



Ottawa Food Bank
La Banque d'Alimentation d'Ottawa

Policy Title:	Accessibility for Persons With Disabilities
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INTRODUCTION

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) recognizes the history of discrimination against persons with disabilities in Ontario. The AODA is intended to benefit all Ontarians by developing, implementing, and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises on or before January 1, 2025.

POLICY STATEMENT

The Ottawa Food Bank supports the goals of the AODA and is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and by meeting our accessibility requirements under the AODA and any other related accessibility laws.

The Ottawa Food Bank is also committed to meeting its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code with respect to persons with disabilities.

The Ottawa Food Bank understands that its obligations under the AODA do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or under any other law.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, “**disability**” is as defined by the AODA, being:

- (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 co-ordination, 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 *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”)

POINTS OF POLICY/PROCEDURAL GUIDELINES

Customer Service

The Ottawa Food Bank is committed to providing our goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities in a manner that is consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity.

Education

We will educate staff and volunteers regarding Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities. The education provided will reflect the specific role of each staff member or volunteer. We will also educate every person who participates in developing the organization's policies, and every person who provides goods, services, or facilities on behalf of the Ottawa Food Bank.

Education will include:

- the purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of its Customer Service Standards,
- the Ottawa Food Bank's policies related to the Customer Service Standards,
- how to best interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities,
- how to best interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person,
- how to use any equipment or devices that are available on-site that may help with providing goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities, and
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

We will provide this education as soon as practicable after a person is hired and will provide education on any changes to our policies.

We will maintain records of the training provided, including the dates on which the education was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

If the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern, or is not permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services, or facilities.

We will ensure that appropriate staff are aware of, and trained to operate, any assistive devices we have available.

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. We will work with the person with disabilities 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 in areas of our premises that are open to the public. Due to the risk of food contamination, service animals are prohibited in the Warehouse.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons related to their disability.

If service animals are prohibited, we will explain why the service animal is prohibited and discuss another way of providing goods, services, or facilities with the customer.

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.

In certain cases, the Ottawa Food Bank might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability, or other people. Before requiring an accompanying support person, we will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs,
- consider health or safety based on available evidence, and
- determine if there is any other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or other people.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a disruption to the availability of assistance devices or services that are normally available at the Ottawa Food Bank, we will notify affected persons. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Feedback Process

The Ottawa Food Bank welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Feedback may be provided by email via accessibility@ottawafoodbank.ca, by mail at:

Director, People and Culture
Ottawa Food Bank
2001 Bantree Street
Ottawa, ON
K1B 4X3

or by telephone at 613-745-7001.

Feedback will normally be responded to within 10 business days.

The Ottawa Food Bank will ensure that 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

The Ottawa Food Bank will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available upon request by posting this information on our web site.

The Ottawa Food Bank will provide these documents 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.

Self-service Kiosks

We will incorporate accessibility features/consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring, or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Information and Communications

The Ottawa Food Bank will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, in accessible formats or with communication supports in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If we determine that information or communications are unconvertible, we shall provide the requestor with an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible and a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by posting this information on our web site.

We are also committed to meeting the internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment

We will notify employees, job applicants, and the public that accommodations for disabilities can be made during the recruitment and hiring processes.

We will notify applicants that are selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations for disabilities are available upon request and will consult with the applicants to provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

We will notify successful applicants of our policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

We will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account their accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

When needed, we will also provide customized emergency response information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who will provide assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when we review our general emergency response policies.

We will develop and maintain a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

We will develop and maintain a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes will take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Changes to Existing Policies

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

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.

APPLICATION

All employees and volunteers.

RELATED POLICIES

Accommodation For Employees With Disabilities Policy

Return to Work Policy

Emergency Response Plan

REFERENCES

Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005

Ontario Human Rights Code, 1990