

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

Introduction

The *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* became law in 2005. Its purpose is to make Ontario barrier-free by 2025 by developing, implementing, and enforcing standards for accessibility related to goods, services, facilities, employment, accommodation, and buildings. All businesses in Ontario with 20 or more employees must file a compliance report every three years.

1. The College Mission

The Ontario College of Social Workers and Social Service Workers (the “College”) protects the interest of the public by regulating the practice of social workers and social service workers and promoting ethical and professional practice.

2. The College Commitment

In fulfilling its mission, College employees deliver customer service in a manner that acknowledges the nature of an individual’s disability and respects a person’s desire for independence and dignity.

The College is committed to meeting the needs of people living with disabilities in a timely manner by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting the College’s accessibility requirements under the AODA and Human Rights Code. The College treats every person with courtesy and respect.

3. Providing services to people living with disabilities

The College is committed to ensuring that information about the College and communications with the College are accessible to people living with disabilities. Registrants of the College and members of the public are encouraged to contact the College if accommodation is required.

3.1 Communication

The College communicates with people living with disabilities in a courteous manner taking into account their disability and ensuring that information, communications and platforms are provided in accessible formats which meet the needs of persons living with disabilities upon request. The College is committed to providing any accommodating measures that may be required.

3.2 Phone services

The College is committed to providing a fully accessible phone service to registrants as well as members of the public. The College offers to communicate with customers in alternate formats if phone communication



is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available. (e.g., Bell relay services, email, etc).

3.3. Accessible websites and web content

The College is committed to ensuring that those visiting the website can view the website and web content in a manner that is respectful of accessibility needs. The College's website and web content conforms with the World Wide Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, in accordance with the accessible websites and web content section of the Information and Communications Standard.

3.4 Assistive devices

The College is committed to serving people living with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services. The following assistive devices are available:

- Automatic door operators at both the street entrance and the lower-level entrance of the building as well as at the entrance to the College offices and at the entrance to the Boardroom;
- A ramp at the street entrance;
- Wheelchair accessible elevators;
- Elevators with visual indicators for up and down as well as floor numbers;
- Wheelchair accessible washrooms;
- Wheelchair accessible office premises;
- Microphone system in the Boardroom; and
- Automatic sensor opening to the Boardroom.

The College uses facilities for meetings and public events that are accessible for people living with disabilities who use mobility aids and devices or have other facility-related needs. Registrants and members of the public are encouraged to contact the College if accommodation is required.

4. Use of service animals and support persons

The College welcomes people living with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal and other third parties. The College ensures that all employees, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained on how to interact with persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

The College welcomes persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person living with a disability who is accompanied by a support person can enter the College premises with their support person. At no time will a person living with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from

having access to their support person while on the College premises. Support persons may on occasion be required to sign confidentiality agreements depending on the specific circumstances.

5. Notice of temporary disruption

The College will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people living 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 outside the entrance to the College office. In addition, a notice will be posted on the College's website.

6. Training for Employees

The College will provide training to all employees, volunteers and contract staff who provide services to the public or other third parties, on behalf of the College.

This training will be provided as soon as possible after an employee begins their duties with the College. All employees, volunteers and contract staff will be required to confirm that they have been trained on the College's accessibility policies, practices and procedures. New employees will undertake training as part of their initial orientation, unless they have previously undertaken equivalent training and are able to provide proof that they have completed this training. Employees will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Training will include the following:

- The purpose and requirements of the AODA;
- How to interact and communicate with persons living with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons living with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- What to do if a person living with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the College's goods and services;
- The College's policies, practices and procedures relating to the Standards of the AODA; and
- The equipment or devices available on the College's premises that may help serve persons living with disabilities.

Council members and non-Council committee members will also receive online training regarding the College's accessibility policies, practices and procedures.



7. Feedback process

The College's ultimate goal is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving registrants, or members of the public living with disabilities. Comments on the College's services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding how well the College provides goods and services to people living with disabilities can be communicated to the College by email at accessibility@ocswssw.org or by telephone at 1-877-828-9380. Where possible, complaints will be addressed immediately. However, some complaints may require more time to address and may require further review to determine the most appropriate course of action. The College will review all complaints and will provide a written response to a complaint within a reasonable period of time from the receipt of the complaint.

8. Alternate formats

Upon request, the College will provide information in alternate formats (i.e., other ways of publishing information beyond traditional printing). Examples of alternate formats include but are not limited to hard copy, large print, Braille, audio, electronic text, captioning, descriptive video service and sign language interpreters.

The College will consider specific format requests when sourcing alternate format materials. Please be aware not all documents will be readily available in every format. In addition, some text items do not lend themselves to certain alternative formats. If applicable, alternatives will be discussed with the individual requesting an alternate format. Please note that the College does not edit/convert alternate formats or e-texts.

9. Modifications to Policies

The College is committed to developing policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons living with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons living with disabilities.

10. Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to people living with disabilities. Any questions should be communicated by email accessibility@ocswssw.org or by telephone at 1-877-828-9380.

Related Link

Multi Year Accessibility Plan