



Accessibility Standards

A Guide For Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation
Team Members, Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders

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Introduction

The Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation (WEEDC) is committed to delivering exceptional service to all our clients, suppliers and stakeholders so that each individual finds value in all the services provided by WEEDC. Providing the highest standard of service accessibility to clients, suppliers and stakeholders with disabilities is one of our primary goals and objectives at the Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation.

This information booklet has been created to explain WEEDC's accessibility standards for all our Team Members, Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders. The following pages detail procedures for service delivery for individuals with guide animals, support persons, personal assistive devices, and measures to follow during a service disruption.

Through every interaction, WEEDC strives to ensure those with disabilities receive the specialized service and access they require to accommodate their specific needs.

In accordance with the requirements of the *Accommodation of Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* and the *Human Rights Code*, all WEEDC Team Members will offer reasonable assistance to a client, supplier or stakeholder with a disability, or permit that assistance be provided by a support person accompanying the client, supplier or stakeholder.

When a client, supplier or stakeholder accepts assistance from a Team Member, assistance will be provided to the satisfaction of the client, supplier or stakeholder and at minimal risk. All Team Members are aware of accessibility options within the facility, and will seek guidance from their Leader if there are any questions or concerns they are unable to address.

General

Windsor Essex Economic Development Corporation's (WEEDC) principles for providing services to clients, suppliers and stakeholders with disabilities are:

Dignity: WEEDC respects the dignity of a person with a disability. The same exceptional service is offered to all individuals, regardless of what their differences might be.

Independence: Those who may move or speak more slowly are given an opportunity to participate. A WEEDC Team Member will not hurry or take over a task for a client, supplier or stakeholder with a disability if they prefer to handle it themselves.

Integration: People with disabilities fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same manner as others. Alternative measures will be deployed as needed to provide services to people with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity: People with disabilities are provided with the same service, chances, options, benefits and results, in the same manner and of the same quality as others.

Disability Defined

According to the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, disability can be defined as:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury and any degree of paralysis or amputation;
- lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal, or in a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability, or 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.

Accessibility can often be achieved in a variety of different ways: what works best for one client, supplier or stakeholder may change for another.

Team Member Communication Standards

When communicating to a person with a disability, Team Members:

- Speak normally and clearly.
- Are patient; service may take longer to provide.
- Ask clients, suppliers and stakeholders if they require assistance.
- Tailor their communication style in a manner that takes the client's, supplier's or stakeholder's disability into account.
- Communicate directly to the person with a disability rather than through a companion or sign language interpreter.
- Are sensitive of the words they use. For example, "people with disabilities" or "person with a disability" should be used rather than "the disabled" or "handicapped."
- Ask clients, suppliers or stakeholders with speech difficulties to repeat themselves if they are not understood.
- Uphold WEEDC's highest standards of service.

Personal Assistive Devices

A personal assistive device is any product or service that can help an individual carry out daily activities with greater ease and independence.

Personal assistive devices are typically:

- Personal mobility aids (i.e. wheelchairs, walkers and canes).
- Communication aids (i.e. hearing, reading and remember aids).
- Life supportive aids (i.e. oxygen tanks).

All personal assistive devices are permitted at WEEDC, subject to applicable regulations. Team members are prohibited from touching assistive devices, including wheelchairs, unnecessarily unless in an emergency or as requested by a client, supplier or stakeholder.

Support Persons and Service Animals

A “Support Person” is a trusted individual chosen by a person with a disability to assist them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs. Communication is directed to the person with a disability rather than through the support person.

WEEDC permits attendance of clients, suppliers and stakeholders with disabilities accompanied by personal support persons.

Service animals are permitted on property. Team members are prohibited from petting a service animal, unless otherwise requested by the client, supplier or stakeholder.

Service Standards for Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders with Physical Disabilities

Physical disabilities can restrict a person’s mobility, their ability to perform manual tasks or to participate in some activities.

When providing service to a client, supplier or stakeholder with a physical disability, Team Members will:

- Inform the client, supplier or stakeholder about accessible features of the facility.
- Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture to ensure clear passage.

When providing service to the client, supplier or stakeholder in a wheelchair, Team Members will:

- Give the person a comfortable viewing angle of themselves and try to be at eye level with the person when speaking with them.
- Not touch the client’s, supplier’s or stakeholder’s wheelchair or any other aids without their permission.

Service Standards for Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders with Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities involve a large group of varying disorders. The disabilities may result in difficulties in the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communication, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation. These disabilities are classified as an invisible disability.

When providing service to a client, supplier or stakeholder with a learning disability, Team Members will:

- Exercise patience with those that may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Explore ways of providing information in a manner that works best for them (for example, have a pen and paper; verbal information may need to be provided in written form and written information may need to be read by an employee).
- Notify their Leader immediately of any concerns.

