Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities
REPORT 09-005
4:00 p.m.
Tuesday, May 12, 2009
Committee Room 207
Hamilton Convention Centre
One Summers Lane

Present: F. Chesney (Acting Chair)
P. Cameron, R. Cameron, B. Helwig, B. Lane, T. Manzuk, K. Nolan, T. Nolan, R. Semkow, M. Smithson,

Regrets: Councillor B. Morelli (City Business), D. Burkett, A. Mallett, T. Wallis

Also Present: E. Lee, Mayor’s Office
J. Lee, M. Carter, Customer Service, Access & Equity
M. Meyer, City Clerk’s Office

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES PRESENTS REPORT 09-005 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Customer Service Standards (Item 5.2 (a))
   
   (a) That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities recommends the proposed measures for implementation of the Customer Service Standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, attached hereto as Appendix A;

   (b) That the Guidelines for Accessible Meetings and Presentations, attached hereto as Appendix B, be approved; and

   (c) That the Service Methods, attached hereto as Appendix C, be approved for inclusion in the development of Customer Service training.

2. Comments on the Draft Employment Standard under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (Item 5.3)

   That the comments respecting the Draft Employment Standard under the AODA, attached hereto as Appendix D, be approved and forwarded to the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.
3. **Request for Reinstatement on the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities – Sharon Derkach (Item 6.3)**

That Sharon Derkach be reinstated as a member of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities for the 2006 to 2010 term of Council or until such time as a successor is appointed by Council.

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF COMMITTEE:**

(a) **PRESENTATIONS (Item 4)**

(i) **Customer Service Standards (Item 4.1)**

Mary Smithson made a presentation respecting Customer Service Standards. Highlights of the presentation included:

- Review of the action taken by the Customer Service Subcommittee in developing the draft Customer Service Standards implementation.
- Principles of service
- Overview of service delivery channels and accessible service delivery features
- Overview of specific services that were reviewed and provisions regarding specific service delivery

In response to questions from the Committee, Jane Lee, Director of Customer Service advised of the following:

- The recommendations from the Customer Service Subcommittee will be sent to Council. They will then likely be referred to staff, who would review their ability to implement the recommendations.
- The Ministry has not released any compliance requirements yet, but the City will likely monitor compliance once a year and the Ministry will probably have enforcement staff as well. The City is also working on implementing a system to track complaints and feedback and on developing training materials.
- This does not tie into the 2009 Accessibility Plan.

On a motion, the presentation respecting Customer Service Standards was received.
(b) SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES (Item 5)

(i) Customer Service Sub-Committee (Item 5.2)

A. Recommendations/Reports for Approval from the meeting held on April 29, 2009 (to be distributed) (Item 5.2(a))

Mary Smithson provided an overview of the report.

Some discussion ensued, including but not limited to the following:

- Concerns respecting confidentiality of medical conditions and personal information – The Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA) and the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) provide protection.
- A person with a mental health disability may be competent to sign a consent form at times, but may not be fully competent at other times. Need sensitivity training to deal with that.

(ii) Draft Employment Standards Working Group (Item 5.3)

Committee agreed that a recommendation should be added to the “What is Missing from the Standards” section that organizations establish layoff and return to work policies to ensure that persons with disabilities are treated equally.

Respectfully submitted,

Fran Chesney, Acting Chair
Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities

Mary-Ann Meyer
Legislative Assistant
May 12, 2009
# City of Hamilton ACPD Customer Service Subcommittee

## AODA Customer Service Standards Implementation – Final Draft (May 2009)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Delivery Channel</th>
<th>Accessible Service Delivery Feature</th>
<th>Comments &amp; Feedback</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Principles of Service</strong></td>
<td>1. Need alternative methods of service (in-person, telephone, mail, fax, email, texting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. One method of service must not create an advantage or disadvantage over another method – where there is a program or event with limited space or registration, the ability to access services electronically &amp; register must not create an advantage for people who cannot access service electronically; telephone &amp;/or in-person service must be equivalent in terms of timely access – consideration to be given to weather conditions &amp; inability to get specialized transportation or other barriers when determining process &amp; deadlines – options to address barriers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Need to be alternatives for on-line forms- word, PDF, html (plain / simple English)- electronic &amp; hardcopy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Information on-line, and in-person should be in plain English- simple language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Public Access computers must be accessible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. Processes must consider that some people use Accessible Transportation services which may not get them to appointments or meetings on time or may be cancelled in inclement weather – alternative options for service, re-scheduling or extension of deadlines must be available, possibly waive fines, payments, late fees or interest (i.e. ability to fill in on-line (or phone) and arrange for payment later)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
where required)

