



Canada's Drug Agency
L'Agence des médicaments du Canada
Drugs. Health Technologies and Systems. Médicaments, technologies de la santé et systèmes.

Customer Service Accessibility Policy

Policy Number: PC-03-24

Effective/Revised Date: October 2024

Review Period: Every 3 years

Version: 4.0



Definitions

In this policy document:

- **“CDA-AMC”** means Canada’s Drug Agency
- **“accessibility”** means the legal duty to accommodate the individual needs of people with disabilities, enabling them to benefit equally and participate fully in all aspects of life; it involves removing and preventing barriers so that people with disabilities can participate more fully in the workplace
- **“accessible formats”** means large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities
- **“assistive devices”** means technical aids, communication devices, or medical aids that are used to increase, maintain, or improve how a person with a disability can function; examples may include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, note-taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, and assistive listening devices
- **“barrier”** means anything that prevents someone with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability; examples of barriers include physical barriers, architectural barriers, information or communication barriers, technological barriers, attitudinal barriers, and policies or practices
- **“communication supports”** means supports that individuals with disabilities may need to access information; these may include, but are not limited to, captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication
- **“disability”** refers to a broad range of medical conditions an individual can have from birth, due to an accident, or developed over time, which impact an individual’s ability to function; examples of disabilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - addiction (e.g., alcohol, drug, gambling)
 - developmental disability (e.g., autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, Down syndrome)
 - health disability (e.g., diabetes, cancer, asthma)
 - learning disability (e.g., dyslexia, dysnomia)
 - mental health condition or mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, depression, anxiety disorder, bipolar disorder)



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- physical disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, spinal cord injury, amputation)
- sensory disability (e.g., hearing or vision loss)
- 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”** means an animal trained or being trained for a person with a disability for reasons related to their disability
- **“support person”** means an individual who accompanies the person with a disability to help with communication, mobility, personal care needs, or access to services or facilities
- **“workspace”** means offices and work sites (including virtual or online) of CDA-AMC and any other location where their business is carried out during and outside working hours, through virtual communications, or offsite activities.

Background

1. CDA-AMC supports the full inclusion of persons with disabilities in our policies, programs, and services. We strive to maintain accessible and inclusive environments that respect human rights and are free from discrimination and harassment. In accordance with the human rights legislation applicable across Canada, CDA-AMC has a legal duty to accommodate the needs of persons with disabilities, up to the point of undue hardship.

Applicability

2. This policy applies to all employees, including indefinite and term employees, and volunteers who support or interact with all types of guests, including but not limited to contractors, board and committee members, suppliers, visitors, and employment applicants. It applies at all stages and to all aspects of our guests’ dealings with the organization, across all locations and types of settings and interactions.

Purpose

3. This policy defines the organization’s commitment to removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting the accessibility requirements under the [AODA](#) and Ontario’s accessibility regulations, ensuring that individuals with disabilities are given equal opportunities and standards of service.



Statement of Commitment

4. CDA-AMC is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all individuals to obtain, use, and benefit from our products, services, and events, regardless of their abilities. We are committed to treating individuals with disabilities in a manner that upholds their dignity and independence. We believe in being inclusive, and we are committed to addressing the needs of persons with disabilities in a timely manner. Our goal is to create an accessible and welcoming environment by identifying and eliminating barriers in our workspace and preventing the creation of new ones. We will achieve this by meeting our accessibility requirements under the AODA and its associated regulations.

Description

5. CDA-AMC makes every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, and equal opportunity by:
 - 5.1 allowing individuals with disabilities to do things in their own ways and at their own pace when accessing services and facilities, if this does not present a health and safety risk
 - 5.2 using alternative methods of access when necessary to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services and facilities in a similar manner
 - 5.3 considering individual accommodation needs when providing goods and services
 - 5.4 communicating in a manner that considers a customer's disability.
6. Upon request, we will provide information about our organization, services, and events, as well as copies of this policy (or the information contained within it), in accessible formats or with communication supports. If the information requested cannot be converted, we will provide the requestor with an explanation as to why the information cannot be changed into an accessible format, as well as a summary of the information. Requests should be directed to the Vice-President, People and Culture (Arni Ahronson), at arni.ahronson@cda-amc.ca.
7. The organization meets and will maintain internationally recognized [Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0 Level AA](#).
8. The organization supports individuals with disabilities in using assistive devices, support persons, or service animals as necessary to access our products, services, and events.



