

ACCESSIBLE STANDARDS POLICY (AODA)

Updated Nov. 2026

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS POLICY INDEX

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GENERAL

1.1 Our Mission, Vision, Values

Mission

To connect our communities to the support, service and care they need throughout their lifelong journey.

Vision

A community where people experience connection and well-being.

Core Values

Relationships: we enter each relationship with care, ensuring equity, respect, and collaboration.

Accountability: we approach our work with integrity while balancing the voices of the people, community, and funders.

Community: we are engaged partners and together we celebrate our strengths and respond to the needs of our community.

Compassion: we deliver meaningful services supporting dignity and belonging through empathy, collaboration, and inclusivity.

1.2 Policy Intent and Commitment

In fulfilling our mission, and in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, Community Care Northumberland (CCN) strives to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

This policy sets out our commitment to standards for accessibility across employment, customer service, transportation, information and communications, and the design of public spaces.

Community Care Northumberland is committed to providing an accessible environment for all clients, residents, employees, volunteers and visitors who may enter our premises, access our information, or use our services. CCN respects and complies with the requirements of the AODA and its associated regulations. We strive to provide an accessible and welcoming environment for everyone by identifying and removing barriers in our workplace and ensuring that new barriers are not created. CCN ensures that persons with disabilities are provided with equal opportunities. We are committed to meeting the needs

of individuals with disabilities in a timely and integrative manner that respects their dignity and independence.

1.3 Establishment of Policies, Practices & Procedures

Community Care Northumberland shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that our policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

Our goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities

a) The provision of our services to persons with disabilities and others will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

b) Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from our services.

c) Our policies will deal with the use of assistive devices by person's with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from our services or the availability, if any, of other measures which enable them to do so.

d) When communicating with a person with a disability, CCN will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

Community Care Northumberland shall, upon request, provide a copy of the policies, practices and procedures as required under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. This policy is also available on our website www.commcare.ca

1.4 Modifications to this or other policies

Community Care Northumberland will review and amend our Accessible Standards Policy as necessary in order to ensure that it is current and applicable.

We are committed to developing accessible standard policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this or other policies before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of Community Care Northumberland that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

1.5 Definitions

Accessible format: Includes but not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille, and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communication support: Includes but not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language, and other supports that facilitate effective communication.

Guide dog: A dog trained as a guide for a blind person that has completed a training program at a designated training facility as set out in the *Guide Dogs* regulation.

Service animal: An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability if:

- The animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators, such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- The person provides documentation from a designated regulated health professional permitted by the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* regulation, confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support person: In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods, services, and facilities.

1.6 Questions about this policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to clients/caregivers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to, the Chief Executive Officer of Community Care Northumberland.

Email: admin@commcare.ca
Telephone: 1-866-514-5774

PROVIDING SERVICE

2. Providing goods and services to people with disabilities

Community Care Northumberland is committed to excellence in serving all clients/caregivers, including people with disabilities, and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

2.1 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account the person's disability.

We will train staff who communicate with clients/caregivers on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities. We will refer to the "Tip Sheets" on communicating with persons with various disabilities in our training resources.

We will make the original communication more accessible by using plain language to help make a document easier to read for people with certain learning disabilities.

We will change the usual method of communication to meet an individual's need and offer communication in a variety of ways such as in person, by phone, online, through print signs, handouts, brochures and through television or media advertisements. Where possible we will modify our communication to account for a client/caregiver's disability by offering:

a) large print for people with vision disabilities on request
b) phone service rather than requiring in person service
c) email, text or note-writing rather verbal communication

We will use assistive devices where possible and available.

We will consider the nature of the communication to find a suitable method to communicate.

a) A client who is unable to speak may use gestures, pen and paper or typing back and forth to communicate simple or straightforward information
b) A client with speech disabilities may use electronic communication systems, requiring the time to listen carefully

We will request the involvement of someone who can facilitate or interpret communication in situations where the information being exchanged is complex, lengthy or very important if necessary.

In the case of clients/caregivers who have limited options of communication, we will assess the situation and consider all options and resources available to facilitate communication when considering our ability to provide service.

Upon request, CCN will provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities,

(a) In a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability,

(b) At no cost and,

(c) Is publicly available.

2.2 Telephone services

We are committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our clients/caregivers. We will train staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language and to speak clearly and slowly.

We will offer to communicate with customers by telephone relay service if telephone communication is not suitable for their communication needs or is not available.

2.3 Assistive devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our services.

We will ensure that our staff are trained on the correct use of, and are familiar with, the various assistive devices used by our clients/caregivers with disabilities while accessing our services. We will also ensure that our staff are knowledgeable on how and when to assist a client/caregiver with an assistive device if requested by an individual.

