



The Canada Homestay Network

Policy: Accessible Customer Service

Preamble

Canada Homestay Network (CHN) is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. This includes providing services that people with disabilities can use and benefit from equally and in a manner that respects their dignity and independence.

Our policy is based on:

- respect for the dignity and independence of people with disabilities
- equal opportunity for people with disabilities to access, use and benefit from our services or programs with the same quality and timeliness that others receive
- service integration in relation to services provided to the broader public, unless alternative ways of providing the service or program are necessary for equal opportunity

The standards and rules on providing accessible customer service are set out in the [Accessibility Standards for Customer Service \(Ontario Regulation 429/07\)](#).

Policy

1. Assistive devices

We will ensure that our staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by students or hosts with disabilities while accessing our services.

2. Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

3. Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. As none of our home offices are open to the public, our policy concerning service animals is limited. Nevertheless, we are committed to allowing students with service animals to access pet-friendly homestays.

4. Support persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them in homestay. The same standard homestay fees will be charged for support persons living in homestay. We will notify customers of this by posting a notice on our website.

5. Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to online web services for customers with disabilities CHN will notify customers 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. The notice will be made publicly available on our website.

6. Training

CHN will provide accessible customer service training to employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on our behalf. Training will also be provided to people involved in the development of policies, plans, practices and procedures related to the provision of our goods and services.

Staff will be trained on Accessible Customer Service within three months after being hired. Training will be delivered via a recorded webinar session that will include:

- an overview of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- CHN's plan related to the customer service standard
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing CHN's goods and services

Staff will also be trained when changes are made to our accessible customer service plan.

7. Feedback process

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way CHN provides goods and services to people with disabilities can provide feedback in person, by phone, in writing, by email, or on disk. All feedback, including complaints, will be handled by the Regional Director for that area. Customers can expect to hear back within 21 days.

8. Notice of availability

CHN will notify the public that our documents related to accessible customer service, including this document, are available upon request by posting a notice on our website.

9. Modifications to this or other policies

Any policy, practice or procedure of CHN that does not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is available in an alternate format on request.

Ce document est également disponible en français.