

Policy Name: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service	Policy No.: PLC-007
	Pages: 5
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Approved By: Executive Team/Board of Directors	Next Review Date: August 2027

1. PURPOSE

The YMCA of Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford (“YMCA HBB”) is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) issued under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”). Our goal is to increase the accessibility of our programs and services for all those who use them or wish to use them.

This policy, together with information related to it, will be available in all of our YMCA HBB operational sites as well as on our website at www.ymcahbb.ca.

2. POLICY DETAILS

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service - Guiding Principles

The YMCA HBB will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its customer service policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the four principles set out below. It is recognized, however, that in some circumstances, a balancing of the four principles, or aspects thereof, may be necessary to maximize the achievement by the YMCA HBB of the goals and spirit of this policy.

The four principles are as follows:

- Dignity** – The YMCA HBB will strive to ensure its services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity of people with disabilities. That is, the YMCA HBB will strive to ensure that people with disabilities who use its programs or services are treated in a manner consistent with them being considered to be just as deserving of effective, timely and full service as any other person.
- Independence** – The concept of independence as used in this policy is flexible and fact dependent. The following are just a few examples of how this term may apply in various situations:
 - In appropriate circumstances, freedom to make one’s own choice rather than being presented with a fixed situation or a single avenue;
 - providing a person with the opportunity to do things their own way, subject to appropriate regard being given to health and safety requirements, the rights of others, and so on;
 - Providing a person with appropriate opportunities to take the time he or she needs to communicate their thoughts, or to complete tasks, without interference or unsolicited “help”.

3. **Integration** – The YMCA HBB will strive to ensure that, unless an alternate measure (whether temporary or permanent) is necessary, the provision of its services to people with disabilities is integrated with its provision of programs and services to others, so as to enable people with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the YMCA HBB’s services. Our goal is to ensure that as much as reasonably possible, people with disabilities fully benefit from the same programs and services, in the same place, and in the same or similar manner, as other users of the YMCA HBB’s programs and services. However, as noted, it is recognized that in some circumstances, complete integration will not be possible and that accordingly, it will be necessary for the YMCA HBB to use alternate measures (temporary or permanent, as may be necessary or appropriate) to provide some of its programs and services to people with disabilities.
4. **Equal Opportunity** – In the context of this policy, “equal opportunity” means that a person with a disability who seeks to use the YMCA HBB’s services generally will have the same or similar opportunities, options, benefits and results as a person who does not have a disability, without having to expend significantly more effort to access or obtain the service. However, “equal opportunity” does not necessarily mean “equal treatment”– in some circumstances, it may be necessary or appropriate to treat an individual differently from others to facilitate them fully benefiting from the YMCA HBB’s services.

Assistive Devices

Where a person with a disability uses an assistive device, the YMCA HBB will take reasonable and appropriate steps, consistent with the above-noted principles, to prevent or minimize the interference of such device with the YMCA HBB’s delivery of its programs or services to such person. The YMCA HBB will take reasonable steps to ensure its staff are familiarized with the types of assistive devices that may be used by individuals with disabilities who wish to use the YMCA HBB’s programs or services so that, where necessary, appropriate fact-based determinations can be made in regard to the use of such devices on its premises.

Service Animals

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, such person will be permitted to enter premises owned or operated by the YMCA HBB with the guide dog or animal, and to keep it with them, unless it otherwise is excluded by law from the premises or from portions of the premises. For the purposes of this section, “guide dog” and “service animal” are defined as follows:

- **Guide dog** – dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act;
- **Service animal** – an animal in regard to which:
 - a) it is readily apparent the animal is used by the person for reasons relating their disability; or
 - b) the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to their disability.

NOTE: in (a) above, if it is not readily apparent to a person acting reasonably that the animal in fact is a service animal, a letter of the type referred to in sub-paragraph (b) may be requested by the YMCA HBB as a condition for allowing such animal onto its premises.

In some circumstances, the use of a guide dog or service animal on premises, or in a portion of the premises, may not appear to be feasible for reasons of health and safety. In such cases, the YMCA HBB will analyze the situation and consider options that may permit the guide dog or service animal to be used.

