



Ontario Native Women's Association

Title:	AODA Compliance	Policy Number:	HR-013
Department:	General		
Approved by:	Board of Directors	Approval Date:	May, 2016

1. Purpose

- 1.1 In compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians Disability Act (AODA), the ONWA has an established plan, policies, practices and procedures on providing goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- 1.2 The ONWA is committed to complying with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005(AODA)* and all of the standards under it in order to create a barrier free Ontario. The ONWA will review its plan on a yearly basis.
- 1.3 The objective of this policy is to identify what the equal treatment provisions of the Ontario Human Rights Code, through the *AODA* and the Regulations, require as a minimum legal standard in program design and service delivery to persons with disabilities and addresses the following:
 - The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
 - The use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
 - The use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
 - The use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
 - Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
 - Training;
 - Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
 - Notice of availability and format of documents.

2. Scope

- 2.1 ONWA strives at all times to provide services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. It applies to ONWA staff, placement students, members and volunteers.
- 2.2 The *AODA* was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating a barrier-free Ontario by 2025. Under the *AODA*, the government will develop and enforce specific standards to improve accessibility across the province. The standards will set requirements in a number of key areas. Five sets of standards are planned, including:
 - Customer Service
 - Transportation

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- Information & Communication
- Built Environment
- Employment

2.3 The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Reg. 429/07 is the first standard that has been developed and officially made law. It sets out specific and general requirements to ensure goods and services are provided in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

3. Customer Service Plan

3.1. **Assistive Devices:** ONWA welcomes all persons to use their own personal assistive devices (eg. Walkers, canes, wheelchairs, note taking devices etc.), to give them equal opportunity to the general public with access to programs and services. We will ensure our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive device that may be used.

3.2. **Communication:** ONWA is committed to communicating with persons with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability as outlined in *Appendix A – How to Communicate with People with Different Types of Disabilities*. Communication is delivered verbally, in writing and through our website or social media.

3.3. **Service Animals:** We welcome person's with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals can be a guide dog (as defined in section 1 of the Blind Person's Act), used by the person for reasons relating to their disability, or confirmed by a letter from a medical practitioner confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability. Service animals were allowed on the parts of our premises that are open the public. In circumstances where there are health and safety concerns for other clients (eg. Allergies), the service animal will be allowed to stay in an adjacent program room.

3.4. **Support Persons:** A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

3.5. **Notice of Temporary Disruption:** In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers/clients with disabilities, ONWA will notify customers/clients promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available

3.6. **Staff Training:** ONWA will provide training to all employees, members, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf. This training will be provided to staff within six (6) months of hire. Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service standard.
- ONWA's accessible customer service plan.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various disabilities.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person

- How to use various equipment and devices, e.g. TTY, wheelchair lifts, etc., available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing ONWA's services.

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to ONWA's accessible customer service plan.

3.7. Accessibility and Employment: ONWA takes an anti-discriminatory approach to our governance, hiring and service delivery policies and procedures to eliminate barriers preventing equitable participation.

During the Recruitment Process

- All job applicants will be notified of the availability of accommodation during the recruitment process.
- ONWA will consult with job applicants who request accommodation to provide effective accommodation means during the recruitment process.

3.8. Accommodations for Employees:

- Any employees who require an accommodation plan for a disability needs to notify their supervisor as soon as reasonably possible. An accommodation plan will be developed by the supervisor together with their employee and Human Resources to ensure the best outcome possible. This plan is treated as confidential information and stored in the employee's personnel file. The employee can seek outside guidance if they so desire with respect to the development of the plan. If the plan is not approved for implementation, a written reply explaining why will be provided to the employee.
- An accommodation plan will be developed for an employee absent from work due to a disability and who returns to work
- It will be the responsibility of the employee to work with ONWA to ensure all reasonable requests i.e. medial documentation, are met to seek the best possible solutions.

3.9. Feedback Process: The ONWA AODA Plan and Policy will be posted in all public areas and on the ONWA website. Feedback about the delivery of services to persons with disabilities is welcomed, as it may identify areas that require change and assist in continuous service improvement. Such feedback may be by telephone, in person, in writing, on our website, or by delivering an electronic text via email, on diskette or otherwise. ONWA will make best efforts to provide a response in the same format in which the feedback was received. Feedback may be provided to:

Mail

Human Resources Manager
 Ontario Native Women's Association
 380 Ray Boulevard
 Thunder Bay, ON
 P7B 4E6

Telephone

1.807.625.8570
 1.800.667.0816 (toll free)

Fax

1.807.623.1104

E-Mail

hr@onwa.ca

Website

www.onwa.ca

www.onwa.ca

APPENDIX A
HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH PEOPLE WITH DIFFERENT DISABILITIES

Basic Principles:

1. If you see someone with a disability who you think may need help or even if you are not sure, simply ask them, "Can I help you?"
 - a. Treat everyone with respect
 - b. Be patient and take your time
 - c. Address the client/person, and not the support person if they are present

2. **Persons with physical disabilities (could be someone using a wheel chair, cane, walker, any other personal assistive device or even someone with limited mobility)**
 - a. If possible, ask them if you can sit with them to assist
 - b. Ask them for their permission before you touch any of their items or equipment
 - c. Ensure all equipment is out of their way if they are not using it

3. **Persons with hearing impairments/loss**
 - a. The person may be deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, or may also be oral deaf – unable to hear and may prefer to talk instead of using sign language
 - b. Being in a lighted area where the person can see your face and read your lips is preferred
 - c. Speak clearly to ensure lips can be read easily
 - d. As needed, attract the person's attention before speaking with wave of hand, gesture, written note
 - e. Move to a quieter area if they are using a hearing aid
 - f. Offer to communicate to them in writing

4. **Persons with vision loss (these persons may use a white cane or a guide dog (animal) or a support person may be with them)**
 - a. Some persons with vision loss may still have some sight
 - b. It's important to identify yourself when you approach them and speak directly to them
 - c. Ask them if they would like for you to read any printed material out to them
 - d. When giving them directions, it's important to be clear and precise and descriptive
 - e. Offer your elbow to guide them if you feel comfortable and if you think they may require assistance

5. **Persons with a service animal**
 - a. A service animal is not a pet. Avoid touching the animal or addressing them as they are working.
 - b. If you are unsure if the animal is a service animal, please ask the person.

6. Persons with a support person

- a. If you're not sure which person is the client, take your lead from the person speaking to you or simply ask.
- b. Speak directly to the client and not to the support person.

7. Persons who are deaf and blind

- a. Speak directly to the person and not their support person
- b. Follow guidance provided on this appendix regarding communicating with someone who is deaf and/or blind

8. Persons with speech or language impairments

- a. Try to ask simple questions that can be answered with a "yes" or a "no"
- b. Allow the person to finish what they are saying without interruption

9. Persons who have learning disabilities (eg. Dyslexia)

- a. Be patient and give them time to respond
- b. Try different way to communicate (i.e. in writing or verbally)

10. Persons who have an intellectual development disability

- a. Use simple, clear and plain language
- b. Given them one piece of information at a time

11. Persons who have mental health disabilities

- a. Treat them with respect and kindness just as you would anyone else
- b. Be confident, calm and reassuring
- c. If the person appears to be in a crisis, ask them how you can help them