7. Eliminating attitudinal barriers are critical to accessible service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Over the Counter</th>
<th>1. Education / awareness/ sensitivity training to address attitudes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Ask ‘how can I help you’?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Avoid use of jargon and acronyms</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Patience and respect for independence of people with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Design training to accommodate varying levels of learning and technology.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Include support persons to assist with communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Include persons with disability to humanize experience and convey independence of persons with disability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Allow quiet space / room for privacy for conversations, interviews – available on request

3. clarifying information / verifying
   o Forms, letter, documents

4. magnification tools
   o Hand held magnifying at every counter- 2.3x magnification

5. electronic automation of forms and answer buttons

6. ability to notify ahead of time or communicate needs

7. right to make an appointment
   o procedure for people who can’t wait

8. assistance in completing forms (– lack of use of arms and legs)
   • Note: a consent waiver may be necessary
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Note: address privacy concerns related to assistance</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 9. | Large print- on request  
| | o 16-20 standard font- forms, documents, brochures, computer screens |
| 10. | understanding of FM systems  
| | o Training on device |
| 11. | ability to swivel computer screen  
| | o must consider privacy issues  
| | o higher monitor |
| 12. | accessible counter – height / depth  
| | o Lower counters  
| | o Smaller width counter  
| | o Remove glass at counters between customer and staff to reduce attitudinal barriers. |
| 13. | automated doors  
| | o Entrances, exits, washrooms, elevators |
| 14. | support persons and service animals  
| | o Not to be separated from person with disability  
| | o Allow in all designated service counters/ locations  
| | o Waive fee or notify ahead of time |
| 15. | ability to access American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter  
| | o Pen / paper  
| | o Resource toolkit of providers, cost, process  
<p>| | o Utilize staff resource |
| 16. | production of information in Braille upon request |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Forms, documents, online</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>material should be in MS Word, PDF, html- plain / simple English</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Clear font – Arial 14, Verdana 12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>training – prepared for technology for people with limited speech</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o TAC clinic – computer speaking on behalf of the customer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o UbiDuo- face to face communication/typing system that provides a means of communication without using speech</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Interprettype</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>signage / way-finding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o large print</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o appropriate height</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o markings on the ground toward counter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o straight waiting lines instead of snaky lines</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**By Telephone**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>attitudinal: privacy for conversation</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o quiet area / space for conversation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o education / training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o patience – respect independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o clarifying information / verifying</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>limited automated phone tree options with a live answer option</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o 1st option live answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o zero out to live answer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o slower paced automated telephone response</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>o Text messaging</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. messaging in queue  
  • estimated length of time in queue  
  • clear and at a pace to be understood |
|--------------------------|
| 4. TTY  
  • Bell relay resource- speak to customer not to the operator |
|--------------------------|
| 5. text messaging  
  • voice messaging – responses / answers by text |
|--------------------------|
| 6. allow someone to speak on behalf of customer  
  • **Note:** need to verify consent for assistance & address privacy concerns |

### On-line or Electronic Services

| 1. people with disabilities have readers and can alter font size  
  • clear / large print |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. register as requiring large print for mail – on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3. MS word document, PDF, html- plain / simple English  
  • Forms, documents, tables |
|--------------------------|
| 4. standard for a minimum font for printed material  
  • Arial 14, Verdana 12- clear print  
  • Large print- 16-20 size font |
|--------------------------|
| 5. Adobe forms, if printable – allow printed blank forms to be filled in as option to on-line forms – may need assistance to fill in  
  • Hard copy option- MS word (in person service) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6. ability to enlarge font – depends on the program</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## 7. Make site more intuitive
- links can be in larger font or boxed links
- separate pictures and viewing materials from text
- increase voice capabilities and text font (21/2 to 3 inches)
- plain English – simple language
- simple instructions
- make navigation back & forth easier
- put steps in order
- feedback needs to be readable – font & colour
- clear notes (large) about mandatory fields

