

OFE ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Purpose and Application

Under the ***Accessibility for Manitobans Act*** all organizations must meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer service for our Organization, in accordance with *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*.

The *Accessibility for Manitobans Act* became law in December, 2013. This landmark legislation provides a proactive process to remove barriers affecting persons with disabilities and many other citizens. The Government of Manitoba is committed to achieve significant progress by 2023, making Manitoba more inclusive for everyone.

Opportunities for Employment is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in ways that allow them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in inclusion. We are committed to meeting the needs of people who face accessibility barriers. We will do this by identifying, removing and preventing barriers and by meeting the requirements of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA).

Opportunities for Employment understands that obligations under *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)* December 5, 2013 and its accessibility standards, do not substitute or limit its obligations under *the Manitoba Human Rights Code* or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

Opportunities for Employment is committed to complying with both the *Manitoba Human Rights Code* and *The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)*.

The first accessibility standard in AMA focuses on customer service. To fulfill the Accessibility Standard in Customer Service, Opportunities for Employment will:

- address physical barriers that prevent customers from receiving service
- meet the communication needs of clients
- allow service animals
- allow assistive devices, such as wheelchairs, walkers and oxygen tanks
- let customers know the accessibility policies and procedures
- let customers know when accessible services are not available
- invite customers to provide feedback
- train staff on accessible customer service, including reasonable accommodations under The Human Rights Code (Manitoba).

This policy applies to all our employees, volunteers and contract trainers.

Assistive devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services or facilities. Our organization will also ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices at our premises that the person with a disability may use.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

We will work with the person with a disability to determine what method of communication works best for them.

Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask a person to provide documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

Support persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, Opportunities for Employment will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time and place.

Notice will be made visible and may be displayed at the location of the disruption, on the website, in a mailing or another reasonable method.

Training

Opportunities for Employment will provide accessible customer service training to:

- all employees; volunteers and contract trainers
- anyone involved in developing our policies

Staff will be trained on accessible customer service within the orientation period (2 weeks) after being hired.

Training will include:

- purpose of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act (AMA)2013 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- Opportunities For Employment’s policies related to the customer service standard
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Opportunities For Employment’s services or facilities

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service policies.

Feedback process

Opportunities for Employment welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Feedback can be received in ways appropriate to the person’s disabilities and includes in person, by mail, or email, by telephone, fax or other methods.

The feedback process is promoted on the website and through other printed outreach methods. A copy of the feedback process and feedback form is available upon request.

All feedback, including complaints, will be handled by the appointed Program Manager.

Customers can expect to hear back in **7 days** from the day of submitting the feedback.

Opportunities for Employment will make sure our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of availability of documents

Opportunities for Employment will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice on the website and through other printed methods.

Opportunities for Employment will provide this document in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and at no additional cost.

Modifications to this or other policies

Any policies of Opportunities for Employment that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

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