Service Standards for Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

“Developmental disability” is a cognitive disability of the brain and is the appropriate term used to describe one form of mental retardation.

When providing service to a client, supplier or stakeholder with an intellectual or developmental disability, Team Members will:

- Use plain language and speak in short sentences while providing one piece of information at a time.
- Not assume what a person can or cannot do but will offer assistance with products and services.
- Ensure they are being understood by the client, supplier or stakeholder.
- Notify their Leader immediately of any concerns.

Service Standards for Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders with Visual Impairments

Vision disabilities reduce one’s ability to see clearly. Very few people are totally blind. Many have limited vision such as tunnel vision, where a person has a loss of peripheral or side vision, or a lack of central vision, which means they cannot see straight ahead. Some can see the outline of objects while others can see the direction of light.

When providing service to a client, supplier or stakeholder with a visual impairment, Team Members will:

- Identify themselves when approaching the client, supplier or stakeholder and speak directly to them. They do not assume the individual can see them.
- Ask the client, supplier or stakeholder if they would like to hold their arm (the elbow area) so that they can assist them without hazard.

When a guide is requested, they will:

- Briefly describe the environment around them including the direction headed and any landmarks.
- Show the client, supplier or stakeholder to a chair or comfortable location that is not in a high-traffic area.

- Identify the denomination clearly when providing money to a client, supplier or stakeholder.
- Follow up to ensure understanding and ask if any further assistance is required.
- Not walk away without saying good-bye.
- Notify their Leader immediately of any concerns.

Service Standards for Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders with Hearing Impairments

People who have hearing loss may be deaf or hard of hearing. Like other disabilities, hearing loss has a wide variety of degrees and guests may require assistive devices when communicating.

When providing service to a client, supplier or stakeholder with a hearing impairment, Team Members will:

- Always ask how they can help and adjust the volume of their voice without shouting.
- Attract the client, supplier, or stakeholder's attention before speaking, with a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving a hand.
- Ensure they are in a well-lit area where their face is visible.
- When necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, such as using a pen and paper.
- Avoid putting their hands in front of their face when speaking.
- Provide clear and precise directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary to make sure they have been understood.
- Where possible, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.
- Notify their Leader immediately of any concerns.

Service Standards for Clients, Suppliers and Stakeholders with Mental Health Disabilities

People with mental health disabilities will be treated with the same exceptional level of service as all clients, suppliers and stakeholder.

When providing service to a client, supplier or stakeholder with a mental health disability, Team Members will:

- Treat the client, supplier or stakeholder with the same respect and consideration they have for all clients, suppliers and stakeholders.
- Be confident and reassuring, listening carefully to meet the client's, supplier's or stakeholder's needs.
- Notify their Leader immediately if someone appears to be in a crisis.
- Notify their Leader immediately of any other concerns.

Disruption in Service

Every effort will be made to provide advance notice if services such as elevators, escalators and accessible washrooms are unavailable.

When a disruption occurs unexpectedly, notice is provided as soon as possible by:

- Posting notices in conspicuous places including at the point of disruption, at the main entrance and the nearest accessible entrance to the service disruption and/or on the WEEDC website;
- Contacting clients, suppliers and stakeholders with appointments;
- Verbally notifying clients, suppliers or stakeholders when they are making a reservation or appointment; or
- Any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Training

WEEDC will ensure Team Members are provided with training on a number of topics outlined in the AODA including the following:

- The purposes of AODA;
- Interaction and communication with people with various types of disabilities;
- Interaction with people with disabilities using an assistive device, including a service animal or support person;
- How to use the equipment or assistive devices available on the premises;
- WEEDC client's, supplier's or stakeholder's services policies, practices and procedures regarding services to people with disabilities.

WEEDC will keep records of the training provided to its Team Members, where records will include the dates on which the training was provided and the name of the Team Members receiving the training. In addition, Acknowledgement forms will be executed by all Team Members receiving the training, confirming that they have received the training and understand the content of the training that was provided to them.

Training will be provided on an on-going basis as required.

Feedback Process

Should a client, supplier or stakeholder with a disability wish to provide feedback on their WEEDC experience, Team Members can direct them to one of the following:

- Feedback Form
- By telephone, in writing and email
- Any WEEDC Team Member

When a Team Member receives feedback, it is reported to their Leader. The Leader will send all feedback in writing to the AODA Coordinator for tracking and follow up. The follow up will ensure that the AODA Coordinator's communication is tailored in a method that takes the client's, supplier's or stakeholder's disability into account. All complaints are resolved in a timely manner according to the Corporation's "Accessible Client, Supplier and Stakeholder Service Policy".