

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

1 POLICY STATEMENT

This policy addresses the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA; Government of Ontario 2016), the goal of which is to make Ontario accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. The *Customer Service Standards* (Ontario Regulation 165/16 under the AODA; Government of Ontario 2016) have been created to ensure that goods and services are accessible to all Ontarians, and that persons with disabilities are treated with respect, dignity, and equality.

This policy applies to the provision of goods and services to the public or other third parties, not to the goods themselves. All goods and services provided by Matrix Solutions Inc. (Matrix) shall follow the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.

2 OUR COMMITMENT

Matrix is committed to ensuring equal access and participation, and treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and will do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility, and meeting accessibility requirements under the AODA and the *Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19* (Government of Ontario 2021). It is our firm conviction that our culture values diversity and inclusivity, as these are critical to the success of our business. Our commitment involves creating and sustaining an environment wherein unique differences are valued, and employees are empowered to contribute to their full potential in achieving superior business results. Our philosophy extends to all stakeholders including employees, partners, suppliers, and customers.

3 DEFINITIONS

Accessible means obtainable, usable, readable, audible, visible, understandable, clear, able to be entered and exited, etc. To be accessible to all people, a variety of accessibility plans are necessary. Ensuring inclusive practices will ensure that all goods and services can be accessed by a larger audience.

Assistive Device is a device, tool, technology, or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities such as moving, communicating, or lifting. Personal assistive devices could include a walker, scooter, wheelchair, cane, hearing aids, magnification, or specialized learning or communication software, communication board, etc.

Disability, as defined by the AODA and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, refers to the following:

- 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 impairment, deafness or hearing impairment (inclusive of partial, total, or fluctuating hearing loss), muteness or speech impairment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or sighted guide for persons with visual impairment or total blindness, or on a wheelchair or other remedial or assistive device,

- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*

A guide dog is a highly trained working dog that has been trained as a guide for a person with visual impairment at one of the facilities listed in Ontario Regulation 58 under the *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, to provide mobility, safety, and increased independence for people who are blind.

Service animal, as reflected in Ontario Regulation 165/16, is a service animal trained to provide service 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 his or her disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- the person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Person means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her to help with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs; or with access to goods or services.

4 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

In accordance with the *AODA Customer Service Standards*, this policy addresses the following:

- The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities
- The Use of Assistive Devices
- The Use of Guide Dogs and Service Animals
- The Use of Support Persons
- Notice of Service Disruptions
- Customer Feedback
- Training

5 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STANDARDS

Matrix will make every reasonable effort to ensure that its policies, practices, and procedures are consistent with the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity by doing the following:

- ensuring that all customers receive the same value and quality
- allowing customers with disabilities to do things in their own ways and at their own pace when accessing goods and services as long as this does not present a safety risk
- using alternative methods when possible to ensure that customers with disabilities have access to the same services, in the same place, and in a similar manner
- taking into account individual needs when providing goods and services
- consulting with the person with a disability to determine the method of communication that works for them and communicating in a manner that takes into account the customer's disability

6 THE USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES

Persons with disabilities may use their own assistive devices as required when accessing goods or services provided by Matrix.

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 of goods and services. For example, where elevators are not present and where an individual requires assistive devices for the purposes of mobility, service will be provided in a location that meets the needs of the customer.

7 THE USE OF GUIDE DOGS AND SERVICE ANIMALS

Matrix welcomes people with disabilities and their service animals. A customer with a disability 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. If the animal is excluded by law, Matrix will provide another means of accommodating the person.

There may be rare circumstances where, for reasons of the health and safety of another person, allowing a guide dog or service animal needs to be considered (e.g., if a person is allergic to animals and is adversely affected if they are near the guide dog or service animal). In such circumstances, we will discuss and consult with the person accompanied by the guide dog or service animal, and alternate measures will be made available to enable the person with a disability to access the goods or service.

The use and safety of the guide dog or service animal is the responsibility of the person with a disability. Matrix is aware that guide dogs and service animals are usually well trained and well behaved. In the unlikely event that this is not the case, guide dogs and service animals may be removed from Matrix's premises after discussion with the owner for the following reasons:

- The guide dog or service animal displays disruptive or aggressive behaviour, such as growling, or other threatening or aggressive behaviour. PLEASE NOTE: If the guide dog is a seizure response dog, this is an expected response from the animal when assisting the person with a disability.