If a guide dog or service animal is excluded from the premises, or a portion of the premises, the YMCA HBB will ensure that measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the YMCA HBB's programs or services.

Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person:

- Both persons will be permitted to enter together upon premises that are owned or operated by the YMCA HBB; and
- The person with the disability will not be prevented from having access to such support person while on the premises.

The YMCA HBB is entitled to require that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person when on the premises it owns or operates if such support person reasonably is necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with the disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. Determinations regarding the need for a support person will be made reasonably, based on factual considerations concerning the ability of the person with a disability to meet such health and safety requirements.

The YMCA HBB will ensure that notice is provided in regard to the amount, if any, that is payable in respect of a person who attends on the premises in the role of a support person only (i.e., the person does not access the YMCA HBB's programs or services for their own personal use while also providing support to an individual with a disability).

For the purposes of this section, "support person" means another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to the YMCA HBB's programs or services. A support person may be a paid personal worker, a volunteer, a friend, or a family member. Examples of the kind of support that might be provided by a support person include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Physically transferring an individual from one location to another;
- Assisting a person with eating or with using the washroom;
- Monitoring an individual's health or being available to provide support in the event of an episode such as a seizure.

Communications

Where necessary and appropriate, the YMCA HBB will communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes such disability into account. The YMCA HBB will do so in order to facilitate effective communications with the person. Where appropriate, the YMCA HBB will ask the person directly how best to communicate with them. The YMCA HBB also will offer its communications in alternate formats as may be appropriate.

Notice of Service Disruptions

In the event of a temporary disruption, in whole or in part, of particular services or facilities of the YMCA HBB that are usually used by people with disabilities in order for them to obtain, use or benefit from the YMCA HBB's programs or services, the YMCA HBB will provide notice to the public of such disruption. Such notice will include the following information:

- The reason for the disruption;
- How long the disruption is expected to last; and
- The alternative services or facilities, if any, that will be available during the period of disruption.

The notice referred to in 5.A (including updates) will be posted in a conspicuous place in the premises owned or operated by the YMCA HBB and/or will be posted on the YMCA HBB's website and/or by such other method(s) as may be reasonable in the circumstances.

Feedback

Feedback pertaining to this Policy or its implementation may be submitted:

- **In Person to:** Senior Vice President, People Leadership, & Culture
- **Mail:**
Senior Vice President, People Leadership, & Culture
79 James Street South
Hamilton, Ontario L8P 2Z1
- **Email:** hbb.accessibility@ymcahbb.ca

The feedback we receive will be directed to the appropriate department and an acknowledgement of the receipt of such feedback will be issued within three (3) business days.

Feedback will be reviewed and considered with a view to determining whether changes to the manner in which the YMCA HBB provides programs or services to people with disabilities are required or appropriate.

Training

The YMCA HBB will provide appropriate training to all staff and volunteer teams. Training will occur on an ongoing basis, and whenever changes are made to relevant policies, practices and procedures. Training will be provided to each person as soon as practicable after they are assigned applicable duties.

All YMCA HBB Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Training will include:

- A review of the purpose of the AODA and its regulations.
- How to interact and communicate with people with disabilities.
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or service animals, guide dogs or support persons.
- How to use any technical devices or equipment that are located on YMCA HBB premises or that the organization provides.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing YMCA HBB programs and/or services.

3. COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1. This policy will be communicated to all YMCA Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford staff in accordance with the YMCA HBB Policy Development and Review Cycle.
- 3.2. The policy will be shared through appropriate internal/external channels, including the MyHBB intranet and other internal communications as required to support awareness and understanding.
- 3.3. Questions about this policy may be directed to the Policy Owner.

4. REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision No.	Revision Type	Reference Section(s)
July 2026	2.0	Updated Policy	• Updated content pronouns • Updated to new template
Unknown	1.0	New Policy	N/A

5. DOCUMENT CONTROL

This document is for internal use only at YMCA of Hamilton|Burlington|Brantford (YMCA HBB). YMCA HBB accepts no responsibility for use of this material by individuals or organizations outside of YMCA HBB.

Printed copies of this document are considered uncontrolled and may not reflect the most current version. The official version of this policy is maintained electronically on [MyHBB Policies](#) and should be consulted prior to use.