



**Policy, Practice and Procedures for the
Customer Services Standards of the
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act**

Prepared by



546073 Ontario Limited Operating as The Big Carrot Limited

Accessible Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07

Accessibility Policies, Practices and Procedures

Executive Summary

546073 Ontario Limited, hereafter referred to as The Big Carrot, is committed to the improvement of all aspects of society whenever possible. A community-focussed organization, The Big Carrot is committed to serving all people in an inclusive manner and maintaining a level of excellence while doing so. It is with the same commitment that The Big Carrot shall endeavor to adhere to the spirit of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and afford equal access for all.

Mission Statement

In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), The Big Carrot is committed to working to improve access and opportunities for people with disabilities by identifying, removing, and preventing barriers that interfere with their ability to access our goods and services.

Barrier Identification

It is the obligation of each member of The Big Carrot, including staff, managers, contractors, and volunteers, to help identify existing barriers to providing equal opportunity for customers to access the services provided by The Big Carrot. The Big Carrot will consult with members of the disabled community (when applicable, on a periodic basis) in order to gather information and establish best practices for providing customer service to a wide variety of disabilities.

Guiding Principles

When developing any policies, practices, or procedures, The Big Carrot will keep the following four guiding principles in mind.

The following definitions are from the Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Dignity

What does the principle of dignity mean?

Policies, procedures, and practices that respect the dignity of a person with a disability are those that treat them as customers and customers who are as valued and as deserving of

effective and full services as any other customer. They do not treat people with disabilities as an afterthought or force them to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. Service delivery needs to take into account how people with disabilities can effectively access and use services and show respect for these methods.

Independence

What does the principle of independence mean?

In some instances, independence means freedom from control or influence of others - freedom to make your own choices. In other situations, it may mean the freedom to do things in your own way. People who may move or speak more slowly should not be denied an opportunity to participate in a program or service because of this factor.

Integration

What does the principle of integration mean?

Integrated services are those that allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers. Integration means that policies, practices, and procedures are designed to be accessible to everyone including people with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity

What does the principle of equal opportunity mean?

Equal opportunity means having the same chances, options, benefits, and results as others. In the case of services, it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way you provide goods or services as others. They should also not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain services. They should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience.

Application and Implementation

The Policies set forth within this document will apply to all of The Big Carrot staff, managers, contractors, and volunteers.

The Accessibility policies of The Big Carrot will be communicated primarily through the posting board, emails, verbal notifications, or handouts of this document.

The Big Carrot will review any new policies, practices, and procedures before instituting them. This will be done through the following steps to ensure that no undue hardship on The Big Carrot is being created:

1. The HR Department will review all new policies.
2. Will seek recommendations from different disability associations, if required.
3. Will seek recommendations from an accessibility consultant, if required.

4. Will send the proposed policy for legal review to consider viability, if required.
5. If the decision is made to implement the policy, the proposed policies, practices, or procedures will be committed to paper for inclusion in the Accessibility Policies, Practices, and Procedures document.
6. A date for implementation of the new standard will be set.
7. The new standard will be distributed to all personnel and departments.
8. The Standard will then be implemented.

Continued Monitoring and Evaluation

The Big Carrot will work to ensure the continued monitoring and evaluation of their efforts toward the achievement of full inclusion for persons with disabilities. To help achieve this policy of full inclusion, the Policies, Practices, and Procedures document will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Accessible Customer Service Policies, Practices and Procedures Document

Accessible Customer Service Training

The Big Carrot will ensure that all staff, managers, contractors, and volunteers dealing either with the public or with third party organizations (business to business) are trained under the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard (429/07). Furthermore, The Big Carrot will ensure that any new staff, manager, contractors, and volunteers dealing either with the public or with third party organizations (business to business) will be trained under the requirements of the Accessible Customer Service Standard (429/07) within 6 months from the start date of their employment.

All employees of The Big Carrot will be required to be trained in any changes or updates to these policies, practices, and procedures and the Accessible Customer Service Standard.

