.

We will ensure that the related training provided to our workers and volunteers includes information on how to serve persons with disabilities who use assistive devices.

Support Persons

Persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person are welcome at all offices of The Career Foundation.

We will ensure that the related training provided to our workers and volunteers includes information on how to serve persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

Service Animals

Service animals, including but not limited to Hearing dogs, Guide Dogs, and other certified service animals, are permitted entry to all of The Career Foundation's offices. We will ensure that the related training provided to our workers and volunteers includes information on how to serve persons with disabilities who utilize service animals.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

The Career Foundation will ensure that its service areas provide appropriate notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to the facilities or services used by persons with disabilities. Such notices will include the disruption's anticipated duration, the reason for the disruption, and whenever possible, alternative facilities and services that can be accessed.

AODA Training for Workers and Volunteers

The Career Foundation will ensure that all of its workers and volunteers who provide services to the public are provided with appropriate training.

The training will include:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
- The requirements of the Customer Service Standard
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices
- How to use The Career Foundation's assistive devices that are available at our offices
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing The Career Foundation's services
- Any other mandatory training provisions required under the AODA

AODA training will be mandatory for all workers and volunteers.

Our Managers and Program Coordinators will ensure that new workers and volunteers complete this training within two weeks of joining our organization.

Workers and volunteers will also receive ongoing training, as soon as practicable, in connection with changes to our applicable policy, practices, and procedures that govern the way The Career Foundation provides services to persons with disabilities.

Difficulty Accessing Our Services

If a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services, we would like to be informed of the situation. By using any of the communication methods outlined in our Feedback Process below, please communicate with us to let us know what alternative methods of service would be more accessible. We will do our best to assist you.

Feedback Process

The Career Foundation is a certified Service Excellence organization. We are committed to providing customer service excellence to all of our clients.

Feedback pertaining to how The Career Foundation provides services to persons with disabilities may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner that is most appropriate to them. Below are the optional methods that we currently have in place by which feedback can be shared.

In person, over the telephone, or via e-mail with any Manager or Program Coordinator:

Feedback can be shared with any of our Program Managers or Coordinators in person at any of our locations, over the telephone, or via e-mail. All of The Career Foundation's offices use a Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) phone system that includes texting capabilities. You may contact us via our toll-free number at 1-855-223-8231, or through the direct contact number for any of our offices as posted on our website at <https://careerfoundation.com/contact-us/>.

Over the telephone, via e-mail, text message, or in person by appointment with the Workplace Coordinator:

Feedback can also be shared with our Workplace Coordinator via e-mail, telephone, text message, or in person by first setting up an appointment. The contact information for our Workplace Coordinator is:

Workplace Coordinator
The Career Foundation
E: WorkplaceCoordinator@CareerFoundation.org
Ph: (416) 642-2407

Regardless of the method chosen, in order to appropriately respond to you, please provide all of your contact information, including your name.

Any complaints received will be reviewed by The Career Foundation's leadership team and immediate action will be taken to address the issue whenever practicable. Appropriate measures will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

All feedback is welcome and will be used to enhance our related policies, procedures, and practices.

We aim to respond to all feedback by the end of the following business day.

Notice of Availability of Documents

This policy and other documents related to how The Career Foundation provides services to persons with disabilities will be made available upon request and may be provided in an alternative, mutually agreeable format upon request whenever practicable. Accessible formats, to the extent possible, of other documents that we provide to the public can also be made available upon request.

If a person with a disability asks for a document in a different format, we may want to discuss what options they have available to them and then agree on the format we will provide.

Should you wish to receive any of our related or publicly available documents in an alternative format, please contact us via any of the optional communication methods outlined earlier. The most current version of this policy will also be posted on The Career Foundation's website at all times.

Glossary

Disability:

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 uses the same definition of disability as the Ontario Human Rights Code, which includes physical disabilities as well as vision, hearing, speech, developmental, learning and mental health disabilities.

The Code defines “**disability**” as follows:

“because of disability” means for the reason that the person has or has had, or is believed to have or have had,

1. 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,
2. a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
3. a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
4. a mental disorder, or
5. an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

Service Animal (as defined by the AODA):

According to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), a service animal is defined as an animal for a person with a disability if:

1. It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to their disability; or
2. The person provides a letter from a regulated health professional confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to their disability

This definition ensures that individuals with disabilities can be accompanied by their service animals in various public spaces and facilities.

Support Person (as defined by the AODA):

According to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), a support person is defined as someone who accompanies a person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods, services, or facilities. This can include a personal support worker, a volunteer, a family member, or a friend.