**Summary of Draft Standard**

**CAN/ASC-5.2.1 Part 1—Design and Delivery of Accessible Programs and Services: Accessible Service Delivery—Accessibility for federally regulated entities as defined by the *Accessible Canada Act***

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For more information, or for alternative formats, contact:

Accessibility Standards Canada
320 Saint-Joseph Boulevard, Suite 246
Gatineau, QC J8Y 3Y8
1-833-854-7628

[accessible.canada.ca](https://accessible.canada.ca/)

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# Introduction

This Standard emphasizes accessibility for persons with disabilities and calls for equitable, inclusive, and barrier-free service delivery for all. The Standard supports the *Accessible Canada Act’*s principles.

Service—helping customers get what they need, like information, support, or completing tasks whether delivered in-person, by phone, digitally, or through other means of access.

Service provider—an organization that delivers services or benefits to customers. Service providers must develop, establish, and implement policies, practices, and measures to provide accessible services. Every service provider’s policies, practices, and measures must:

* be available to the public; and
* be accessible to persons with disabilities.

This Standard recommends considering various viewpoints to enhance service delivery. It highlights the necessity of consulting persons with disabilities while creating accessible services. Including them in the creation of training and review procedures is critical.

For all clients to interact with and benefit from services, the Standard sets out a framework for improving service accessibility across industries.

## Service delivery principles

Services must respect the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. They must offer equal opportunities to access services and use accessible communication methods that consider the needs of persons with disabilities.

* Equitable service delivery must not create extra cost for the person receiving the service. Service providers must make every effort to avoid delays for the person receiving the service.
* Persons with disabilities must receive services that are equitable to the services given to other customers.
* A service provider must not deny a person with a disability the opportunity to obtain, use, and benefit from a service if that person otherwise qualifies for that service.
* To achieve equitable service delivery, service providers must consider:
* the needs of persons with disabilities;
* the ways that customers interact with the service being delivered; and
* the interaction of the different forms of discrimination.

# Purpose and scope

The purpose of this Standard is to promote accessible service delivery that enables all customers to obtain, use, and benefit from services without barriers.

This Standard applies to the federal government and federally regulated organizations. Still, provincial, municipal, private, and non-profit sectors may adopt it.

# Definitions

**Accessible formats**: Various formats of communicating information including audio formats, braille, large print, plain language, sign language (ASL/LSQ) and other means.

Assistive device: Any medical device, mobility aid, communication support, or other aid designed to assist a person with a disability.

**Communication supports**: Supports that persons with disabilities may use to access information such as sign language interpretation, written communication, captioning, assistive listening systems, and others.

Equitable: Considering all customers’ unique experiences and individual needs, in the delivery of customer service, to ensure customers have access to the resources and opportunities that are necessary to obtain, use, and benefit from the services.

**Inclusive design**: Design that considers the full range of human diversity with respect to ability, language, culture, gender, age, and other forms of human differences (from Inclusive Design Research Centre)

Mobility aid: Any manual or electric wheelchair, scooter, walker, cane, crutch, prosthesis, or other aid designed to assist a person with a disability.

# General requirements

The Standard emphasizes equitable service for all customers, particularly persons with disabilities. It requires that:

* services are provided without extra cost or delays for persons with disabilities;
* persons with disabilities receive services equitable to those given to other customers; and
* service providers consider the needs of persons with disabilities, customer interactions, and intersectionality of discrimination.

The Standard also requires that organizations consult persons with disabilities when developing accessible services, policies, practices, measures, and training so their needs are met effectively.

## Accessible communication

Service providers must offer information in accessible formats, upon request, and must inform people about available communication supports.

Organizations must ensure that customers with disabilities have the opportunity to:

* receive essential information about a service that meets their communication needs;
* access services through various means (in-person, phone, digital, or other); and
* receive services in a manner that meets their specific needs.

# Communication

## Identify and communicate essential information

All customers require essential information to fully understand the service offered. They need information before they can make or finalize a decision. The service provider must focus the communication on necessary and essential information with enough context to understand and complete the task or activity.

When communicating essential information to customers, service providers must clearly emphasize essential information. That way, this information stands out to the customer, whether in verbal and written text or auditory formats.

## Plain language

The organization should use plain language in all essential communications with customers. The service provider should:

* create communication that is clear, timely, accurate, and accessible in plain language for anyone who might need it; and
* use simple, visual and auditory aids to summarize complex information (for example, using infographics to summarize the key benefits between different services).

Plain language— A communication is in plain language if its wording, structure, and design are so clear that the intended audience can:

* easily find what they need;
* understand what they find; and
* use that information.

Source: [International Plain Language Federation](https://www.iplfederation.org/) (<https://www.iplfederation.org/>).

**Interpretation services**

Interpretation services must be accessible. Examples of interpretation services can include captioned telephony, and various relay methods.

## Disruption of services

Service providers must develop, use, and make public a process for planned and unplanned temporary disruptions to a service, which describes:

* steps to take when planned and unplanned disruptions occur;
* methods and locations used to communicate disruptions to internal and external partners; and
* roles and responsibilities when planned and unplanned disruptions occur.

Examples of notification methods can include emails, phone calls, large print signage at the location of disruption, social media posts, and website posts.

The notice of disruption must:

* be in accessible formats;
* occur in advance, when planned, or as soon as possible when unplanned;
* include the estimated time of the disruption;
* describe alternative service locations or alternative service delivery methods when available; and
* provide contact information where a customer could receive immediate assistance.

# Digital service delivery

The Standard requires that:

* all technological, virtual, and digital platforms used for customer service are accessible and meet the needs of persons with various disabilities; and
* all digital platforms used for service delivery and customer service meet the requirements of [CAN/ASC-EN 301 549 : 2024 — Accessibility requirements for ICT products and services (EN 301 549 : 2021, IDT)](https://accessible.canada.ca/en-301-549-accessibility-requirements-ict-products-and-services) and service delivery in the built environment.

The Standard promotes physical inclusivity by:

* requiring compliance with [CAN/ASC B651:23 Accessible design for the built environment](https://www.csagroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2430328.pdf) for various built environment elements;
* publicly providing accessible information about the physical environment, including layout, accessibility features, and emergency procedures; and
* providing guide dog or service dog relief areas near service entrances.

# Support person and service dogs

The Standard serves inclusivity by requiring:

* allowance for a support person to accompany the person with disabilities without added charges;
* allowance for guide dogs and service dogs on premises; and
* alternatives if the law prohibits guide dogs or service dogs.

When the law prohibits guide dogs or service dogs, the organization must provide an alternate service or service delivery that is:

* available on request;
* available without additional costs to the customer requesting the service; and
* timely.

Both the service provider and the customer requesting the service must agree to the alternate solution. The customer must receive a level of service that is equitable to that of other customers.

# Training and feedback

## Training

The Standard requires the organization to train all personnel involved in service delivery on:

* various acts and regulations related to accessibility and human rights;
* principles and practices that promote inclusive service delivery; and
* interacting with persons with disabilities using various assistive devices or accompanied by support people, a guide dog, or a service dog.

When designing training materials, the organization:

* must involve persons with disabilities in the development and delivery of training; and
* may develop training with input from organizations with relevant subject-matter expertise that represent persons with disabilities.

Every service provider must prepare and maintain a training policy and plan that:

* summarizes the content of the training;
* specifies when the training will be provided; and
* is available to any customer who requests it in an accessible format.

## Feedback

Every service provider must develop a process for receiving and addressing feedback on accessibility. This is to ensure continuous improvement of the requirements of Part 1 of the [*Accessible Canada Regulations* (SOR/2021-241)](https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2021-241/index.html).