

Understanding Accessibility at United Way Greater Toronto and Providing Accessible Service

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and what it means for you

United Way Greater Toronto supports the principles of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) and is deeply committed to meeting the requirements of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. We will work to prevent and remove barriers and to provide fair and effective accommodation for people with disabilities. Inclusiveness is one of our organizational values and promotion of integration and equity is reflected in all that we do. Our commitment to accessibility extends beyond the four walls of our organization and into the community, through partnering with and funding agencies who work to improve the lives of people with disabilities.

To help us meet the AODA's standards — and to ensure that at United Way we continue to service our community in an accessible way — we're asking that you read and then follow the customer service standards outlined below. We also have a responsibility to inform you about how United Way Greater Toronto is meeting other standards of the AODA and how the Ontario Human Rights Code relates to people with disabilities. Please click this link and review the brochure about [Disability and Human Rights](http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights-brochure) at <http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/disability-and-human-rights-brochure>.

What we're doing to comply with the AODA

- Providing written documentation of all our policies, practices and procedures that foster accessible customer service
- Notifying people that all written documentation related to accessible customer service is available upon request
- Making sure our website and all written customer service documentation is in a format that is more accessible to people with disabilities
- Offering customer service training to all staff, contractors and volunteers who provide services to the public or third parties on our behalf
- Providing training to all staff and volunteers on relevant Standards that are part of the Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation and how the Ontario Human Rights Code relates to people with disabilities
- Making available on our website our [commitment to accessibility](#) and our multi-year [accessibility plan](#) that outlines how United Way Greater Toronto is taking steps to prevent and remove barriers to accessibility and how we will meet the requirements of the regulation

What it means for you

The two standards that apply to your role are the Information and Communication Standard and the Customer Service Standard. The Information and Communication Standard is about how we create, provide, and receive information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities. The Customer Service Standard is about how we provide the best possible and most accessible service to everyone.

What you need to know about the Information and Communication Standard

The Information and Communication Standard means that United Way Greater Toronto must:

- provide information and communications in an accessible manner to people with disabilities upon request at no additional cost
- consult with the person to determine their accessibility needs
- determine the most appropriate way to communicate according to the accessibility needs of an individual and United Way Greater Toronto's capability to deliver

Providing alternate formats and communication supports can include:

- reading written information to a person directly
- providing large print or text transcripts of audio or visual information
- using handwritten notes
- ensuring information is written in plain language
- formatting electronic documents to be accessible to screen readers

In circumstances where we do not directly or indirectly control information, technology is not available or information is lost when it is converted, we may not be able to provide an alternative. Even in these circumstances, we are expected to provide an explanation about why we cannot accommodate and a summary of the information.

The Information and Communication Standard also applies to our website. Under this standard, we need to ensure our website conforms to international accessibility guidelines. Our website, redesigned in 2014, provides a level of accessibility that exceeds compliance by ensuring that content is easily read by screen readers and other devices and allows the user to navigate efficiently to read only what they may be interested in reading.

As always, it is important for us at United Way to invite feedback from everyone. Under the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, we



established a customer service feedback process for receiving and responding to feedback about how we provide goods or services to people with disabilities. Under the Standard for Information and Communication, we need to ensure that every other feedback mechanism in the organization meets individual accessibility needs. That means if we send you a volunteer feedback survey, it needs to be accessible or we need to provide an alternative way to respond.

What we're doing to provide more accessible customer service

At United Way Greater Toronto, we're committed to ensuring all staff, volunteers and other constituents have equal access to our events and resources. We offer:

- Accessible documents on our website, Unitedwaygt.org, which are available in different downloadable formats, including a list of helpful tools for accessing online information
- A TTY line for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech-impaired who do not use a traditional telephone. Our TTY number is 416-359-2083
- Spoken language - signed language interpreters by request for meetings and events
- Automatic door openers that can be obtained from our Human Capital department, helping people access meeting rooms and offices at 26 Wellington Street East, Toronto. Offices at 80 Centurian Drive, Markham are accessible through the parking garage. Please call staff to arrange access to the parking garage. Offices at 90 Burnhamthorpe Road West, Mississauga is accessible.
- Accommodation for people who require the assistance of service animals or support persons. All service animals, such as Canine Vision Dog Guides, Hearing Ear Dog Guides, Seizure Response Dog Guides are welcome in all United Way facilities open to the public. In the rare instance that we can't provide access to a service animal or support person, we will offer other accommodations or an alternate meeting time

Doing your part to provide accessible customer service

As we continue to meet the AODA's standards at United Way Greater Toronto, we're asking that you help us by providing positive and proactive customer service to people with disabilities. United Way relies on the services you provide to help us carry out our mission.

Please review each of the following sections carefully, noting the action items you can take to ensure you're providing accessible customer service.

Meeting the Accessible Customer Service Standard

When interacting and communicating with people with disabilities, the best approach is to start by asking how you can best communicate with them.

Here are some leading practices for you to consider when interacting and communicating with people who have disabilities:

Practising good etiquette

- Be patient. Don't interrupt or finish someone's sentences
- Don't make assumptions about what a person can do
- Use plain language
- Provide one piece of information at a time
- Try to provide information in a way that takes into account the person's disability. For example, some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math

Interacting with people who have support people, service animals, or assistive devices

- Speak directly to the person, not to his or her support person
- Avoid touching or addressing service animals — they are working and need to pay attention at all times
- Don't touch assistive devices, such as canes or wheelchairs, without permission

Providing customer service to people who are deaf or have hearing loss

- Attract a person's attention before speaking. For example, try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand
- Ensure you are in a well-lit area where a person can see your face. Don't cover your mouth or turn away when speaking, as some people who are deaf or have hearing loss will use speechreading (lip reading) as part of the way they communicate
- Reduce background noise or move to a quieter area
- Ask if another method of communicating would be easier. For example, use a pen and paper

Providing customer service to people with vision loss



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- Don't assume that a person with vision loss can't see you. Many people who have low vision still have some sight
- Identify yourself when you approach a person with vision loss and speak directly to him or her. For example, you can ask if he or she would like you to read any printed material out loud
- Be precise and descriptive when providing directions or instructions
- Offer your elbow to guide someone with vision loss

Providing customer service to people with physical disabilities

- Sit when speaking to someone who uses a wheelchair so you are able to make eye contact at the same level
- If you have permission to move a person's wheelchair, don't leave him or her in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors
- Don't assume that a person with a speech impairment has another disability

Providing customer service to people with mental health challenges

- Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else

Questions or comments?

Do you have questions or comments about this document?
Start by contacting your United Way staff partner or manager.

Do you want to learn more about the AODA?
Please visit accessson.ca

Do you want to learn more about AODA and the Ontario Human Rights Code?
Please visit ohrc.on.ca/en/learning/working-together-code-and-aoda

Do you have a specific question about United Way Greater Toronto's commitment to accessibility?
You can call 416-777-1444, TTY 416-359-2083 or contact us on our feedback page at www.unitedwaygt.org/contact-us