



**Title: 200.10 Accessible Customer Service**

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**1.0 Policy:** CMHA Niagara shall provide accessible customer service that follows the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all people.

**2.0 Purpose:** In response to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, CMHA Niagara Branch has initiated this policy on Accessible Customer Service. CMHA Niagara strongly believes in the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for all people. These principles are ingrained in the values of our organization.

**3.0 Scope:** This policy applies to all services that CMHA Niagara offers to the community. This policy applies to all CMHA staff, students, volunteers and contractors.

**4.0 Definitions:**

Assistive Devices – is a technical aid, communicative device or other instrument that is used to maintain or improve the functional abilities of people with disabilities. Personal assistive devices are typically devices that people bring with them such as a wheelchair, walker or personal oxygen tank that might assist in hearing, seeing, communicating, moving breathing, remembering and/or reading.

Disability – the term disability as defined by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, and the Ontario Human Rights Code refers to:

- 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 coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness of speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog, or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device.
- A condition or mental impairment or a developmental disability
- A learning disability, or dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language
- A mental disorder
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, 1997

Guide Dog – is a highly trained working dog that has been trained at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the Blind Person’s Act, to provide mobility, safety and increased independence for people who are blind.



## **Title: 200.10 Accessible Customer Service**

Service Animal – as reflected in Ontario regulation 429/07, an animal is a service animal for the person with a disability if:

- It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability

Support Person- as reflected in Ontario Regulation 429/07, a support person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to services.

### **5.0 Procedure:**

5.1 CMHA Niagara will provide training to all board members, directors, staff, volunteers and students who provide services on our behalf in the following areas:

- a. The purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- b. CMHA Niagara's policies, procedures and practices relating to the Customer Service Standards
- c. How to interact and communicate with people who have various types of disabilities
- d. How to interact with people who have disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- e. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our facilities or services

5.2 Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing CMHA services. In cases where the assistive device presents a safety concern or where accessibility might be an issue, other reasonable measures will be used to ensure the access to our services.

5.3 A person who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be allowed access to premises that are open to the public unless otherwise excluded by law. "No pet" policies do not apply to guide dogs or service animals. If a guide dog or service animal is excluded by law, CMHA Niagara will offer alternative methods to enable the person with a disability to access our services.

If it is not readily apparent that an animal is being used by a person for reasons relating to his or her disability, CMHA Niagara may request verification from the person. Verification may include:

- A letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons related to the disability
- A valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada
- A certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school

The person who is accompanied by a guide dog or service animal is responsible for maintaining care and control of the animal at all times.



**Title: 200.10 Accessible Customer Service**

If a health and safety concern presents itself, for example in the form of a severe allergy to the animal, CMHA Niagara will make every reasonable effort to meet the needs of the person with the disability without endangering the person with the severe allergy.

- 5.4 If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, CMHA Niagara will ensure both persons are allowed to enter the premises together and that the person with the disability is not prevented from having access to the support person.

In situations where confidential information might be discussed, consent will be obtained from the client, prior to any conversation where confidential information may be discussed.

- 5.5 Every effort will be made to communicate to a person in a way that takes into account their disability i.e. speaking clearly and slowly using plain language, making written information available in large print, etc.

- 5.6 Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control of CMHA Niagara. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that persons with disabilities rely on, every reasonable effort will be made to provide advance notice. In some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruptions, advance notice may not be possible.

- 5.7 Feedback regarding the way in which CMHA Niagara provides services to persons with disabilities can be made verbally, in writing directly, by email, mail, through our client evaluation forms or through a separate customer service evaluation form which will be located at Central Reception and in all of our waiting areas. Complaints will be addressed according to CMHA Niagara's complaint procedure. Pamphlets indicating these procedures are provided to all clients and are also located at central reception and client waiting areas. All complaints will be investigated and responded to quickly and efficiently by a Program Manager. Appropriate action will be taken to rectify legitimate complaints.

**6.0 Related Documents:**

[Accessibility Policy Statement.doc](#)

[Accessibility Procedures.doc](#)

[..\Information & Resources\Accessible Customer Service Resource Book.pdf](#)

[..\Feedback Form\Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form.doc](#)

[..\Customer Service Training Video & Quiz\Customer Service Training Video.htm](#)

[..\Customer Service Training Video & Quiz\Customer Service Standard Quiz.htm](#)



**Title: 200.10 Accessible Customer Service**

**7.0 References:**

**Ministry of Community and Social Services,**

Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

ServiceOntario AODA Contact Centre:

Toll-free: 1-866-515-2025

TTY: 416-325-3408 / Toll-free: 1-800-268-7095

Fax: 416-325-3407

E-mail: [accessibility@css.gov.on.ca](mailto:accessibility@css.gov.on.ca)

Web Site: [ontario.ca/AccessON](http://ontario.ca/AccessON)

[ontario.ca/AccessON](http://ontario.ca/AccessON)

Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Reg. 429/07

Compliance Manual: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Reg. 429/07

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service: Summary of Requirements

Compliance Manual for Small Businesses and Organizations: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Reg. 429/07

Training Resource: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Reg. 429/07

Training Resource for Small Businesses and Organizations: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Reg. 429/07

**Legislation:**

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_05a11\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm)

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, [http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws\\_src\\_regs\\_r07429\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm)

**Quality Records**

Title	Location Kept	Duration Kept	Disposal Method