## 8. People need to receive a notice for on-line forms when they have not been successfully submitted

### E-mail & Printed Material

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>People with disabilities have readers and can alter font size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clear / large print</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Register as requiring large print for mail – on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>PDF documents / MSWord format – needs to be options for both for on-line information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Forms, documents, tables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Perhaps a standard for a minimum font for printed material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arial 14, Verdana 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Large print on request – 16-20 font size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Braille – on request</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Visiting Someone’s Home | 1. protocol in place for mobility device if person must go in ambulance  
  o support person or device to accompany person  
  2. home visit vs. over the counter  
    • possibly need an appointment  
      i. vulnerable  
      ii. secured entry  
    • identification as a city worker  
      iii. logo  
      iv. large print business card  
      v. photo ID  
    • pocket communicator & receiver – FM system  
      vi. works independent of hearing aids  
      vii. receiver & microphone  
      viii. small & portable  
  3. advance notice of visit (unless enforcement)  
  4. assistance with forms  
    Note: consider privacy issues  
  5. consent to share personal information  
    • notify in advance to enable customer to provide person to assist with forms  
    • liability to be addressed in procedures  
  6. attitudinal  
    • mental health issues |
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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</thead>
</table>
|   | - concerns about people coming to their homes  
|   | - allow a friend or support person  
|   | - when making an appointment, inquire about accommodation  
7. | hand held magnifying glass if forms are printed in small font  
8. | have large font version available  
9. | black on white  
|   |   a. coloured border to distinguish different copies of forms, where required  
10. | electronic forms if requested  
11. | large print on computer screens  
12. | simple language  
|   |   a. avoid use of jargon & acronyms  
13. | text option of communicating available on request  
14. | allow use of other channels, i.e. voice, web  
15. | be flexible in meeting customers’ needs  
|   |   o advance notification or accommodation requests  
16. | allowing for friend or support person  
17. | provide support person- on request  
|   |   o signer  
|   |   o interpreter  

### Public Meetings, Presentations

See draft checklist attached as Appendix B to Item 1, Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Report 09-005 (note sources)

1. **Public Meetings**
   i. televised meetings – closed captioning
   ii. infrared hearing systems – private, can’t be picked up by radio waves
   iii. real time captioning for public hearings and meetings
   iv. photos of accessible meeting sites
   v. specialized meeting room- on request
   vi. ASL interpreters
   vii. FM systems
   viii. provide meeting handout
   ix. flexible timeframes
   x. email address / telephone number for feedback
   xi. avoid PowerPoint / videos with flashing effect for photo-sensitive epilepsy
   xii. area in the front for people in wheelchairs

