

Policy Section: Customer Service

Policy No:

Subject: Accessibility Standard for Customer Service

Effective Date: January 1, 2012

Approved by: Board of Directors

Revision/Review Date: September 2024

CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING IN TORONTO (C.I.L.T.), INC.

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARD FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

Purpose of Policy

The purpose of this Policy is to set out the accessibility standard and CILT expectations for customer service in respect to provision of goods and services to persons with a disability.

The standard is mandatory under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. (O. Reg. 191/11).

All public sector organizations which provide goods and services to customers in Ontario are required to comply.

The Policy is created based on principles of independence, dignity, integration and equal opportunity.

Objectives of Policy

CILT is run by persons with a disability for persons with a disability. We are committed to providing excellent customer service to people in all communities.

The objectives of the Customer Service Policy are:

- To ensure that services can be provided in ways that accommodate the individual's disability needs; and
- To ensure that our staff are knowledgeable about accessible customer service best practices.

What this Policy Does Not Cover: This Policy does **not** cover decision with respect to the provision of services or funding under CILT's programs.

Complaints about CILT's services and/or programs will be addressed according to CILT's Service Complaint and Appeals Policy, available online at <http://cilt.ca/policies.aspx> or by contacting us.

CILT's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

1. Serving People with Disabilities

1.1 Providing Goods and Services

Centre for Independent Living in Toronto (C.I.L.T.) Inc. is committed to excellence in serving all consumers, including people with disabilities.

1.2 Assistive devices

We welcome the use of various assistive devices for accessing our goods or services. Where possible, CILT staff will assist onsite with available assistive technology. Consumers are also welcome to use their own assistive technology to access CILT's services.

1.3 Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability by inquiring about their communication needs and seeking to provide accommodations or alternate communication formats when needed.

1.4 Service animals

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public.

1. All service animals must be visually recognized by a harness or vest.
2. If not visually recognisable, the person must carry with them a letter from a recognized medical professional indicating that the animal is needed to support them. (a list of medical professionals can be found in the Application section of the Customer Service section of the IASR.)
3. The person is responsible for the behaviour of their animal while on CILT premises.
4. If a service animal is not allowed in a particular part of CILT's premises due to a legal reason, then alternative means of accessing goods and services must be provided by CILT.

Note: The same requirements exist for emotional support animals.

1.5 Support persons

Support persons are welcome in our office. They will not be charged for accompanying a person with a disability to any CILT events or workshops.

We will notify consumers of this through a notice posted on our premises, on our website and through CILT's social media channels.

2. Notice of temporary disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for consumers with CILT, we will notify consumers within 24 hours of any planned service disruption and within 30 minutes of any unplanned service disruption.

The notification of disruption will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative goods, facilities or services, if available.

The notification will be posted:

- On the home page of CILT's website (CILT.ca), on our social media channels and when possible by email;
- At CILT's main entrance (on the door and on the notice board at the reception area), both in print and in braille; and
- In the greeting message on the phone system.

Those scheduled for an appointment will be notified in advance by phone and/or e-mail.

Notice period expectation:

- For planned events such as office closure on statutory holidays – notification will be posted at least 3 business days before the event;
- For unplanned disruption which lasts for a substantial period of time (for instance, CILT website or phone system is down for 4 hours or more) – CILT will make reasonable efforts to provide notice during the disruption.

3. Staff Training on Accessibility Standards in Customer Service

CILT will provide training to all full-time, part-time and contracted staff, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf.

Training will be conducted to:

- existing staff and volunteers on an ongoing basis; and
- new staff/volunteers within 2 weeks of hiring. The Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation will be included as part of orientation.

Training topics include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005;
- CILT's requirements of 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;

-How to use the TTY and braille printer (if necessary); and

-What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing CILT's goods and services.

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

Training Tools include a combination of:

- Electronic or printed materials; and

- E-learning course: "How May I Help You? Welcoming Customers with Disabilities", developed by the Government of Ontario and the Retail Council of Canada and/or "Access Forward" training by the Government of Ontario.

A training log including who is trained on what and when will be kept to ensure all staff and volunteers are up-to-date with the legislation and CILT's expectations on accessible customer service.

4. Feedback Process

CILT welcomes consumer feedback which helps to continuously improve its customer service to people with a disability. A feedback form can be found online at www.cilt.ca/feedback.aspx. Completed forms can be returned to CILT in person or by mail to 365 Bloor Street East, Suite 902, Toronto, ON M4W 3L4; by fax to 416-599-3555; or by email to cilt@cilt.ca.

All feedback will be forwarded to and handled by the Enquiry Generalist. Consumers can expect to hear back within 5 working days.

All feedback will be logged for future reference and/or review for strategic improvement.

5. Modifications to this or other policies

Any CILT policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

6. Notification of this Policy

A copy of this policy is posted on <http://cilt.ca/policies.aspx>.

The policy will be publicized under What's New and under the Accessibility tab of the CILT website and in the CILT newsletter 'In the Stream'.

7. Accessible Formats

This policy is available online 24/7 in electronic format (pdf or text).

Other accessible formats (such as braille, large print, etc.) are available upon request.