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- 8.1 **Assistive Devices:** Individuals with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our programs or services, or when participating in our events. In cases where an assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our programs or services, or participate in our events. We will also ensure that our employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that we provide that may be used by guests with disabilities while accessing our programs or services, or while participating in our events.
 - 8.2 **Support Person(s):** Individuals with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises. For events, support persons will participate at no cost. Upon initial contact with a support person, we will work with the person with a disability to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the support person.
 - 8.3 **Service Animal(s):** The organization welcomes and allows individuals with disabilities to bring their service animal(s) when the service animal is clearly identified. The care and control of the service animal is the responsibility of the person with a disability. A person with a service animal will not need to have identification verifying the animal's certification but may be asked to point out the tasks the service animal will perform. Service animals must remain leashed or secured unless this interferes with the animal's work or task.
9. The organization will make every effort to give as much notice as reasonably possible in the case of a planned or unexpected interruption of service and/or access to our offices or events. Notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative means of communication, if available. Notice may be given by posting the information in a prominent location at the offices, at the event site, on the website, via social media accounts, or by any other reasonable method under the circumstances.
 10. The organization is committed to training employees and representatives who support or interact with customers in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the *Ontario Human Rights Code* that relate to serving individuals with disabilities. This training is important in ensuring that employees can take the initiative to identify barriers in the way that we work.



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The training is incorporated into the hiring process and will continue to be reviewed every year. Training includes:

- 10.1. an overview of AODA and the requirements of the [Customer Service Standards](#)
 - 10.2. how to interact and communicate with individuals with various types of disabilities
 - 10.3. how to interact with individuals with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person
 - 10.4. how to use the equipment or devices available onsite or otherwise that may help with providing programs, services, or events to individuals with disabilities
 - 10.5. what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the organization's products, services, or events.
11. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.
12. CDA-AMC welcomes feedback from our customers on the way we provide products, services, and events to individuals with disabilities. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and address concerns.
- 12.1. Feedback may be provided by the following means:
- in writing to 600-865 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5S8, Attention: Vice-President, People and Culture, Canada's Drug Agency, Reference: Accessibility and AODA
 - by visiting our website at www.cda-amc.ca
 - by telephone or teletypewriter (TTY) at (613) 226-2553
 - by email at arni.ahronson@cda-amc.ca.
13. Customers can expect to hear back from us within 2 business days from the date of receipt. Response time to the feedback will depend on the nature of the issue but will not be any later than 15 business days, unless there are particular circumstances involved.
- 13.1. When an employee receives feedback through the hosting of an event or the



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provision of products or services, this feedback is directed to the Vice-President, People and Culture, Canada’s Drug Agency.

14. When we are hosting an event or working with individuals outside of Ontario, a review of local requirements around accessibility will be reviewed.

Privacy and Confidentiality

15. The organization will maintain the confidentiality of information related to an accommodation request with access to information restricted to those with a need to know. Any release of the information will be done with the consent of the individual.

Related Policies and Procedures

- Accommodation Policy
- Request for Accommodation Procedure: Employees
- Request for Accommodation Procedure: Guests
- Workplace Violence, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy
- [Integrated Accessibility Standards Multi-Year Work Plan](#)

Policy Owner and Review Period

16. The Vice-President, People and Culture, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of this policy. This policy is reviewed every 3 years or as needed by the organization to ensure it respects and promotes the dignity and independence of individuals with disabilities.

Corporate Contact

Please direct any questions or requests for changes to this policy to the Vice-President, People and Culture (Arni Ahronson), at arni.ahronson@cda-amc.ca.

Revision History Table

Section	Description of Changes	Prepared or updated by	Date
All	Development of original policy document and approved by CEO	—	January 2012



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All	Definition of <i>guest</i> expanded, provision of accessible formats, and communications supports	N. Rosien	September 2016
All	Updated to new template, incorporated feedback from the Government of Ontario website and the Patient and Community Advisory Committee	M. Bowes	September 2021
All	Policy template updated including business unit name, policy owner, and policy contact; updated the term to <i>indefinite</i> employee from <i>regular</i> employee	Governance, Canada's Drug Agency	September 22, 2023
All	Policy template updated, including revisions to incorporate organization's new operational name	Governance, Canada's Drug Agency	July 2024
All	Updated definitions and added new ones, added <i>Background</i> section, under <i>Applicability</i> (also added <i>Visitors</i> and <i>Suppliers</i>), <i>Policy Statement</i> renamed as <i>Statement of Commitment</i> (per AODA requirements), added bullet points in <i>Description</i> , edited item 6 (<i>Communication</i>) to have a point of contact for requests	People and Culture, Canada's Drug Agency	July 2024