2. **Presentations**
   I. alternative for visual disabilities
   II. large print format – have a few copies available
   III. material available electronically, i.e. CD or memory stick
   IV. on-line access (for 30 days after presentation)
   V. screen colour and contrast
   VI. size of font
   VII. Braille / large print
   VIII. hard copy / CD of presentation for recap or review afterward
   IX. email information ahead of time to allow sufficient time to review
   X. visual identification or photo signs
   XI. email address / telephone number for feedback
3. Physical Locations for Meetings/films/presentations, etc.
   I. advertise in advance if location is accessible or not
   II. one or more venue must be accessible, where there are multiple venues
   III. consider transportation options
   IV. highlight what is absolute in terms of accessibility in facilities
   V. spaces for people in mobility devices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Films</th>
<th>1. Script available or closed captioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Auditory script</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attitudes</th>
<th>The sub-committee has reviewed information about serving people with disabilities on the Ministry website, and has modified it to be considered as the basis for procedures and training.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>These Service points are attached as Appendix C to Item 1, Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Report 09-005 (a modification of information available on the Ministry website)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## PROVISIONS REGARDING SPECIFIC SERVICE DELIVERY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Waste Management</th>
<th>Services to be modified as follows:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Garbage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- special provisions will be made for people with medical conditions (upon application – proof may be required) to allow more than the 2 bag limit in 2009 and the 1 bag limit in 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- avoid throwing bins on sidewalk (it is disruptive for wheelchairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Green Container</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- smaller green bins available (upon application) for people with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community Recycling Centre / Transfer Stations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- customer can advise staff at the gate that assistance is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- staff at the gate will radio ahead and staff will be available to assist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Community Outreach Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- forms to be available to be printed &amp; mailed or filled out verbally in person and over the telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- written material for education must be available in different formats, i.e. larger font, electronically (choice between PDF and MS Word formats)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- videos should also have script or closed captioning available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Waste calendar contains much information resulting in a font size that is quite small – ability to view on-line and expand to make larger; available to be mailed in a large print format in black on white (colours are not good for people with visual disabilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- provide garbage calendar in Braille or clear print on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bylaw Enforcement</td>
<td>• appointments made for most inspections (except heat by-law enforcement) officers are in uniform, carry photo ID and drive vehicles labeled MLE.</td>
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<td>-------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Emergency Medical Services (Ambulance) | • priority is handling the emergency service animals allowed in ambulance  
• special stretchers available for bariatric patients  
• mobility device taken only if it can be safely secured  
• cannot accommodate electric chair - this will be transported back to patient's home  
• emergency policy for support persons  
• use many Ministry of Health forms – extremely small print - carry magnifying devices to assist in enlarging font size for forms  
• deaf or hard of hearing |
| Fire | • deal with the emergency first and getting people out – worry about people first  
• visual smoke detectors to be added to smoke alarm assistance program |
| Ontario Works | • screening can be done by a home visit if a face-to-face interview isn’t possible  
• ASL interpreter and FM system to be available  
• 4 locations throughout the City – all accessible  
• Quiet space / room for job search purposes – accessible computers required at Employment Centres  
• appointments are made in advance  
  - accommodation to made on request, prior to visit  
• an X or similar mark is acceptable as a signature as long as it has been witnessed  
• employment assistance for people with disabilities – need to provide accessible assistance, referral to community agencies as an option |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• must conserve the originality of the building; create virtual tours to locations/areas that can’t be modified for accessibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• more hands on exhibits, where possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• accessible amenities and access to all parts of museum, or visual and audio description of inaccessible areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• virtual tours, as an option</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• pictures with audio beside exhibits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Braille plaques besides pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• DVDs available in some locations – need to be closed captioned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ASL interpreters to be available upon advance request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need for alternative formats for materials – i.e. large print, audio version</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clear explanation of what is accessible and what is not in each location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• updated washrooms and ramps where possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• signage to be modified on exhibits to provide large print – or large print version available</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recreation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• promotional material needs to be available in printed and large format if required as well as on-line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recreation Guide in large print and Braille on request</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• utilize checklist for accessible meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• accessible family washrooms / special washrooms for persons with support persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ramps in pools &amp; raised or dropped floors in pools, where possible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interpreters on request to assist with programming and teachings on how to use equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• additions to recreation guide, including</td>
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<tr>
<td>- whether a facility is accessible or partially accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- depth of pools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- accessible features that facility has – i.e. ramp vs. lift in pool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- whether facility is designated as heat alert facility</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• programming requirements to be determined following the Needs Assessment for Persons with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• equip buildings with visual smoke detectors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix A to Item 1
Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Report 09-005
Guidelines for Accessible Meetings and Presentations

Advanced planning may help to ensure that the accommodation needs of people with disabilities are anticipated and acted upon ahead of time. Even when you may not know in advance whether any of your participants may need accommodations, you should be prepared to arrange your meeting or event to be accessible so that people with disabilities can participate fully.

Short workshops, information sessions, focus groups, media conferences or events of a few hours in duration may not require the same detailed preparations that lengthy conferences or conventions require, such as determining dietary requirements when planning menus and arranging overnight guest rooms. However, many of the same pre-event planning steps apply to both.

The following guidelines are meant to help you plan your meeting or event. They reflect an optimal level of accessibility. Some facilities may not meet all of the criteria outlined below. If you are in doubt about the level of accessibility at a potential venue, it is recommended that you consult with a local disability group who has expertise in barrier-free access and/or meeting planning.

Two important areas need to be considered when arranging accessible meetings - physical access to the meeting space and access to the meeting contents and proceedings.
Here are some general points to think about when planning an accessible meeting or event:

• Ensure that a member of your staff is responsible for making the event accessible.

• Be prepared to respond to accommodation requests in the same manner that you respond to other requests and questions about the event.

• Ensure that the invitation or notice of meeting includes information about the accessibility of the event.

• Investigate what local resources are available, for example, sign language interpreters, accessible transportation, emergency veterinarians (for service animals) and wheelchair repair services, when preparing for longer events.

• Schedule sign language interpreters and/or real-time captioners as soon as possible after confirming the date of the event.

• Before confirming the date, find out if other disability-related events are taking place in the area during the same timeframe. This may have an impact on your event and availability of service providers.

• If the event’s participants are responsible for their own meal arrangements, find out what local restaurants are accessible.
• Investigate the availability of installed or portable FM Listening Systems in meeting facilities for people who have a hearing loss. (An FM system consists of a transmitter used by the speaker and a receiver used by the listener.)