2.4 Billing

We are committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our clients/caregivers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in large print or email format upon request.

We will answer any questions clients may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

2.5 Use of service animals and support persons

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, CCN shall ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from CCN's goods, services or facilities.

We will ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

We are committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. We will ensure that any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the premises together and will not be prevented from having access to their support person while on our premises.

We will require that a support person agrees to the rules or requirements that are specific to the services we provide as outlined in our program policies.

Where confidentiality is important because of the kinds of information being discussed, we will require the support person to sign a confidentiality agreement.

CCN may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if, after consulting with the person with a disability and considering the available evidence, CCN determines that,

(a) A support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises; and
(b) There is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and the health or safety of others on the premises.

If CCN requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the office premises, CCN will not charge a fee in respect of the support person's admission to the premises.

Whether or not a fee will be charged for a support person accompanying a client/caregiver with a disability will depend on the service/program being accessed. If a service/program is subject to a fee for a support person, we will inform the client/caregiver in advance of the event by either verbal or written notice. Any service requiring fees for support persons will be identified in our Program Policies. All fees are subject to change and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

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2.6 Accessible Transportation

Community Care Northumberland provides accessible transportation services in compliance with the applicable requirements of the *Integrated Accessible Standards* regulation (IASR). CCN vehicles adhere to all necessary and applicable technical requirements under the IASR.

Current information regarding accessibility equipment and features of our vehicles, routes, and services is made available to the public. This information is provided in an accessible format upon request. If the accessibility equipment on a vehicle is not functioning and equivalent service cannot be provided, CCN takes all reasonable steps to accommodate persons with disabilities and repair the equipment as soon as reasonably practicable.

In pursuit of providing accessible transportation, Community Care Northumberland:

- Deploys any lifting devices, ramps, or portable bridge plates upon request of an individual with a disability;
- Provides adequate time for individuals with disabilities to board, be secured, and exit the vehicle;
- Provides support to individuals with disabilities to board, be secured, or exit the vehicle upon request;
- Assists with the storage of mobility aids or devices used by individuals with disabilities; and
- Allows passengers with a disability to travel with a medical aid.

Information pertaining to the above is provided in an accessible format upon request.

Community Care Northumberland ensures that alternate fare payment options are available to passengers with disabilities, and that passengers with disabilities are not charged a higher fare to use transportation services. CCN does not charge a fare to a support person who is accompanying a person with a disability who requires a support person. Individuals with a disability who require a support person are responsible for demonstrating the need for a support person to accompany them or may be requested to have a support person by CCN upon booking.

2.7 Notice of temporary disruption

Community Care Northumberland will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people 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 at all public entrances, service counters on our premises, posted on our website, and through social media.

CCN shall prepare a document setting out the steps that will be taken in connection with a temporary disruption and, on request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.

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NOTICE OF DISRUPTION

Type of Disruption: _____

Expected _____or Unexpected _____

Reason for Disruption: _____

_____

Other Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

We apologize for any inconvenience.

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2.9 Design of Public Spaces

Community Care Northumberland will meet accessibility laws when designing, planning, selecting, or making major modifications to public spaces.

The Ontario Building Code includes provisions for barrier free design. The AODA and IASR also lay out standards that CCN must adhere to. Their purpose is to provide a minimum threshold for accessibility design. The AOPD also establishes requirements for service environments and their maintenance including emergency maintenance and service disruption procedures for accessible elements in public spaces.

CCN will ensure that space used for the provision of services and programs are accessible and where possible include;

- Outdoor paths or travel, like sidewalks, paved parking lot, ramps, stairs, curb ramps.
- Elevators
- Accessible washrooms
- Accessible off-street parking
- Service-related elements like counter and waiting areas
- Ensure subcontracts/landlords uphold regular property maintenance and property maintenance schedules.

EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING

3.1 Accessible Employment

Hiring

Accommodation is available from the beginning of the recruitment process. Information regarding the availability of accommodation is included in all job postings. Applicants selected to participate in an assessment or the selection process are informed that accommodation is available upon request. Where accommodation is requested, CCN consults with the applicant and provides or arranges for suitable accommodation that meets their individual needs. Successful applicants are made aware of CCN's policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when an offer of employment is made.

Accessible Workplace Information

Community Care Northumberland ensures that new employees are aware of the policies and supports available for employees with disabilities as soon as reasonably possible after beginning employment and that all employees are informed of any updates to existing policies.

