

POLICY AREA: Universal  
SUBJECT: Accessibility  
POLICY NUMBER: U.2

Date Approved: February 2020  
Date Reviewed:  
Date Revised:

# REMOVING BARRIERS

## Statement

Palace Theatre Arts Commons (PTAC) is committed to extending a high level of customer service to all of its patrons. We are dedicated to demonstrating leadership by working constructively with our venues, patrons, staff, volunteers and community to meet and exceed the requirements which will identify, prevent and remove barriers so a fulfilling theatrical experience can be enjoyed by patrons with disabilities.

## The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

PTAC adheres to the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) which became law on June 13, 2005.

In addition to compliance with the Customer Service Standard - AODA - PTAC enhances the experience for patrons with disabilities by:

- a. Accommodating patrons with disabilities, where reasonable.
- b. Providing large text versions of information, where possible.
- c. Front of line service for patrons with disabilities.
- d. Seating accommodations:
  1. Making seats available inside the theatre so waiting in line is avoided;
  2. Advance seating;
  3. Designated seating.

## The Customer Service Standard (AODA)

Every business and organization operating in Ontario that provides goods, services and facilities to the public or other organizations and has at least one employee in Ontario has to meet the requirements of the Customer Service Standard. Every provider must:

- a. Develop, implement and maintain policies and procedures on providing goods, services and facilities to patrons with disabilities.
- b. Provide training on the *Integrated Accessibility Standard Regulation* requirements and the Ontario Human Rights Code, and how to serve patrons with disabilities to staff, volunteers, contractors, and anyone else who interacts with the public or other third parties on your behalf, and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices and procedures.
- c. Establish a process for receiving feedback on how you provide service to patrons with disabilities and how you will respond to feedback and take action on any complaints. Make information about the feedback process readily available to the public.
- d. Communicate with a patron with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
- e. Let patrons with disabilities bring their service animals onto any part of your premises open to the public, except where the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
- f. Let patrons with disabilities bring their support person with them when accessing goods

- or services on parts of your premises open to the public.
- g. Let the public know when facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to access your goods or services are temporarily unavailable.
- h. Document all policies, practices and procedures to providing accessible customer service and notify the public that these documents are available upon request.

## Accessible Patron Service at Palace Theatre Arts Commons

To ensure compliance with the Customer Service Standard, PTAC will continually:

- a. Review existing policies and procedures and identify gaps and develop new policies and procedures, as required.
- b. Recommend long term priorities that continue to enhance the experience for patrons with disabilities.
- c. Develop and implement a communication plan to increase understanding of the Customer Service Standards.
- d. Develop and deliver training programs for staff and volunteers

## Customer Service Standard

In complying with the requirements, PTAC makes reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies and procedures are consistent with the following principles, as defined by the Customer Service Standard, AODA:

- a. All goods, services and facilities at PTAC will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity of people with disabilities.
  - 1. Dignity: service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.
  - 2. Independence: when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own, without unnecessary help or interference from others.
  - 3. 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 patrons, 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 PTAC has to treat individuals slightly differently so that they can benefit fully from the services.

## Assistive Devices

PTAC is committed to serving and welcoming people with disabilities who use assistive devices.

Assistive devices can include and are not limited to:

- a. Wheelchairs
- b. Hearing assistive receivers;
- c. Close captioning systems;
- d. Live descriptive services.

## **Communicating with a Patron with a Disability**

PTAC's policies and procedures take a person's disability into account when communicating with the individual. Where possible PTAC asks the patron directly the best way to communicate with him/her.

### **Service Dogs**

A service dog may accompany a patron 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. PTAC ensures that all employees are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities, who are accompanied by a service dog.

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.

Service dogs, including service animals in training, are allowed to accompany people with disabilities on PTAC premises open to the public.

The owner is responsible to "stoop and scoop".

### **Support Persons**

PTAC is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.

A support person is 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, services and facilities.

A patron with a disability, accompanied by a support person, pays regular admission to PTAC. Fees are not to be charged for the support person. Complimentary admission for one support person is the standard.

*Policy adapted from: The Toronto Fringe: Customer Service Standard*