

The Art Gallery of Hamilton believes in equal opportunity and is committed to providing a barrier-free environment that allows all people to maintain their independence and dignity. As an organization, we respect and uphold the requirements set forth under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005) and its associated Regulations and strive to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities in a timely and effective manner.

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the [Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11](#) for the Information and Communications Standard set forth under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#). This policy applies to the provision of information and communications services and materials for people with disabilities.

In demonstrating leadership, the AGH is:

- Integrating access so it will positively impact all people.
- Focusing on innovative accommodation around program development.
- Reviewing initiatives on an ongoing basis to meet and exceed, where possible, the compliance requirements of the Customer Service Standard of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).
- Including enhancements and improvements to accessibility in the AGH budget.

All goods and services at the AGH will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.

Definitions

Accessible Formats– Include but are not limited to large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, braille and other formats usable by persons with disabilities.

Communication Supports – Include but are not limited to captioning, alternative and augmentative communication supports, plain language, sign language and other supports that facilitate effective communications.

Conversion Ready– An electronic or digital format that facilitates conversion into an acceptable format.

Dignity - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

Disability - As defined by the Ontario Human Rights Code (2023):

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, 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 on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*; (“handicap”).

Exterior Paths of Travel – Refers to sidewalks and walkways designed and constructed for pedestrian travel and intended to provide a functional route from Point A to Point B, rather than a recreational experience.

Independence - when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.

Integration and Equal Opportunity - service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with disability to access goods or services. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept inconvenience or lesser quality. Sometimes this may mean that the AGH must treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

Performance Management – Activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness with the goal of facilitating employee success.

Redeployment – The reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs within the organization as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization.

Redeveloped – A planned significant alteration to a public space. It does not include maintenance activities.

Support Person – An individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Accessibility Policy

Assistive Devices

The AGH is committed to serving people with disabilities, and ensuring that those who use assistive devices will benefit from enjoying a fulfilling experience.

Procedures:

We ensure that:

Our employees, volunteers and interns are aware of and trained on the various assistive devices provided by the AGH that may be used by visitors with disabilities while accessing our programs, products and services. (Assistive devices are devices that are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations.)

The Art Gallery of Hamilton currently has the following assistive devices:

- FM assisted listening device
- Large print
- Magnifying glasses
- Wheelchairs
- Furniture risers for tables
- Alternate information for inaccessible spaces.

The AGH recognizes that visitors with disabilities may bring personal assistive devices. These devices will be accommodated unless they present an immediate danger to other visitors or works of art. This includes articles that are normally not allowed in gallery spaces (please see "Accessibility: Exceptions for prohibited items. These articles will be marked with a sticker to indicate that permission has been granted to bring the item into the galleries.

Communicating with a Visitor with a Disability

The AGH's policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Two-way communication is a process of providing, sending, receiving and understanding information. To communicate in an effective way, the AGH considers how the disability affects the way that the person expresses, receives or processes communications. Where possible, the AGH asks the visitor directly the best way to communicate with him/her.

Procedures:

The AGH uses a variety of ways, wherever possible, to make communications more accessible by:

- Considering the needs of people with disabilities during the planning stage of services and communication development.
- Using plain language to make a document easier to read for people with certain learning disabilities.
- Offering information in alternate formats:
 - Paper and pens to hand-write information back and forth
 - Large print maps and printed hand-outs of commonly used information
 - Large print of commonly used information for people who have low vision
 - E-mail as an alternate channel to provide accessible communication.

Service Animals

The AGH is committed to welcoming visitors with disabilities who are accompanied by a trained, accredited service animal. A service animal may accompany a visitor or any third party with a disability

to all parts of our premises that are open to the public. Service animals may be used for, but not limited to, the following disabilities: vision loss, physical disability, hearing loss, autism, epilepsy etc. Although service animals are most commonly dogs, other service animals could include, but are not limited to, ferrets, monkeys etc.

The AGH ensures that all employees, volunteers, interns, third parties and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service animal.

Procedures:

To be considered a service animal under this standard, it must either be readily apparent that the animal is being used because of a person's disability or the person with a disability may be asked to provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that it is required because of his or her disability. The AGH does enforce a general by-law that does not permit pets on the premises, including the AGH property surrounding the building. Service animals are not pets - they are working animals. They are used by people with disabilities to overcome barriers much like assistive devices such as a white cane or a wheelchair.

At times, due to capacity, visitors with disabilities accompanied by service animals may be advised that the crowded conditions may make it difficult to manoeuvre.

Guide dogs or other service animals, including service animals in training, are allowed to accompany people with disabilities on the AGH premises open to the public.

If the service animal is causing a disturbance for other visitors, the visitor and accompanying service dog may be required to leave the area or the AGH.

The owner is responsible to "stoop and scoop".

The AGH anticipates there will be special situations and is prepared to make every effort to accommodate the circumstances on an individual basis, as they arise, keeping safety to the visitors, service animals and art work in mind.

Support Persons

The AGH is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person(s). Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person(s) is allowed to enter the AGH's premises with his or her support person(s). At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person(s) be prevented from having access to his or her support person(s) while on the AGH premises.