Upon request, CCN provides or arranges for the provision of accessible formats and

supports for employees with disabilities regarding information needed to perform their job and other information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace. Individualized workplace emergency response information is also provided to an employee with a disability where necessary and with the consent of the employee. An employee who requires workplace information in an accessible format or with supports should inform their supervisor. CCN consults the employee making the request to determine the best way to provide the accessible format or support.

Community Care Northumberland has a Return to Work policy that provides an outline for any individual accommodation plans required for employees with disabilities. An employee with a disability who requires an individual accommodation plan should inform their supervisor. These plans include:

- Information regarding accessible formats and supports, where requested;

- Individualized workplace emergency response information, where necessary; If an employee receiving the workplace emergency response information requires assistance, and with the employee's consent, CCN shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by CCN to provide assistance to the employee. This information shall be provided as soon as practicable after the employer becomes aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

- CCN will review the individualized workplace emergency response information,
  - when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
  - when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and
  - when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

- Details of any other accommodation provided.
- P-HS-66 Return to Work Program is available upon request (admin@commcare.ca).

3.2 Training for staff

Community Care Northumberland will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf, and to all those who are involved in the development and approval of client service policies, practices and procedures.

The training provided will cover the following:

1. Review of the purposes of the AODA and requirements of the customer service standard;
2. Community Care Northumberland's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
3. Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with

various types of disabilities;

4. Instruction on how to interact with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
5. Instruction on how to use equipment or devices available at our premises, or that we provide otherwise, that may help people with disabilities access our services
6. Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing our services.

The training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable, during their orientation, or after they are assigned the applicable duties.

The training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

A ‘Record of Training’ will be kept in the employee’s personnel file.

3.3 Training for volunteers

Volunteers will be required to complete all required Accessibility Awareness training and a ‘Record of Training’ will be kept with their volunteer file.

3.4 Training for third party service providers

Agents or third parties hired by Community Care Northumberland who deal with the public during their work will provide proof of Accessibility Awareness training prior to their work for the agency.

3.4 Accessible Transportation Training

Community Care Northumberland provides all applicable employees and volunteers with accessible transportation training. Training addresses:

- Features of and the safe use of any CCN accessibility equipment;
- Acceptable modifications to procedures where required due to a temporary barrier or the failure of accessibility equipment; and
- Emergency preparedness and response procedures specifically for the safety of persons with disabilities.

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)
RECORD OF TRAINING

In accordance with the AODA, employees and volunteers are required to complete a training program on accessible customer service, as outlined in the Community Care Northumberland Accessible Standards Policy. The purpose of this training is to ensure that every person who deals with the public or third parties on behalf of CCN is able to provide excellent customer service to those with disabilities, as well as to help dispel myths, misconceptions, stereotypes and fears about people with disabilities. (The training will be offered by the agency or you may go online to complete the training on your own.) This training takes approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

The website address is:
http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/en/serve-ability/01.aspx

All employees and volunteers who have completed the training program are required to sign this form acknowledging that they have received and understood the instruction provided in the following areas:

- A review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standard.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device, service animal or support person.
- How to use the equipment or assistive devices available on the premises or that CCN otherwise provides that may help with the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing our goods and services.

If you are a volunteer, this form will be kept in your volunteer file. Employees will have the form stored in their personnel file.

Employee/Volunteer Name: _____

Employee/Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisors Name: _____

Supervisors Signature: _____ Date: _____

FEEDBACK

4.1 Feedback process

The ultimate goal of Community Care Northumberland is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving clients/caregivers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way Community Care Northumberland provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, by telephone, email or the completion of a feedback form. All feedback will be directed to the Chief Executive Officer. Clients/caregivers can expect to hear back within seven days.

CCN will ensure that these processes are accessible to persons with disabilities by providing or arranging for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request and, will notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communications supports with respect to the feedback process.

4.2 Problem Resolution

Complaints will be addressed according to the Client Comment, Complaint & Appeal Process (Policy No: PR-C-30) already established in Community Care Northumberland's Program Manual.

Customer Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting Community Care Northumberland. We value all of our clients and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit: _____

_____

Did we respond to your customer service needs today? ❑ YES ❑ NO

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

❑ YES ❑ SOMEWHAT ❑ NO (please explain below)

_____

Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

❑ YES ❑ SOMEWHAT ❑ NO (please explain below)

_____

Please add any other comments you may have: _____

_____

_____

Contact information (optional): _____

_____

Thank you, Management

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Record of Customer Feedback

Date Feedback received: _____

Name of Client (optional): _____

Details: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Action to Be Taken: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Staff Member: _____

Date: _____

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Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005

In our commitment to continually improve our service to those with disabilities, and in accordance with the AODA (2005), our **Accessible Standards Policy** is available upon request at all CCN office locations. We also welcome your feedback on the quality of service we provide to our valued clients with disabilities.

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