

# Customer Service Accessibility Policy

**Policy Number: HR-13-03**

<b>Date policy introduced</b>	January 2012
<b>Date policy last reviewed</b>	September 2021
<b>Date of next scheduled review</b>	September 2024
<b>Approved by</b>	President and CEO

## Definitions and/or Acronyms

<b>Accessibility</b>	“Accessibility” is the ability to get into and benefit from some system or entity. The concept focuses on enabling access for people with disabilities.
<b>Barrier</b>	A barrier is anything — including anything physical, or relating to building design or technology, or relating to attitudes — that gets in the way of a full and equal participation of individuals.
<b>Disability</b>	As outlined in the <a href="#">Ontario Human Rights Code</a> , a disability is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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,</li> <li>• a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,</li> <li>• a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,</li> <li>• a mental disorder, or</li> <li>• an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997</li> </ul>
<b>Service Animal</b>	An animal trained or being trained for a person with a disability for reasons related to their disability.
<b>Support Person</b>	An individual who goes along with someone with a disability to support the person in dealing with their communication, ease of movement, or personal care needs.

## Applicability

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

## Purpose

This policy defines CADTH’s commitment to removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting the accessibility requirements under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#), the [Accessible Canada Act](#), and [Ontario’s accessibility laws](#), ensuring that individuals with disabilities are given equal opportunities and standards of service.

## Policy Statement

CADTH is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for all people to get, use, and benefit from CADTH products, services, and events. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in being inclusive and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do this by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act](#) and [Ontario’s accessibility laws](#).

## Description

- 1 CADTH provides its products, services, and events in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- 2 CADTH conducts its communications in a manner that takes the disabilities of people into account. When asked, CADTH will provide information about our organization, our services, and our events in accessible formats or with communication supports. If the information requested cannot be converted, CADTH 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.
- 3 CADTH meets and will maintain internationally recognized [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.0 Level AA](#) website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.
- 4 CADTH supports people with disabilities in using assistive devices, support persons, or service animals as necessary to access CADTH's products, services, and events.
  - 4.1 **Assistive Devices:** The use of assistive devices by people with disabilities to get, use, or benefit from CADTH's products, services, and events will be allowed unless otherwise prohibited because of health and safety or privacy issues. We will also ensure that our employees are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by people with disabilities while accessing our goods or services or participating in our events.
  - 4.2 **Support Person(s):** People with disabilities who bring with them 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, CADTH will work with the person with disabilities to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the support person.
  - 4.3 **Service Animal(s):** CADTH welcomes and allows people 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 have 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.
- 5 CADTH 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 facility or event. 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 CADTH office, at the event site, on CADTH's website or via social media accounts, or by any other reasonable method under the circumstances.
- 6 CADTH 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 people with disabilities. This training is important in ensuring that CADTH employees and representatives are able to take the initiative to identify barriers in the way that we work. The training is incorporated into CADTH's hiring process and will continue to be reviewed every year. Training includes:
  - 6.1 An overview of the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#) (AODA) and the requirements of the customer service standard ([Regulation 429/07](#))
  - 6.2 How to deal and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
  - 6.3 How to deal with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or need the help of a service animal or a support person
  - 6.4 How to use specialized equipment or devices provided by CADTH, as required
  - 6.5 How to support people with a particular type of disability who are having difficulty accessing CADTH's products, services, or events

- 7 CADTH welcomes feedback from our customers on the way we provide products, services, and events to people with disabilities. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and address concerns within a good amount of time.
  - 7.1 Feedback can be provided in writing to 600-865 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario K1S 5S8, Attention: Vice-President Corporate Services, Reference: Accessibility and AODA; by visiting our website at [www.cadth.ca](http://www.cadth.ca); or by email at [meganab@cadth.ca](mailto:meganab@cadth.ca).
  - 7.2 Customers can expect to hear back from us within five (5) 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.
  - 7.3 Where CADTH employees receive feedback through the hosting of an event or the provision of products or services, this feedback is directed to the Director, Human Resources.
- 8 This policy is reviewed every three (3) years or as needed by Human Resources to ensure it respects and promotes the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. In reviewing this policy, CADTH will consult with the CADTH Patient and Community Advisory Committee.
- 9 CADTH 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.
- 10 Where CADTH is hosting an event or working with individuals outside of Ontario, a review of local requirements around accessibility will be reviewed.

## Related Policies/Forms/References

For more information, refer to the following related policies:

- Disability Accommodation Policy
- Request for Accommodation Procedure — Employees
- Request for Accommodation Procedure — Guests
- Respectful Workplace Policy

## Corporate Contact

Please direct any questions regarding this policy to the Vice-President, Corporate Services.

## Revision History Table

Section	Description of Changes	Prepared/ Updated By	Date
All	Development of original master policy document		January 2012
All	Definition of guest 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 CADTH's Patient and Community Advisory Committee	M. Bowes	September 2021