Accessible Customer Service

The Big Carrot will ensure that all staff, managers, contractors and volunteers are diligent in identifying barriers to Accessible Customer Service and to make corrections where applicable and where no undue hardship will be created. This will be done using the following methods:

- At all Big Carrot locations, all employees, contractors, and volunteers will be required to offer assistance to anyone entering the building that has a visible disability by asking if they can be of any assistance.
 - Offer to retrieve the desired item/items
 - Offer a personal shopper
- When a customer with a visible mobility disability enters the premises, the greeting staff member will ask, "May I be of any assistance?" Based on the product or service the individual is seeking, the staff member can then suggest the best ways to serve the customer.
- The Big Carrot will accommodate persons with a visual impairment using the following guidelines. *(Remember: Vision loss is often an invisible disability. If an individual self-identifies to a staff member that they are visually impaired, the same guidelines for Accessible Customer Service will apply.)*

- a. If a customer with a visible visual impairment enters the location, the greeting staff member will identify themselves, declare they are trained in Accessible Customer Service and ask how they can be of assistance.
 - b. If guide assistance is required the representative of The Big Carrot will guide the individual using the accepted guide techniques.
- The Big Carrot will accommodate deaf, deafened persons, or those hard of hearing by offering one of the following aides with respect to receiving service:
 - a. The Big Carrot will identify whether any employee is trained in American Sign Language for the purpose of communicating with deaf or deafened customers. If yes, all staff will be made aware of this employee's ASL designation and will be able to refer customers to them if needed.
 - b. If it is apparent that a customer is hard of hearing, the staff person will offer to move to a quieter location, if available, to ease communication.
 - c. Staff will always be prepared to offer pen and paper to aid communication.
 - Daily diligence will be followed to ensure that aisles and entrance ways are clear and free of obstacles which may impede someone's mobility in and around the location.
 - If maintenance or other requirements will cause areas of The Big Carrot location to have or restricted access for a significant period of time, the staff of The Big Carrot will ensure that notification of disruption of services protocol will be followed.
 - The Big Carrot will ensure that any modifications or changes to common areas are done with Accessible Customer Service in mind.

Feedback Process

It is the goal of The Big Carrot to comply with the spirit of Accessibility of Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The following feedback process will be used to enable the team at The Big Carrot to respond to feedback received the the organization regarding accessible customer service.

- Utilize the Customer Feedback Form and return it to the location for review.
- Contact The Big Carrot using phone, fax, email (at hr@thebigcarrot.ca).

When feedback has been received, the team at The Big Carrot will review the scenario and make every effort to accommodate the requests of the individual or group in a manner that is satisfactory to all, so long as no undue hardship to The Big Carrot is created. This may include, but may not be limited to, taking the following actions:

- Feedback forms will be reviewed by all necessary levels of management and HR

- Contacting the complainant and discussing the remedial action using a manner that takes into account the complainant's disability.
- If required, seeking the recommendations of an accessibility consultant.
- If required, seeking the recommendations of an association associated with the disability in question.
- If required, seeking the recommendations of legal services.
- If required, seeking the recommendations of the accounting department.
- If it is decided that action is to be taken, the Policies, Practices and Procedures document will be updated to reflect the corrective action.
- If action is to be taken, a date of implementation will be chosen.
- If action is to be taken, the affected members of staff, managers, contractors and volunteers will be notified of the changes and informed of the date of implementation.
- Once a course of action has been developed, a call will be placed to the individual that initiated the feedback to inform them of the course of action.

The feedback process is to take into account the individual's disability and will be made available through a variety of methods such as:

- In person at each location
- On the telephone
- In writing
- By e-mail

For an example of a Customer Feedback Form, see Appendix A.

The Big Carrot will respect the individual's right to privacy under the Privacy Information Protection Act (PIPA) and will abide by the rules of PIPA regarding any request for information.

Communication

Any communication between The Big Carrot staff, managers, contractors, and volunteers and their customers or the public will be conducted in a manner that takes into account an individual's disability. An understanding shall be reached on how it is best to communicate with a person with a disability on a case by case basis. This may include, but will not be limited to, the following methods of communication:

- Verbal communication
- Written communication
- Digital communication (e-mail)
- Hand gestures

Notice of Temporary Disruption of Service

The Big Carrot will ensure that any temporary disruption of service, **whether expected or unexpected**, will be identified and relayed to their clients in a timely manner through the following means:

1. Staff will refer to the Policies, Practices and Procedures document for instructions.
2. Notification policies will be put into effect as deemed necessary, and may or may not include the following:
 - a. Notifications of disruption will be indicated in writing and placed on the entranceway to the appropriate location. (Note: Priority and consideration will be given to any security issues.)
 - b. Staff answering the phones at the affected location will identify the disruption of services to incoming calls.
 - c. A recorded message on the automated phone system.

The Notification of Temporary Disruption Service will include the following information:

1. The reason for the disruption of service.
2. The date of the disruption of service.
3. The expected length of the disruption of service.
4. A description of alternate services of available.