• Investigate the availability of telephones with auditory adjustments for people who have a hearing loss.

• Check to determine whether there are visual fire alarms. If not, inquire about the facility's evacuation plan or create your own.

• Determine the availability of a TTY. Ensure that your staff has been trained on how to use it. (A TTY is a device that is used by persons who are deaf and hard of hearing to communicate through telephone lines.)

• Ensure that the conference website is available in a format that is accessible to people who use screen readers.

• Ensure there is at least one telephone that can be used by a person who is seated.

• Check to see if the customer service areas (i.e., counters, display tables, etc.) are low enough for wheelchair or scooter users to see over.

• Make sure that any additional signs specific to the event are created in large print.

• Determine a suitable relieving area for guide dogs.
• Provide water bowls for guide dogs.

Here are some specific points to consider.

Choosing the location
• Plan an on-site visit to the location under consideration in order to determine its level of accessibility before you book your event.
• Determine if the site has been recommended by a credible local disability organization with expertise in barrier-free access.
• Determine the appropriateness of the location through previous successful experiences involving people with disabilities at that venue.
• Inquire about recent renovations or current construction that may have an impact on accessibility.
• Determine whether the staff at the location has been sufficiently trained in disability awareness. If not, arrange for training from a recognized trainer prior to your event.

Exterior Access

Signage
• Ensure that the signs for the street address or building name are clearly visible from the street.
• Check to see that the signs are well lit during evening events.

Parking
• Determine that there are a reasonable number of accessible parking spots available for the estimated number of attendees with disabilities. Arrangements can
be made with the owners of the meeting facility to permit additional spaces to be used for designated parking close to the building for the duration of the event.

- Ensure that the designated parking spots for people with disabilities are on a firm, slip-resistant surface and located close to the entrance of the building.
- Determine whether there is a curb cut or level access provided from parking area to the main entrance.
- Ensure snow removal during winter events.
- Investigate whether accessible metered parking or public parking lots with accessible spaces are available close by the meeting facility if a large number of attendees with disabilities are expected.

Sidewalks/Path of Travel

- Determine that there is a barrier-free path of travel from the parking lot or drop off area to the meeting entrance, avoiding stairs, sudden changes in level, slippery or unstable ground, or objects obstructing the path of travel.
- Ensure snow removal from the path of travel during winter events.
- Ramps, if required, should be gradual in slope and have handrails on both sides.
- Sidewalks should be clearly separated from the road and driveway for safety reasons.

Accessible Transit

- Make certain that the location is serviced by accessible or parallel transit services.
- Ensure there is a drop-off area available in front of the building. A covered drop-off area is preferred.
Interior Access

Entrances and Lobbies

• Make certain that an accessible entrance is available with all doorways wide enough for the passage of a person using a wheelchair or scooter. Access through the main entrance is highly desirable.

• In the case when the main entrance is NOT accessible, ensure there is a clearly visible sign at the front of the building indicating the location of the accessible entrance.

• Check that entrances are well lit and not located in isolated areas.

• Ensure that entrances do not lead to locked doors with buzzers or bells that must be pushed to permit access.

• Ensure that the door handles are easy to open without individuals having to twist their wrist. Ideally, doors should have lever handles and be equipped with an automatic door opener.

• Provide signs indicating where the meeting is taking place within the building.

• Ensure that the signs are large enough and clear enough to be read by people with low vision.

• Make sure the signs are mounted at a comfortable height for both people who use wheelchairs and people with low vision.

• Arrange for staff or volunteers to be available at doorways and throughout the facility to direct or assist people with disabilities to the meeting location.
Elevators

• Determine that the elevators are located close to the meeting facilities and are large enough to hold power wheelchair and/or scooter users.

• Ensure there are enough elevators to safely and conveniently transport the number of people using mobility devices attending the session.

• Where lifts must be used, make certain they are safe and easy to operate with enough space to accommodate both wheelchair and scooter users.

• Determine whether Braille buttons and raised numerals have been provided to assist people who are blind or have low vision.

• Verify that the elevator controls are mounted at a comfortable height for a person using a wheelchair or scooter.

• Make sure that the elevator has an auditory signal to alert people who are blind or have low vision.

• Check to see that the elevator has a visual cue system in each elevator lobby to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Accessible Washrooms

• Make sure the washroom doors have a raised (tactile) male or female sign or Braille lettering.