Procedures:

A visitor with a disability, accompanied by a support person(s), pays regular admission to the AGH.

Fees are not to be charged for the support person(s). Complimentary admission for support persons is the standard. Visitors are informed of this through the AGH's communication to the public.

At events where food and/or beverages are served, a support person who wishes to participate in the food and/or beverage service will be charged the regular price. Support persons may exclude themselves from the food or drink service, and accompany the visitor with a disability at no charge. In the case of

studio programs, if the support person wishes to participate in the art-making activities, they will be charged the regular price; if they choose not to participate, they will not be charged.

Temporary Disruption of Service

The AGH is aware that temporary disruptions of services (daily functions – elevators, physical operations) and programs may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the AGH's control or knowledge.

The AGH makes a reasonable effort to provide advance notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available.

Procedures:

Where possible, advance notice is made available for updates through the following networks, as appropriate.

- www.artgalleryofhamilton.com
- Telephone recordings
- Temporary signage
- Digital signage
- Social media

In the event of an unexpected disruption, advance notice is not possible. In such cases, the AGH provides notice, as soon as possible, through its communication networks.

Process to Receive and Respond to Feedback

The AGH provides a variety of methods for the public to provide feedback about how goods and services are provided to visitors with disabilities. These methods include;

- Comment cards
- Email
- Telephone
- Website
- Social media
- Canada Post
- In person to AGH staff

The visitor is requested but not required to provide their name and contact information (phone, e-mail).

Once feedback is received, the following actions are taken to respond:

- The feedback is directed to the appropriate person for action.
- The feedback is assessed for appropriate action
- Visitors who provide their contact information can expect an answer within 3-5 business days, where appropriate.

The public is made aware of these feedback vehicles through:

- A notice and link on the web site;
- A sign in the AGH;
- A document describing the feedback process, available on request in different formats
- Other communication networks, as appropriate.

Customer Service Training

The AGH is committed to training all staff, volunteers, interns, board members and all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization on the AODA Customer Service Standard and how to provide accessible customer service to persons with disabilities.

Procedures:

All new staff and volunteers are assigned training as part of their onboarding procedure with an expectation that the training will be completed within the first 4 weeks of employment.

Training is primarily provided through an online platform, however in certain situations additional formats may be used including in-person training sessions, website access and printed material.

The learning outcomes include:

- Awareness of the AODA legislation, specifically the customer service standard.
- Awareness of the importance of access and the four principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.
- An understanding of the impact of the legislation/standard on the AGH and on the individual's role.
- Increased confidence by the staff and volunteers when welcoming and hosting visitors with disabilities and their empowerment to respond to individual needs.

The training content includes the following:

- The history of the legislation and the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 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 people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person.
- The assistive devices available on the AGH's premises, and how to use them.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the AGH's goods and services.
- The AGH's policies and procedures relating to the customer service standard.
- Definitions of disability, dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.
- Visitor scenarios, specific to the AGH's experience.

On-going training in connection with any changes to the AGH's policies and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities is provided.

An evaluation process is in place for continuous improvement in training content and delivery. Training is recorded through HR records for staff, volunteers and interns and includes name, date and content.

Posting of Documents

The AGH notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice in the following location:

- www.artgalleryofhamilton.com
- Visitor Services display screens

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of

the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Additional AGH Policies and Procedures to Enhance the Visitor Experience

In addition to compliance with the Customer Service Standard –AODA, the AGH has several additional policies and procedures to enhance the experience for visitors with disabilities. These include:

- Prohibited Items in Gallery Spaces – a revised policy includes that visitors with disabilities can carry items that would otherwise be prohibited but that are required for medical reasons, in accordance with the AODA.
- Café assistance – employees from Visitor Services can provide support and assist when needed.
- Scooters are allowed – no size restrictions – in the AGH.
- An emergency plan is in place to assist visitors with disabilities to areas of safe refuge whereby visitors await rescue by the fire department in cases of emergency.
- All public areas are accessible, with the exception of the Central Staircase. The AGH has:
 - Wheelchair accessible ramps leading to the entrance from the street.
 - Automated door openers at the main entrance.
- Currently all existing washrooms conform to the Building Code.
- Programs are only held in accessible areas.

Information and Communications Policy

Feedback Process

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will ensure that all feedback processes (both internal and external) are made accessible to clients/customers or employees, upon request.

In accordance with the customer service standards, Art Gallery of Hamilton will make known the availability of accessible feedback formats.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

Unless deemed unconvertible, the Art Gallery of Hamilton will provide, or arrange for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities, upon request. Accessible formats and communication supports will be provided in a timely manner and at no additional cost to the individual.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will take into account the person's accessibility needs when customizing individual requests and shall consult with the individual making the request to ensure suitability. The Art Gallery of Hamilton will make the availability of accessible formats and communication supports publicly known.

Emergency Procedures, Plans or Public Safety Information

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will ensure that all publicly available safety and emergency information (e.g. evacuation procedures, floor plans etc.) is provided in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, upon request.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will ensure that our website and all web content published after January 1, 2012, conform to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 and will refer to the schedule set out in the IASR for specific compliance deadlines.

