



Policy Type:	Operational	Policy Number:	OP-05
Policy Title:	Accessibility at Events and Programs	Initial Policy Approval Date:	May 2021
		Last Review/Revision Date:	
		Year of Next Review:	2025

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that OV-CAOS meets the standards set out by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) 2005* and its regulations and provides accessible services.

This policy also reflects the regulations set out in *Ontario Regulation 165/16*, a regulation passed in 2016 that replaced *Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service)* and specific sections of *Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)*.

Section 1: Statement of Organizational Commitment

OV-CAOS is committed to providing equitable access to programs and events. The organization will ensure that each employee, volunteer and participant receive equitable treatment with respect to employment and services without discrimination, and receives accommodation where required in a timely manner, and in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and the *AODA* and its regulations.

Section 2: Definitions

“Accessible formats” may include, but are not limited to, large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

“Assistive devices” are any products, equipment or technological aids used by persons with disabilities that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks. Examples include Braille recorders, recording devices, magnifiers, and more.

A **“barrier”** is anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability, including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

“Communication supports” are tools or devices that facilitate communications for a person with a disability and may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

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Section 2: Definitions (continued)

"Disability" means

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

"Service animal" refers to an animal used by a person for reasons relating to their disability. An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if,

- o the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, with visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- o the person provides documentation from one of designated, regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability: (O. Reg. 165/16, s. 16)

"Support person" means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities.

Section 3: Responsibilities

1. The board ensures that OV-CAOS complies with the spirit, principles and intent of AODA and designates the Artistic Director(s) as the individual(s) accountable for the organization's compliance with legislation.
2. The Artistic Director(s) will ensure that policies and procedures comply with the AODA and any regulations made under the AODA.

Section 4: The Accessibility Plan

1. OV-CAOS will work to establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan that will outline the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers. We will hire a consultant to help us develop and implement an accessibility action plan.
2. The process of reviewing and maintaining the accessibility plan will be done in consultation with persons with disabilities.
3. The plan will be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
4. The plan will be posted on the organization's website and be provided in accessible formats upon request.

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Section 5: Policies and Procedures

1. In accordance with the *O. Reg 165/16*, relating to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005*, OV-CAOS has developed this current Accessibility at Events and Programs policy, which includes the required Customer Service elements and the organization's other policies will support accessibility, specifically:
 - a) the human resource policies will address training on AODA regulations and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, accommodation for job applicants and accommodation plans;
 - b) the programming policy will address the availability of information in a variety of accessible formats (e.g. print, audio, visual, digital, etc.).

Section 6: Customer Service

OV-CAOS is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, work, play and invest in our community, and in the context of customer service will commit to the following.

1. The organization will make every reasonable effort to ensure that events and programs are accessible by:
 - a) encouraging the use of personal assistive devices to access our events and programs;
 - b) arranging for the provision of access to accessible materials, where they exist;
 - c) providing a website with content that will meet or exceed World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level 2;
 - d) encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities;
 - e) waiving fees for support persons assisting users, and/or when fees are required providing advance notification;
 - f) permitting service animals to assist users and/or provide alternative accommodation in situations where an animal is disallowed under the law.
2. OV-CAOS will make every effort to communicate with participants in a manner that enables the use of events and programs by providing:
 - a) this "Accessibility at Events and Programs" policy in alternative formats upon request;
 - b) information on the provision of customer service for people with disabilities and accessible events and programs;
 - c) a process for receiving feedback about the manner in which the organization provides services to persons with disabilities.
3. OV-CAOS will provide training to its board members, staff and volunteers on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities and will keep a record of when the training was provided and the individuals who received the training.

Section 7: Communication

1. OV-CAOS make its communications available, upon request, in accessible formats for persons with disabilities and make the public aware of the availability of communication support. In this context, the types of communications include:
 - a. policies,
 - b. accessibility plans,
 - c. emergency procedures, plan and public safety information prepared for the public,
 - d. forms, surveys and other tools used to gather feedback,
 - e. information on programming and events in accessible format, and
 - f. employment standards.

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Section 7: Communications (continued)

2. Accessible formats of the organization's communications shall be made available:
 - a. in a timely manner,
 - b. at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to others for the communications, and
 - c. in consultation with the person making the request.

Related Documents:

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11
Ontario Regulation 165/16 made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. S.O. c.11* and amending O
Reg. 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)

Editor's Notes: (for information and the text is not to be included in your own policy)

In June 2016, the Ontario Government announced amendments to the Accessibility Standards related to Customer Service and these changes were documented in a new regulation called *Ontario Regulation 165/16*.

An important change with this 2016 regulation is that all staff and volunteers, regardless of their contact with the public, must receive **Customer Service Training**. Previously only those who dealt directly with the public had to be trained. This means that all employees and volunteers (paid and unpaid, full-time, part-time and contract positions) and anyone involved in developing your organization's policies (including managers, senior leaders, directors, board members) as well as anyone who provides goods, services or facilities to customers on your organization's behalf must receive training on all five AODA standards. Details on training are posted on the Ontario Government website at <https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-train-your-staff-accessibility>.

For training, you can use Access Forward (at <http://www.accessforward.ca>). This is a government partner website that offers free training resources to meet the training requirements under AODA. There are additional resources for training including downloadable training modules, printable certificates and timeline charts.