• Check to see that washroom doors are equipped with an automatic or push button door opener.

• Ensure the location has washrooms that are large enough to accommodate scooter and power wheelchair users and are equipped with at least one accessible stall.

• Ensure the location has at least one accessible unisex washroom on the same floor as the event. A minimum of a
five-foot turning radius is needed for wheelchair users to manoeuvre without restriction.

- Make sure that the faucets are reachable by a person using a wheelchair or scooter and can be operated using one hand.
- Check to see that other washroom accessories and dispensers are within easy reach of a person using a wheelchair or scooter.
- Make certain that the accessible washrooms are located in close proximity to the meeting rooms.

**Hallways and Corridors**

- Check to see that major hallways and all essential doorways throughout the facility are wide enough to permit the passage of people using wheelchair and scooters.
- Ensure that all interior doors are easy to open with one hand without twisting the wrist.
- Determine that low pile carpeting, hardwood flooring or tile has been used as the floor finish to ensure that a wheelchair or scooter user can travel easily throughout the facility.

**Meeting and Conference Rooms**

- It is preferable for the meeting room to be located on the building entry floor.
- Ensure that the boardroom or meeting room is large enough to provide circulation and seating for an adequate or anticipated number of participants who use wheelchair, scooters, guide dogs or other mobility aids.
- Check to see that accessible seating is available throughout the meeting space.
- Determine that the reception/refreshment areas are in an area large enough to provide circulation for participants.
who use wheelchair, scooters, guide dogs or other mobility aids.

- Ensure that the stages and speaking areas, including lectern or podium are accessible to wheelchair and scooter users.
- Ensure that there is a well-lit space provided for the sign language interpreter when interpreters will be present.
- Check for noise levels (ventilation systems, noise from adjacent rooms etc.) which may be distracting.
- Check to see that the meeting room has appropriate requirements (drapes, blinds, etc.) to provide reduction of light or glare from windows.
- Ensure that cables, wires and microphones are well secured and do not block traffic.
- Remind guest speakers and exhibitors to be prepared to provide printed handout materials in alternative formats should alternative formats be requested in advance.

Making refreshment and dietary arrangements

- Where beverages are being served, bendable straws and lightweight cups should be made available within easy reach of individuals in wheelchairs or scooters.
- Make available non-sugar (dietary) beverages, juices and water for people with dietary concerns such as diabetes.
- Be aware that self-serve meals or buffets may present obstacles for some people who are visually impaired or people with a physical disability. Well-trained catering service staff can provide assistance to participants who require additional help. If catering staff is not present, ensure that someone is assigned to assist those who need help getting food.
• Check to make sure that an alternative to pastries and cookies, such as fruits or vegetables, are available for people with dietary concerns.
• Provide an opportunity for participants to indicate their dietary needs on any registration form or invitation to an event where meals are being served.

Producing invitations and promotional materials
• Ensure invitations and promotional material about your accessible event are identified with the International Symbol of Accessibility and other accessibility symbols.
• Provide invitations in alternate formats for people or organizations that require or request them (i.e. Braille, on audiotape, via e-mail, in large print, on computer disk).
• The invitation and promotional materials should include a note that asks participants to request any additional requirements they may have in order to fully participate in the meeting or conference.

Ensuring accessible communications
It is important to consider the communication needs of your whole audience when preparing your meeting or conference, and accessibility is one important component of your communication plan. However, accessibility to print documents is not the only need you must take into consideration. It is important to make any oral presentation available to people who are deaf through a qualified sign language interpreter. Print materials need to be made available in French and in formats readily accessible to people who are print disabled.

When preparing for any public event, with or without a disability focus, it is suggested that you:
• Arrange for a sign language interpreter and/or real-time captioner to be present.
• Promote the fact that your materials are available in alternative formats and in French, and provide contact information on how to obtain these formats on printed materials.

• Display, and have available for distribution, materials prepared in alternative formats in both French and English.

• Adjust the numbers of multiple format documents you will need according to the anticipated audience. For example, if the anticipated audience consists of seniors, you may consider producing a greater number of printed materials in large print.