(For Template, see Appendix 'A')

Assistive Devices and Mobility Aids

Employees of The Big Carrot will adhere to the following guides when interacting with customers that require assistive devices:

1. Ask if the individual requires assistance.
2. If assistance is required, the representative of The Big Carrot will listen to the instructions of the individual requiring assistance and repeat the instructions back to the individual so that all instructions are clearly understood and executed.
3. If an individual's assistive device cannot be utilized within locations of The Big Carrot, other reasonable arrangement for the access of the goods and services of The Big Carrot will be made.
4. All staff, managers, contractors, and volunteers of The Big Carrot will be informed of the areas of the locations or offices that must be kept clear of assistive devices due to safety regulations and will make other arrangements for access of services if required.

5. All staff, managers, contractors, and volunteers in a position to offer up any available assistive devices to customers with disabilities will be trained on the proper and safe use of each device, in order to educate the customer.

Mental Health, Intellectual or Developmental Disability

The Big Carrot's staff, managers, contractors, and volunteers will treat any individual that has been identified as someone with a mental or developmental disability with the same respect and accord given to any customer. The representatives of The Big Carrot will follow the recommendations of the Accessible Customer Service training provided and follow the prescribed procedures such as:

1. Ask if the individual requires assistance.
2. Provide more time for an individual to respond to questions.
3. Listen intently and paraphrase the question or response back to the individual to ensure full comprehension.
4. Offer aids such as a pen and paper, if required, to communicate.

Service Animals

The Big Carrot will train its employees, required contractors or volunteers in the treatment and rules pertaining to the use of service animals.

At no time will any of The Big Carrot's staff, managers, contractors or volunteers prevent an individual requiring the use of a service animal from accessing the services of the service animal while on the premises except where a pre-existing law prohibits the animal, or the following conditions are not met:

- The animal is an obvious service animal, wearing a harness or identifying coat.
- The person requiring the service animal can produce a letter from an attending physician, nurse practitioner or Ministry of the Attorney General requiring the use of the service animal.

Support Persons

The Big Carrot will train its employees, required contractors, and volunteers in the treatment and rules pertaining to the use of support persons.

At no time will the staff, managers, contractors, or volunteers of The Big Carrot prevent an individual requiring the use of a support person from accessing the services of the support person while on the premises.

The Big Carrot's staff, managers, contractors and volunteers will treat every individual with all due respect and will direct all attention to them and address the support person only when required

During events which are held at individual Big Carrot locations at which an admission is to be charged, notification of the policy concerning the admission fee for a support person will be posted.

The admission policy is as follows:

- The same fee charged to the general public will be charged to the support person.
- The option to drop the fee will rest with the individual accepting the admission fee.

Alternate Formats of Communication

The Big Carrot will endeavour to provide, if requested, reasonable alternate formats of items such as this Policy, Practice and Procedures document as well as invoices and other applicable information unless an undue hardship would be created on The Big Carrot. These formats may include, but are not limited to, such communication structures as:

- Electronic text
- Oral communication
- Braille where applicable

Since it would cause undue hardship on The Big Carrot to provide the requested information in all forms of alternate formats and is not feasible to do so, all efforts will be made to reasonably accommodate any request for information in an alternate format.

Contact Information

The Big Carrot

Human Resources Department

348 Danforth Avenue

Toronto, Ontario

M4K 1N8

Tel: (416) 466-2129 Press '0' for Customer Service and they will connect you to HR.

Email: hr@thebigcarrot.ca

www.thebigcarrot.ca

Accessibility Professionals of Ontario

Colin McCarthy

Consultant

84 Silverbirch Place

Whitby, Ontario

L1R 1X5

(647) 477-8745

colin@accesspros.ca

Appendix A

Templates

Feedback Form Template

The Big Carrot would like to thank you for taking the time to fill out our Accessible Customer Service feedback form. The Management and staff at The Big Carrot are committed to removing the barriers which may impede the disabled community from accessing our goods and services. The Big Carrot will review your information and if it can be adopted without creating an undue hardship, it will be acted on at the earliest opportunity.

Please return this form to the specific location or emailing to hr@thebigcarrot.ca.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email: _____

Date of visit: _____

How did you find the customer service provided to you today?

Very good___ Good___ Average___ Below average ___ Poor___

Comments:

How was your experience with the accessibility of our facilities?

Very good___ Good___ Average___ Below average ___ Poor___

Comments:

Did you have any communication issues and, if so, how could they be improved?

Yes___ No___

Comments:

Any additional comments:

We, at the Big Carrot, would like to thank you for taking the time to help us with our accessibility policies. We look forward to servicing your needs to the best of our ability.

The Big Carrot (Location)

Will be **CLOSED** from

(Date)

To

(Date)

Due To

(Reason)

The closest alternative Big Carrot Location is

(Location)

We apologize for any inconvenience and we look forward to serving you soon!