



## **CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY STATEMENT: SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Definition**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) has been developed to create mandatory accessibility standards that identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities. These standards apply to all private and public sector organizations across Ontario.

### **Application**

This policy applies to all NCO Group, Inc. (NCO) employees who interact with the public and those specifically designated to provide services to consumers in Ontario and/or, by contract to act, from time to time on behalf of NCO.

### **Policy Statement**

NCO is committed to ensuring that our services are provided in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. NCO is also committed to providing people with disabilities the opportunity to access our services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other consumers. NCO further commits to ensuring that our environment is maintained free from discrimination and harassment as prohibited by the Ontario Human Rights Code (1990), and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) (AODA). This commitment is upheld by NCO's Equal Employment Opportunity/Employment Equity policy and our Harassment and Unprofessional Conduct policy.

### **NCO's Responsibilities**

- Provide practices and procedures for all employees in order to provide services to people with disabilities;
- Provide training for all employees on how to service and interact with people with disabilities;
- Make our buildings, workspaces, and meeting places accessible to visitors and employees with disabilities; and,
- Make information about NCO's services, policies and procedures related to persons with disabilities accessible.

### **Providing Services To People With Disabilities**

NCO will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

#### 1. Communication

NCO employees will receive training on how to interact and communicate with Ontario consumers with disabilities guided by the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.

## 2. Use of Animals, Support Persons and Assistive Devices

NCO will ensure that the access, use, and benefit of goods and services are not compromised for those with disabilities who require assistive devices or those who are accompanied by a service animal/support person. Service animals, such as – but not limited to – guide dogs, hearing dogs, seizure response dogs, or other certified service animals, are welcomed at all NCO facilities, both in secured areas as well as areas opened to the public.

When an employee is in need of an accommodation, the Corporate Workers' Compensation & Leaves Administration Department will review the request prior to approving. Once approved, the Corporate Workers' Compensation & Leaves Administration Department will finalize the accommodation with the location and the employee.

Those employees with disabilities shall use or benefit from goods or services through the use of company provided assistive devices on NCO premises. Exceptions may occur in situations where NCO has determined that the device may pose a risk to the privacy of those conducting business with the organization. In secure areas, employees will be accommodated by providing an alternative where possible.

NCO will ensure that all employees are trained as required to use assistive devices available on our premises. When certain expertise is required, specially trained personnel will assist.

Consumers, employees and potential employees with disabilities are welcome to be accompanied by a support person when on NCO premises that is open to the public or other third parties. At no point will an individual in need of a support person be denied access to that support person or alternative measure. Those in need of a support person will be responsible for providing their own support person. Exceptions may occur in situations where NCO has determined that the support person may pose a risk to the privacy of those conducting business with the organization

## 3. Documents and Information Sharing

Consumers and employees with disabilities will be offered alternative communication formats that will meet their needs as promptly as possible.

### **Billing**

In accordance with NCO's commitment to accessibility, consumers have the option to have their written communication provided in a format which best suits their needs.

### **Notice of Temporary Disruption**

In the event that a planned, temporary service disruption occurs that would limit a person with a disability from accessing NCO facilities or their goods or services, NCO will make the disruption known to consumers through their website, or voicemail. Notices will include reasons for the disruption, its anticipated duration, or alternative offerings.

### **Employee Training**

NCO will provide AODA customer service training to all employees, contractors and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Training is available in multiple formats, including, but not limited to, face to face instruction, a documented training module, and other formats as requested. Training using accessible formats is an option.

Training topics will include:

- The purpose of AODA (2005), and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with individuals with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or support person;
- What to do if an individual with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods or services at NCO; and,
- Current policies, practices, and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

### **Feedback Process**

NCO's goal is to meet the needs of our consumers and employees while accommodating the unique requirements of those with disabilities. Feedback may be provided by emailing [AODA.inquiries@ncogroup.com](mailto:AODA.inquiries@ncogroup.com), calling 1-800-227-4000, or by visiting one of our locations (Protocol Global Solutions Locations: <http://protocolglobalsolutions.com/Locations/> NCO Locations: <http://www.ncogroup.com/Locations/Locations.html>). A prompt response will be made to all inquiries.