

**The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Standard for Customer Service Policy**

In accordance with obligations under *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, the Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay, hereinafter referred to as the CAS, has developed this accessibility policy.

Application

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, and students who interact with the public on behalf of the CAS.

Statement of Commitment

The CAS is dedicated to providing services in a manner that takes into account the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

The CAS is dedicated to developing policies and procedures which are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equality. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated whenever possible, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access services. People with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the services provided by and on behalf of the CAS.

In accordance with the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07*, this policy addresses the following:

Assistive Devices

The CAS encourages people with disabilities to use their personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our/the CAS services.

Communication

The CAS is committed to communicate with persons with disabilities in a respectful manner that takes into account their disability. A person with a disability may contact the CAS via telephone, TTY, fax or mail to request a specific communication plan and/or documents in an alternative format.

Contact Us Information

Service Animals

Service animals are allowed to accompany individuals with disabilities in those areas of premises that are open to the public or other third parties, except where excluded by law (i.e., where food is prepared, handled, served or stored, or where otherwise disallowed by law pertaining to a specific animal breed).

If the service animal or guide dog is excluded by law from the premises, the CAS is committed to look to other available measures to enable the persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from CAS services.

**The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Standard for Customer Service Policy**

The individual with a disability is responsible for the care and supervision of their service animal while on CAS premises. If the animal is unruly or disruptive, and needs to leave the CAS premises, the CAS will work with the individual with a disability to find another way in which to provide services.

Support Persons

The CAS is committed to providing services to a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person. The CAS will ensure that both individuals are permitted to enter any CAS premises together, and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person.

Where a support person is accompanying a person with a disability, for the purposes of assisting in a discussion that may involve confidential information, the CAS's usual procedures for signing consents regarding disclosure of information and confidentiality will apply.

Fees will not be charged for the support person. Authorization for expenditure for any costs associated with a support person required by the Society must be secured in advance.

Temporary Disruptions to Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to CAS facilities or services the CAS will notify the public of the disruption. The 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.

The notice will be placed at main public entrances and service counters at CAS premises, and on the CAS website at www.thunderbaycas.ca.

Training

The CAS will provide training about accessible services to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on the agency's behalf. Training will also be provided to people involved in the development of policies, plans, practices and procedures related to the provision of our services.

All CAS Staff will be trained in the AODA Customer Service Standard. This training will be provided to staff during their initial orientation.

The training content may vary depending on who is receiving the training, the nature of the services provided, and on the individual departmental requirements. An on-line AODA training module is available for all regular full-time and part-time staff; and a Customer Service Standard Best Practices training module is available for casual staff and volunteers.

The training will include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this Regulation and instruction about the following matters:

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Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
Standard for Customer Service Policy**

- a) An overview of the purposes of the *Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Regulation 429/07 Customer Service Standard.
- b) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability.
- c) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, service animal or a support person.
- d) How to use the equipment or assistive devices available at the Children's Aid Society or that we otherwise may provide that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- e) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing our goods or services.
- f) The Children's Aid Society customer service policies, best practices and procedures in providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
- g) A record of the dates in which training is provided, and the number of individuals to whom it is provided will be kept by the CAS.

Feedback

The CAS will ensure that individuals are able to provide feedback concerning the accessibility of CAS Services. Feedback may be received in person, by telephone, in writing, by online submission on the CAS website www.thunderbaycas.ca or by another method determined by both parties.

Feedback may be submitted to the Manager of Human Resources or designate. For individuals who have left contact information and if contact has been requested, the Manager of Human Resources or designate will respond to the request within 10 business days. The Human Resources Unit will document and track all feedback/comments.

All feedback will be reviewed on an annual basis or earlier if necessary for possible action that can be taken to improve Society services. The response to feedback will be in a format that is accessible to the person with a disability.

COPIES OF THIS POLICY

This policy and any other document related to the delivery of services shall be made available, upon request, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy will be made available on the CAS website.

**The Children's Aid Society of the District of Thunder Bay
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Standard for Customer Service Policy**

APPENDIX – DEFINITIONS

Accessible means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated; easy to get at; capable of being reached, or entered; obtainable.

Accessible Formats – formats that are an alternative to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible formats may include large print, Braille, and audio electronic formats such as DVDs, CDs

Assistive Devices: According to the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, Assistive aids and devices are used to replace, compensate for, or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. They include a broad range of items such as mobility and visual/hearing aids, orthotics/prosthetics, speech devices, medical supplies, environmental controls, and respiratory devices and so on.

Disability means:

- a) Any degree of physical 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 and Insurance Act, 1997.

(Ontario Human Rights Code 10(1), 1990)

Service Animals: According to the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment standard, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- a. It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person: Under Customer Service Standard

“Support person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.