

AODA-PP: Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities Policy

Department: AODA Public Policies	Effective Date: 01/01/2023
Section: Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities	Review Date: 01/01/2025

PURPOSE

Noojmowin Teg Health Centre (NTHC) is dedicated to the individuals we serve. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Noojmowin Teg Health Centre provides accessible customer service to individuals with disabilities in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*.

POLICY

- 1.0 Noojmowin Teg Health Centre is dedicated to ensuring accessible customer service for individuals with disabilities. Rooted in the principles of understanding, acceptance, and inclusion as mandated by the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005, we are committed to identifying, removing, and preventing barriers to access for persons with disabilities.
- 2.0 To uphold this commitment, Noojmowin Teg Health Centre will establish a Multi-Year Accessibility Plan outlining strategies to address barriers in areas such as Customer Service, Transportation, Built Environment, Information and Communications, and Employment, in compliance with AODA and its regulations.
- 3.0 Any concerns or inquiries regarding accessibility should be directed to info@noojmowin-teg.ca or other relevant personnel as defined in the Customer Feedback Policy and Customer Feedback Procedure.
- 4.0 All policies, procedures, and accessibility plans are made available on the Noojmowin Teg Health Centre website and can be provided in alternative formats upon request to accommodate individuals and their families.
- 5.0 Individuals with disabilities are entitled to privacy. Noojmowin Teg Health Centre is obligated to maintain the confidentiality of personal health information, ensuring it is not disclosed or accessible to others, including support persons, without authorization.

PROCEDURE

Use of Service Animals

- i. People with disabilities who utilize a service animal have the right to access Noojmowin Teg Health Centre with their animal and have it accompanied them.
- ii. Service animals are typically identifiable by wearing a harness or service vest, which informs the public that they are performing essential tasks.
- iii. Any animal that poses a direct threat to the health and safety of others, or displays repeated disruptive behavior, may be denied access to Noojmowin Teg Health Centre. In such instances, our employees will ensure alternative measures are available to facilitate the person with a disability in obtaining services.

Use of Assistive Devices and Support Persons

- i. Noojmowin Teg Health Centre is committed to facilitating the use of assistive devices by individuals with disabilities when accessing our care and services.
- ii. Individuals with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person are entitled to have access to that support person while utilizing the goods and services offered by Noojmowin Teg.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

- i. Should services become temporarily unavailable or are expected to be so, Noojmowin Teg Health Centre will issue public notification.
- ii. This notice will contain details regarding the cause of the disruption, its expected duration, and any alternative facilities or services that may be accessible during this time.

Training for Accessibility

- i. Training on the accessibility standards and providing customer service to individuals with disabilities will be mandatory for all employees and volunteers at Noojmowin Teg Health Centre. Various methods will be utilized, such as e-learning, booklets, in-service education sessions, new employee orientations, and any other training deemed suitable based on individual job descriptions.
- ii. Training will include:
 - Understanding the purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.
 - Familiarization with the requirements outlined in the accessibility standards and the Ontario Human Rights Code.
 - Learning effective methods to interact and communicate with individuals with various types of disabilities.
 - Understanding how to engage with individuals who use assistive devices, service animals, or support persons.
 - Acquiring knowledge on accessing and utilizing internal resources or devices available at Noojmowin Teg Health Centre's premises or elsewhere to aid in providing goods or services to individuals with disabilities.
 - Knowing the appropriate steps to take if a person with a disability encounters difficulty in accessing goods and services at Noojmowin Teg.
 - Understanding Noojmowin Teg's policies, practices, and procedures regarding providing access to individuals with disabilities and all components of this policy.

Feedback

- i. Channels for providing feedback and receiving responses are available through email, telephone, event management systems, or in-person interactions.

Notice of Availability of Documents

- i. Public notification is given that documents mandated by the Accessibility Act standards are accessible upon request in various formats.

Reporting

- i. Uphold policies and procedures to showcase adherence to Accessibility standards.
- ii. Present an annual accessibility report, encompassing an accessibility plan in accordance with the Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), to the executive team.
- iii. Lodge an annual accessibility report with the Ontario Government.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

- i. Offer emergency procedures and public safety information to the public in accessible formats upon request.
- ii. Provide personalized emergency response details to employees who self-disclose disabilities. Emergency evacuation strategies for such employees will be communicated to their manager and designated peer assistants as applicable.

Transportation

- i. If relevant, Noojmowin Teg Health Centre will assist in arranging accessibility transportation services upon request.

Procuring and/or Acquiring Goods and Services

- i. Noojmowin Teg Health Centre integrates accessibility standards into the procurement, acquisition, or design of goods and services.

Internet and Web Content

- i. Starting from 2014, all newly developed internet websites and web content adhere to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, Level A standards, with the exception of live captioning and pre-recorded audio description.

Recruitment

- i. Notification is provided to employees and the public regarding the availability of accommodations for applicants with disabilities during the recruitment process.
- ii. Upon selection, applicants are informed that accommodations are available upon request.

Accommodation

- i. Employees are briefed on policies designed to assist colleagues with disabilities, including provisions for job accommodations.
- ii. Tailored accommodation plans are devised for employees with disabilities.
- iii. Return-to-work plans are formulated for individuals who have been on leave due to a disability.

- iv. Accessibility requirements and accommodation plans are considered when redeploying employees with disabilities.

Performance Management and Career Development

- i. During the performance management process and in facilitating career development and advancement for staff with disabilities, the accessibility requirements and individual accommodation plans will be taken into consideration.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will:

- Review existing policies and ensure alignment with AODA principles.
- Uphold core principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equity.

Program Managers will:

- Implement and monitor compliance with Accessibility Standards.
- Address accommodation requests from individuals with disabilities.
- Ensure employee awareness of accessibility standards and backup accommodation procedures.

Human Resources will:

- Review and update policies and training related to accessibility.
- Ensure Human Resources practices align with Accessibility Standards.

Health Care Providers, Employees, & NTHC Affiliates will:

- Participate in mandatory education on Accessibility Standards.
- Report feedback from patients/customers regarding accessibility to relevant managers.

Clients will:

- Communicate disability-related assistance needs to Noojmowin Teg Health Centre employees.

DEFINITIONS

Accommodations: Measures undertaken to make facilities and services accessible to individuals with disabilities, including provision of assistive devices or services, policy adjustments, and alternative participation methods.

Adaptive or Assistive Devices: Tools and equipment, such as computers or communication devices, designed to facilitate access to information or services for individuals with disabilities, along with mobility aids and service animals.

Barrier: Any obstacle that hinders the full participation of a person with a disability in society, including physical, architectural, information or communication, attitudinal, policy, or procedural barriers.

Disability: Encompasses all disabilities protected under the Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, including physical, mental, learning, and sensory impairments, as well as conditions such as mental disorders and injuries.

Service Animal: An animal trained to assist a person with a disability, with recognition criteria outlined in the policy.

Support Person: An individual who accompanies a person with a disability to assist with communication, mobility, or access to goods and services.

REFERENCES AND RELATED POLICY

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)

Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)