

# Accessibility Makes Good Business Sense!

Is your business welcoming to customers and employees with disabilities? Read on to learn more!

## Key Accessibility Terms

**Accessibility** - means giving people of all abilities opportunities to participate fully in everyday life.

**Disability** - covers a broad range of conditions, some visible and some not visible. A disability may have been present from birth, caused by an accident, or developed over time.

**Personal Assistive Devices** - any tool or mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks & activities such as moving or communicating, to maintain their independence (e.g. walker, cane, hearing aid).

**Service Animals** - trained working animals with a job to do for or on behalf of a person with a disability. Service animals are permitted in all public areas unless excluded by law.

**Support Persons** - may be employed by a person with a disability to provide assistance to them in the form of communication, mobility, or personal care.

## How Can You Make Your Business Accessible?

### Your business should be inviting to everyone!

- Make sure your entryway and aisles are clear of items (including displays).
- Provide handrails, ramps and power door openers.
- Have areas that allow customers to sit (chairs with backs or benches).
- If possible, have lower counters that allow people in wheelchairs to see over.
- Clear snow and ice from sidewalks and entryways.
- Support workers and service animals must be allowed to accompany customers.
- Offer alternative ways to do business with you! Online shopping or delivery.
- Ask customers if they need help or how you can make their experience easier.

### Keep Current!

- Know the requirements for your business from the AODA.
- Talk to the Brock Accessibility Advisory Committee.



### Spread the word!

- Websites should be easily navigated and allow for changes in font size for visual impairments.
- Written information should be available in alternative formats (i.e. large print, braille, etc.)
- Signs should be clear, with large font.

### Accessible Workplace!

- Provide employees with accessibility training.
- Provide job postings in an accessible format.
- Hire people with disabilities.

## Did you Know?

An estimated 28% of Ontarians or 3.8 million people over the age of 15 have at least one disability.

\* Province of Ontario statistic

## General Tips to Provide Accessible Customer Service

### 1. Treat everyone with respect.

- Speak directly to the person with a disability rather than their support person.
- Be aware that some methods of service delivery may not work for all people.

### 2. Take the time to understand what accommodations are needed.

- Be patient.
- Don't jump to conclusions.

### 3. Allow people to be independent.

- Don't jump to assist an individual before asking if they need help.
- Don't assume you know what someone wants – make sure you ask first.

### 4. Provide services that everyone can access.

- Offer flexible services that can be accessible in a number of ways.

## Do's & Don'ts

**Do** acknowledge that a person with a disability may have a service animal, but **don't** interact or distract the animal while it is working.

**Do** allow people to use their assistive devices at their own pace. **Don't** move or touch an assistive device, such as a wheelchair, walkers, etc., without permission from the owner.

**Do** take feedback from customer on the service they have received. **Don't** ignore suggestions or improvements.

## Brock Accessibility Advisory Committee

The Township of Brock Accessibility Advisory Committee (B.A.A.C.) provides advice and recommendations to the Council of the Township of Brock on matters related to the identification, removal and prevention of barriers for persons with disabilities.

The Committee is comprised of one Council representative and a number of dedicated members, appointed by Council, who are committed to working towards a barrier-free Brock.

On an annual basis we review the Township's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan and bring forward recommendations for the municipality.

Have questions? Contact us at [clerks@brock.ca](mailto:clerks@brock.ca) or by phone 705-432-2355.



## Helpful links for additional accessibility resources

Township of Brock Website: [townshipofbrock.ca/accessibility](https://townshipofbrock.ca/accessibility)

Accessibility in Ontario: information for businesses: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/accessibility-ontario-information-businesses>

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/about-accessibility-laws>

Rick Hansen Foundation <https://www.rickhansen.com/>