Education and Training Resources and Materials

Upon request, the Art Gallery of Hamilton shall provide, or arrange for the provision of, the following information in an accessible format to students (past, current and potential) with disabilities:

- Training resources and materials*
- Program information (e.g. course requirements, descriptions and availability).

Accessible formats will take into account the needs of the individual to whom the material is being provided.

*Training resources and materials may be provided in an accessible or conversion-ready format.

Training to Educators

In addition to the general training requirements the Art Gallery of Hamilton will provide all educators with accessibility awareness training.

Records

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will maintain a record of all training provided. Training will include the dates on which training was provided and the number of people that were trained.

Producers of Educational and/or Training Materials

The Art Gallery of Hamilton shall create and make available accessible or conversion-ready materials, including textbooks and print-based supplementary learning resources, upon request.

Exceptions

The Information and Communications Standard does not apply to:

- Products and product labels;
- Unconvertible information or communications; or
- Information that the organization does not control either directly or indirectly through a contractual relationship.

Unconvertible Information or Communications

If it is determined, in consultation with the requesting party, that information or communications are unconvertible, the Art Gallery of Hamilton will ensure that the individual who made the request is provided with an explanation and a summary of the information.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will classify information or communications as unconvertible where:

- It is not practicable to convert; or
- The technology required to make the conversion is not readily available.

Employment Policy

Recruitment, Assessment and Selection

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will notify employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for job applicants who have disabilities. Applicants will be informed that these accommodations are available, upon request, for the interview process and for any other candidate selection methods. Where an accommodation is requested, the Art Gallery of Hamilton will consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

Successful applicants will be made aware of the Art Gallery of Hamilton's policies and supports for accommodating people with disabilities.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will ensure that employees are aware of our policies for employees with disabilities and any changes to these policies as they occur.

If an employee with a disability requests it, the Art Gallery of Hamilton will provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for the following:

- Information needed in order to perform his/her job; and
- Information that is generally available to all employees in the workplace.

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will consult with the employee making the request to determine the best way to provide the accessible format or communication support.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

Where required, the Art Gallery of Hamilton will create individual workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities. This information will consider the unique challenges created by the individual's disability and the physical nature of the workplace and will be created in consultation with the employee.

This information will be reviewed when:

- The employee moves to a different physical location in the organization;
- The employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and/or
- The Art Gallery of Hamilton reviews general emergency response policies.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will develop and have in place written processes for documenting individual accommodation plans for employees with disabilities.

The process for the development of these accommodation plans should include specific elements, including:

- The ways in which the employee can participate in the development of the plan;
- The means by which the employee is assessed on an individual basis;
- The ways that an employer can request an evaluation by an outside medical expert, or other experts (at the employer's expense) to determine if accommodation can be achieved, or how it can be achieved;
- The ways that an employee can request the participation of a representative from their bargaining agent or other representative from the workplace (if the employee is not represented by a bargaining agent) for the creation of the accommodation plan;

- The steps taken to protect the privacy of the employee's personal information;
- The frequency with which the individual accommodation plan should be reviewed or updated and how it should be done;
- The way in which the reasons for the denial of an individual accommodation plan will be provided to the employee; and
- The means of providing the accommodation plan in an accessible format, based on the employee's accessibility needs.
- The individual accommodation will also:
 - Include information regarding accessible formats and communication supports upon request;
 - Where needed, include individualized workplace emergency response information; and
 - Outline all other accommodation provided.

Performance Management and Career Development and Advancement

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will consider the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities when implementing performance management processes, or when offering career development or advancement opportunities.

Individual accommodation plans will be consulted, as required.

Return to Work

The Art Gallery of Hamilton will develop and implement return to work processes for employees who are absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation(s) in order to return to work.

The return to work process will outline the steps the Art Gallery of Hamilton will take to facilitate the employee's return to work and shall use documented individual accommodation plans (as described in section 28 of the regulation).

Redeployment

The accessibility needs of employees with disabilities will be considered in the event of redeployment. Individual accommodation plans will be consulted, as required.

Design of Public Space

Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas

The Art Gallery of Hamilton is committed to ensuring that any newly constructed and/or redeveloped outdoor public use eating areas have a minimum 20% of tables that are made accessible in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards, section 80.17.

Outdoor Play Spaces

Not applicable

Exterior Paths of Travel

Not applicable

Obtaining Services

When constructing or replacing any service counters, fixed queuing guides and/or waiting areas, the Art Gallery of Hamilton will ensure that projects are accessible and done in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards.

Maintenance

The Art Gallery of Hamilton shall ensure that our multi-year accessibility plan addresses:

- Preventive and emergency maintenance procedures for the accessible elements in public spaces; and
- Procedures for temporary disruptions to accessible elements.

Exceptions

There may be times where it is not possible for the Art Gallery of Hamilton to meet all technical requirements as outlined within legislation. In these instances, the Art Gallery of Hamilton will strive to meet the requirements to the fullest extent to allow for accessible use with particular constraints as addressed in legislation.

Review

This policy will be reviewed regularly, by the AODA committee, to ensure that it is reflective of the Art Gallery of Hamilton's current practices as well as legislative requirements.