

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

Revision Date: November 3, 2023

Purpose

Accessibility standards will set requirements in a number of other key areas and will be reviewed at least every five years. New requirements may be added over time. Whenever new or revised standards are developed under the AODA, this policy will be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure consistency. Updated information about the AODA and accessibility standards is available at: www.accesson.ca or by calling the AODA Contact Centre at 1-866-515-2025 (TTY 416-325-3408) or 1-800-268-7095 (toll-free).

This policy has been prepared to outline what OPTIMA must do to comply with the regulation and what our customers may expect from us. This policy also supports the service vision, principles and mandatory requirements of the OPTIMA Service Directive, which is intended to guide Optima in its efforts to meet or exceed customer needs and expectations.

Scope

The policy is intended to benefit the full range of persons with disabilities, as defined in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Whether a person's disability is apparent or not, everyone should be treated with courtesy, made to feel welcome, and have their need for accommodation respected whenever they interact with an Optima service.

This policy is available in alternate formats upon request.

This policy applies to all those working for Optima including all regular, temporary, full-time, part time and probationary employees, contractors, consultants and or volunteers as well as customers and clients of Optima.

Policy

1. Optima is a professional service organization committed to providing high-quality, cost-effective services that keep pace with rising public expectations.
2. Optima strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Optima is also committed to ensuring that customers with disabilities receive accessible services with the same quality as others do.
3. Optima will provide training on customer service to all employees who provide services, and who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. New staff and staff who commence new duties that involve interaction with

the public or other third parties will undertake training as part of their orientation, if they haven't already done so.

4. Optima will provide staff with training that includes:
 - a) A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service;
 - b) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
 - c) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
 - d) How to use the equipment or devices available on the provider's premises, or otherwise, that may assist with the provision of services to persons with disabilities;
 - e) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Optima's Services and/or Optima policies, practices and procedures relating to the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
 - f) Staff will be trained, as appropriate, on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way services are provided to persons with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.
5. Optima is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services.
6. Optima will ensure that staff knows how to use assistive devices available in their various locations for customers, and inform customers of the assistive devices that are available.
7. Persons with disabilities may bring their service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public or other third parties. Optima will ensure that all staff, volunteers and third parties dealing with the public are trained in how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.
8. On rare occasions, a manager may determine that a support person is required, or that a service animal cannot enter an area of the premises consistent with other laws. In these instances, managers will suggest appropriate alternatives and provide assistance.
9. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Optima premises open to the public or other third parties with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

10. When support persons are required (e.g., sign language interpreters, real-time cautioners, attendants) for Optima sponsored meetings, consultations or events, Optima will arrange to pay support persons directly for their time and reasonable travel expenses upon request, in accordance with Optima payroll policy.
11. Optima will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This means staff will communicate in a means that enables persons with disabilities to communicate effectively for purposes of using, receiving and requesting Optima, services and facilities.
12. Optima will let customers know what methods are available for giving feedback. If a method is not suitable, customers may request another method. Privacy will be respected and all feedback will be reviewed for possible action that can be taken to improve Optima services. Feedback received by Optima and/or questions surrounding this policy will be redirected to Optima Compliance:

HR Manager
Optima Communication International
144 Front Street W. Suite 200
Toronto Ontario M5J2L7
Tel.: 416-581-1236
13. Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints may require more effort to address, and must be reviewed for action, possibly at a higher level.
14. Customers can expect acknowledgement of verbal/telephone feedback within two business days, and within fifteen business days of the receipt of a mailed/e-mailed complaint.
15. The acknowledgement must indicate when the matter will be addressed and when the customer will be notified, and Optima will follow up with any required action within the timeframe noted in the acknowledgement. Feedback/response will endeavor to be in a format that is accessible to the complainant.
16. Optima is committed to ensuring that their customer service policies, practices and procedures respect and promote the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities.
17. Any Optima operational policy affecting customer service that does not respect and promote the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of persons with disabilities will be modified or revoked.