

Policy Name: Accessibility Policy	Date Issued: July 2017
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Policy Statement

Gateway supports the principles of and is committed to complying with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) and the Ontario Human Rights Code. In alignment with our mission, Gateway will provide support services to all people regardless of if an individual has a disability.

Purpose

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) establishes standards to address barriers that persons with disabilities face in the areas of information and communications, employment, transportation, design of public spaces, and customer service. The requirements under these standards are not a replacement or substitution for the requirements of the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Scope

This will apply to all Gateway staff, students, and volunteers.

Statement of Commitment

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. is committed to providing a barrier-free environment for all stakeholders including our clients, employees, job applicants, suppliers, and any visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. As an agency, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*, and its associated standards and regulations.

Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. understands that we have a responsibility for ensuring a safe, dignified, and welcoming environment for everyone. We are committed to ensuring our agency's compliance by incorporating accessibility legislation into our policies, procedures, equipment requirements, training, and best practices. We will review these policies and practices annually, as agency changes occur, or in anticipation of compliance deadlines. In addition, we will strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

Providing an accessible and barrier-free environment is a shared effort, and as an agency, Gateway Residential & Community Support Services of Niagara Inc. is committed to working with the necessary parties to make accessibility for all a reality.

Procedures

1. Training

- 1.1. Training will be provided to new employees, volunteers, and other employees involved in developing policies and providing services to our clients. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis with respect to any changes made to the established policies.
- 1.2. Training will include:
 - 1.2.1. The Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities.
 - 1.2.2. An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard.
 - 1.2.3. Policies related to the Customer Service Standard
 - 1.2.4. How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
 - 1.2.5. How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
 - 1.2.6. How to use the required equipment available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing services to people with disabilities.
 - 1.2.7. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing services.
- 1.3. This training will be provided during the orientation process. A record of who took the training and the date this training was provided will be kept.

2. Assistive Devices

- 2.1. People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our services. We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with the various assistive devices we have on-site or that we provide what may be used by clients with disabilities while accessing our services.

3. Communication

- 3.1. We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. When providing information to, or communicating with, a person with a disability, we will provide, upon request, the information and communication in an accessible format. We will work with the person with a disability to determine which method of communication works for them.

4. Service Animals

- 4.1. We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on our premises that are open to the public. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers, and

others are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

5. Support Persons

- 5.1. Gateway is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

6. Notice Of Temporary Disruption

- 6.1. In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services for clients with disabilities, Gateway will notify clients promptly. This posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative services, if available.

7. Feedback Process

- 7.1. Persons with disabilities are encouraged to make complaints or inquires in a manner that takes into account their disability.
- 7.2. Individuals who wish to provide feedback on the way Gateway provides support to people with disabilities, can provide feedback through various methods, clients can expect to hear back within five business days.

8. Feedback Forms

- 8.1. There are forms available for clients and employees to provide feedback to Gateway.
- 8.2. These forms are located on MS Teams in the AODA section. These are available upon request. The forms will be reviewed on a regular basis.

9. Notice of Availability of Documents

- 9.1. Gateway will notify the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request. This notice will be posted in a conspicuous place on the premises or on our website. 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.

10. Customer Service

- 10.1. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities. We incorporate accessibility criteria and features when providing services. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

10.2. At Gateway, the provision of services to people with disabilities is integrated with the provision of services to others, unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the services. People with disabilities are to be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the services or which Gateway provides.

11. Information and Communications

- 11.1. We have a process for receiving and responding to feedback and this process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request. We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability.
- 11.2. When asked, we will provide information about our agency and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication support. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.
- 11.3. When requested documents and information are made available in other formats to people with disabilities at no additional cost and in a timely manner.
- 11.4. If Gateway has been asked for information or communication that has been determined as unconvertible, we will provide the person making the request with an explanation and a summary of the unconvertible information or communication.

12. Employment

- 12.1. We will notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We will notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We will consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation. We will notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.
- 12.2. On a job posting Gateway will include the following statement:

“Accommodation will be provided in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Gateway is committed to supporting a culture of diversity and inclusiveness across the organization. We believe in equal opportunity, and it is our priority to ensure a barrier-free recruitment and selection process. If you are contacted for a position, please notify Human Resources of any accommodation needs you may have during the selection process. Information received regarding the accommodation needs of applicants will be addressed confidentially. We thank all

respondents for their applications but only those selected for an interview will be contacted.”

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

12.3.1. information that is needed in order to perform the employee’s job; and

12.3.2. information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

12.4. Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency 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 is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

12.5. Our Performance appraisal, career development, and redeployment processes will consider the accessibility needs of all employees with disabilities.

13. Design of Public Spaces

13.1. Gateway will incorporate accessibility requirements under the IASR when building or redeveloping a public space identified under the Accessibility Standard for the Design of Public Spaces.

14. Transportation

14.1. Gateway will maintain policies and plans for accessibility and train staff to comply with the accessibility standards related to the Transportation Standards outlined in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

Standard and accessible formats of this document are available upon request.