- The guide dog or service animal causes damage to any person or property.
- The guide dog or service animal shows poor health, such as a contagious disease with the potential to be spread by the animal to others.

8 THE USE OF SUPPORT PERSONS

Matrix welcomes people with disabilities who are accompanied by a Support Person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person will be allowed to enter public areas of the premise to which they would normally have access with his or her Support Person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person be prevented from having access to his or her Support Person while on the premises.

When addressing a person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person, employees will communicate directly with the person with a disability. If confidential/personal information is being exchanged and the person with a disability requests to discuss the information in private, the request will be accommodated, and the Support Person will be asked to wait in another area.

A Support Person is required to abide by the same rules and regulations as any other person on the premises. For example, both the person with a disability and his/her Support Person may be expected to sign-in in a log-book when entering the premises.

9 NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

Service disruptions may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the control or knowledge of Matrix. In the event of any temporary disruptions to facilities or services that customers with disabilities rely on to access or use Matrix's goods or services, Matrix will notify customers promptly, and reasonable efforts will be made to provide advance notice whenever possible. In some circumstances (e.g., unplanned temporary disruptions), advance notice may not be possible.

Notices will be placed in a conspicuous place on the premise and in a format that considers the types of disabilities of persons who use the disrupted service. For example, a notice of disruption for an elevator will be placed at a height that would be at the line of vision for an individual using a wheelchair. At an accessible location, this 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.

10 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

Matrix is committed to providing fair and equal access to our premises, facilities, and services for everyone, including persons with disabilities. Matrix has a process for receiving and responding to feedback and recognizes that feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Feedback or complaints about the delivery of goods and services may be submitted in person, by telephone/teletypewriter, in writing, electronically, or through other methods. Upon request, Matrix will provide alternate formats for receiving and responding to feedback to ensure the process takes the individual's accessibility needs into account and is accessible to persons with disabilities. Please direct your feedback to Matrix via the contact details listed in Section 15.

Matrix will respond as soon as reasonably possible acknowledging the receipt of feedback and outlining the action(s) to be taken. Responses may take up to a maximum of ten (10) business days.

11 TRAINING

Matrix will ensure appropriate levels of training to all employees, volunteers, agents, and others who interact with the public on behalf of Matrix, as well as those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices, and procedures.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable and on an ongoing basis in respect of any changes, in a manner that is consistent with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 165/16. Matrix will keep records of training that include the dates on which training occurred and the number of persons trained.

As per Ontario Regulation 165/16, regardless of the format, training will cover the following:

- a review of the purpose of the AODA
- a review of the requirements of the AODA *Customer Service Standards*
- instructions on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities, including those who:
 - ✦ use assistive devices
 - ✦ require the assistance of a guide dog or service animal
 - ✦ require the use of a Support Person
- instructions on how to use equipment or devices that are available at our premises or that we provide that may help people with disabilities
- instructions on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing services
- Matrix policies, procedures, and practices pertaining to providing accessible customer service to customers with disabilities

12 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STANDARDS

Matrix is committed to meeting the communication needs of people with disabilities. We will communicate in ways that take individual needs into account. We will notify the public that accessible formats and communication supports will be made available upon request. While respecting individual independence, we will consult with people with disabilities to determine their requirements for information and communication. We will work with them to ensure accessible formats and supports are provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost.

13 MODIFICATIONS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

Matrix is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Matrix retains the right to amend or change this policy at any time; however, any such changes will be made only after considering the impact on people with disabilities.

14 REFERENCES

Government of Ontario. 2021. *Ontario Human Rights Code*. R.S.O. 1990, c. H. 19. Consolidation Period from April 19, 2021. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90h19>

Government of Ontario. 1990. *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, R.S.O. 1990, c. B. 7. Consolidation Period from December 31, 1990. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90b07>

Government of Ontario. 2005. *Blind Persons' Rights Act*, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 58 Guide Dogs. Consolidation Period from December 9, 2005. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/900058>

Government of Ontario. 2016. *Integrated Accessibility Standards, Part IV.2 Customer Service Standards*. Ontario Regulation 165/16. Filed June 6, 2016. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/r16165>

Government of Ontario. 2016. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*. S.O. 2005, c. 11. Consolidation Period from April 19, 2016. <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/05a11>

15 FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information on this policy, please contact us:

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