



Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

The following policy, practices and procedures have been established by the Office of the Ontario Ombudsman (“the Ontario Ombudsman”) to govern the provision of its services in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and Regulation 429/07, “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.”

The Ontario Ombudsman endeavours to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures for the provision of its services are consistent with the principles outlined in the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, specifically:

- The services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities
- The provision of services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the services

Use of Assistive Devices

The Ontario Ombudsman recognizes that some individuals with disabilities use assistive devices in order to access services. The Ontario Ombudsman will permit these individuals to use their assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from its services.

In addition to telephone and electronic mail service, the Ontario Ombudsman offers assistive measures such as TTY service to enable persons with disabilities to access its services. If necessary, alternate service methods will also be made available to accommodate individual needs.

Communication

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Ontario Ombudsman will communicate in a manner that takes into account the person’s disability.

Service Animals

The Ontario Ombudsman recognizes that some individuals with disabilities may require the use of guide dogs or other service animals in order to access services. Persons with

disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal will be permitted to enter the Ontario Ombudsman's premises and to keep the animal with them, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If the animal is legally excluded from the premises, the Ontario Ombudsman will provide alternative measures to enable the person to obtain, use or benefit from its services.

Support Persons

The Ontario Ombudsman further recognizes that some individuals with disabilities rely on support persons for assistance while accessing services. A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the Ontario Ombudsman's premises together with the support person, and will not be prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

Given the nature of the Ombudsman's work, support persons accompanying or assisting individuals with disabilities may be required to undertake to keep matters confidential.

Disruptions to Service

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to the Ontario Ombudsman's facilities or services that are usually used by persons with disabilities, the Ontario Ombudsman will provide notice of the disruption to the public, including the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services that may be available. Notice of such disruption will normally be posted on the Office's website and may also be posted on the physical premises, where appropriate in the circumstances.

Staff Training

The Ontario Ombudsman will provide training to its staff about the provision of services to persons with disabilities. The training will include a review of this policy, the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as well as the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

The training will also include:

- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities, including those who use assistive devices, service animals or support persons;
- how to use any equipment or devices available at the Ontario Ombudsman that may help with the provision of services to persons with disabilities; and,
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Ontario Ombudsman's services.

Staff will be trained before January 1, 2010 and on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures. New staff will be trained upon commencement of employment.

The Ontario Ombudsman will keep a record of the training it provides.

Comments and Complaints

Comments or complaints regarding the Ontario Ombudsman's provision of services to persons with disabilities can be made to:

Manager, Communications

Office of the Ontario Ombudsman
Bell Trinity Square
483 Bay Street
10th Floor, South Tower
Toronto, ON M5G 2C9

By Phone : 1.800.263.1830, ext.3521

By Fax: 416.586.3485

By TTY: 1.866.411.4211

By Email: info@ombudsman.on.ca

Or download a complaint form: www.ombudsman.on.ca

Comments or complaints about how the Ontario Ombudsman receives feedback about its provision of services to persons with disabilities may also be made using the same contact information.

If necessary and requested, the Ontario Ombudsman will provide accessible formats and communication supports to accommodate individual needs in making a comment or complaint about the Ontario Ombudsman's provision of services to persons with disabilities and/or this process for providing feedback.

All comments and complaints will be reviewed by the Manager, Communications, and other staff as appropriate, to identify potential opportunities to improve accessibility and ensure that appropriate actions are taken by the Ontario Ombudsman in response to concerns raised.

Please note that an appointment is recommended for in-person service. The Ontario Ombudsman's office hours are from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Copies of this Policy

The Ontario Ombudsman recognizes that persons with disabilities use methods other than standard print to access information. If the Ontario Ombudsman is required to

give a copy of this policy to a person with a disability, the Ontario Ombudsman will provide the policy, or the information contained in the policy, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Alternatively, the Ontario Ombudsman and the person with a disability may agree on an alternate format for the document or information.