

Accessibility for Ontarians with a Disabilities Act: Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulations

<p>Policy Statement</p>
<p>Pathways to Independence strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities and is committed to providing access to our programs and services in ways that take into account their disabilities and specific requirements for the provision of service. This policy is inclusive of the general requirements that apply across the five standards of Customer Service, Information & Communications, Employment, the Built Environment and Transportation as identified in the Act.</p>
<p>Scope</p>
<p>Sections 1-8 of this policy applies to all full and part time employees of Pathways, volunteers and/or contractors who provide services on behalf of Pathways to members of the general public who have disabilities. Section A, Employment Standards applies only to full and part time employees of Pathways to Independence.</p>
<p>Definitions</p>
<p>Assistive Devices: Auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e., canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).</p> <p>Disability: As per the Ontario <i>Human Rights Code</i>, "disability" means: a) 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 coordination, 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 <i>Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</i> ("handicap").</p> <p>Persons with Disabilities: Individuals who are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario <i>Human Rights Code</i>.</p> <p>Service Animal: Any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.</p> <p>Support Person: Any person, whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend, who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs, or with access to goods or services.</p> <p>Accessible Formats – include but not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.</p>

Communication Supports – include but not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Policy

1. Communication

Pathways will provide goods & services and communicate with people with disabilities in ways that takes into account their disability. Depending upon the need, this may include but is not restricted to the use of communication devices and media such as large print, TTY machines, telephony relay services, or email. We are committed to assisting people with disabilities who use personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services and programs.

We can arrange for accessible format and communications supports, upon request, in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability following consultation individuals and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

Alternate formats and communication supports are available throughout our feedback and/or complaints process, upon request.

1. Service Animal

We welcome people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties except where excluded by law, under the Food Safety and Quality Act.

2. Support Person

The role of a support person(s) who accompanies a person with a disability is respected and the support person will be included based on the needs or expressed wishes of the person with a disability. Fees will not be charged for a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability to any Pathways event or program.

3. Notice of Interruption of Services

Pathways will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available. The notice will be placed at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

4. Training

Pathways will provide training to all employees upon hire who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of policies, practices and procedures. The training will include the Ontario Human Rights Code and information required by the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

5. Providing feedback

Feedback regarding the way Pathways provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, verbally, by email, or on the agency website. Feedback may be provided to the Chief Executive Officer or designate who will ensure that the appropriate actions are taken to respond to or resolve any issue presented.

6. Accessibility Plan

In keeping with this legislative requirement and with CARF accreditation standards, Pathways will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan outlining its strategy to prevent and remove barriers. The plan will be posted annually on the Pathways website and it will be provided in an accessible format upon request. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually in keeping with CARF and AODA ISAR requirements. The plan will be available in the Pathways Annual Management Report.

7. Procuring or Acquiring Goods and Services, or Facilities

Pathways will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities. The only exception is in cases where it is impracticable to do so.

Employment Standards

Pathways will ensure that human resources processes are supportive of people with a disability. These processes include but are not limited to; recruitment, providing accessible information, plans for emergencies, individual accommodation, return to work, performance management, and career development and redeployment. Supportive employment related processes and tools will be developed and implemented in accordance with the collective agreement and other related employment legislation.

i. Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

Pathways job postings will notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants who have disabilities. Applicants will be informed that these accommodations are available, upon request, for the interview process and other candidate selection methods. Additionally, Pathways will notify the successful applicant of relevant policies and supports for accommodating people with disabilities as required.

ii. Accessible Communications for Employees

Upon request and in consultation with the employee, Pathways will provide accessible formats and communication supports for an employee with a disability. Information will include but is not limited to:

1. Information needed in order to perform their job; and
2. Information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace.

iii. Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

Pathways will ensure that employees with disabilities who require workplace accommodation due to their disability will have a documented accommodation plan.

iv. Plans and Processes

Pathways will ensure that employees with a disability have a tailored emergency response plan or information in keeping with employee's requirements.

Pathways Human Resources processes, such as performance management will respect the needs of employees with disabilities when required.

v. Return to Work and Redeployment

Pathways will ensure that employees with a disability will be supported with a documented return to work plan in keeping with the agency's Return to Work policy and practices. In the event the agency uses redeployment process, the accommodation needs of the employee with a disability will be considered and in accordance with the collective agreement.

Procedure

Not Applicable