• The following is a guideline for quantities for a general public event, such as a trade show or exhibit:
  - One English and one French Braille copy for display
  - Two English Braille copies and one French Braille copy for distribution
  - One English and one French large print copy for display
  - Five large print copies of English and three large print copies of French for distribution
  - One English and one French audio cassette for display with large print/Braille labels. Consider CD ROM format in addition to tape.
  - Five English and two French audio cassettes for distribution with large print/Braille labels. Consider CD ROM format in addition to tape.
  - One English and one French computer disk for display with large print/Braille
labels. Consider CD ROM format in addition to disk.

- Five English and two French computer disks for distribution with large print/Braille labels. Consider CD ROM format in addition to disk.

- For small sized promotional materials such as a bookmark, copies are available in English and French with Braille overlay indicating the name of the document and contact information. For an anticipated audience size of 500 attendees, 200 English and 50 French copies.

- Respond to specific customer's requests for preferred alternative formats by making post-event production and delivery arrangements if required.

**Communication Support Services**
Communication support services help people with disabilities access information presented orally at meetings, conferences, and public events. In pre-event planning, each participant should be asked if they require any special accommodations.

**Sign Language Interpreters**
A sign language interpreter is necessary whenever communication is required between deaf and (non-signing) hearing people. Interpreters should be available at events, meetings or presentations attended by people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

**Real-Time Captioning (also known as CART)**
Real-time captioning can make a meeting or presentation accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing and
who may not use sign language. It provides simultaneous (real-time) speech to text translation. A real-time captioner uses a court reporting steno machine, coded to type verbatim text with minimal keystrokes. The steno machine is connected to a laptop containing special software that converts the key strokes and displays the text being spoken for the user to read on an overhead screen or monitor.

**Computerized Notetakers**
Computerized notetaking is a service that can make a meeting or presentation more accessible to people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It may also be requested by people with vision disabilities because it allows them to refer to the saved electronic notes afterwards using screen reading software. Notetakers use a laptop computer with a standard keyboard and an overhead screen or monitor. Computerized notetaking is not a verbatim transcript, but summarizes what is spoken while still maintaining accuracy and the spirit and intent of the speaker.

**Assistive Listening Systems**
An assistive listening system receives a feed from the audio system found in lecture halls or meeting or conference rooms. This communication support makes it easier for people who are hard of hearing to hear and understand speech even from a distance. For example, a wireless FM system, which consists of a transmitter and receiver, can be used with or without a hearing aid.

**Intervenors**
Intervenors may guide and interpret for people who are deaf-blind. Intervenors are trained in special sign language that
involves touching the hands of the client in a two-hand, manual alphabet or finger spelling.

**Communication Support Attendants**
Communication support attendants help people with intellectual disabilities access information presented orally at meetings, conferences, and public events.

**Providing attendant care services**
Attendant care services to people with disabilities include assistance with personal care and escorting to community outings. To ensure that adequate arrangements are made, ask the participant prior to the event about the level and type of service required. Clearly describe the specific needs of the participant to the vendor.

**Meeting Accessibility Policy of the Canadian Hearing Society**
The Canadian Hearing Society (CHS) supports the rights of people who are deaf and hard of hearing and is committed to ensuring accessibility to information communicated during all meetings, workshops and other communication sessions. It is therefore the CHS policy that any meetings, workshops or other sessions follow the following guidelines for accessibility and communication. It is the responsibility of the designated Chairperson of the meeting to ensure the policy is adhered to and that accessibility issues are prepared for prior to the commencement of the session in question.

**Interpreters and Real-Time Captioners/Notetakers**
Every session will have sufficient interpreters and/or real-time captioners/notetakers. Which service(s) will be provided will depend on the participant’s request. Based on availability, a real-time captioner will be the preference over a notetaker. Presenters must remember that the
captioner/notetaker is in a fixed position due to equipment. All equipment must be in good working condition. Should there be any problem with accessibility requirements e.g. interpreters or captioner/notetaker not available, equipment not working, the session will be cancelled. Furthermore, should accessibility requirements falter during the session e.g. equipment stops working, the session will be stopped until the required adjustments are made.

Facilities/Meeting Flow
Prior to beginning the session, the Chairperson will ensure that all physical adjustments are made e.g. blinds and lighting adjusted as required. The Chairperson will designate someone to keep a speakers list to assist with time management and the flow of the meeting.

Sightlines
Everyone (including interpreters, captioner/notetaker) must be able to see each other and the presentation clearly. Seating must be made available for those who lip read to ensure sightlines. Tall objects such as water bottles should be kept off the tables. Equipment must be positioned in the least restrictive spot.

Noise
Common background noises can interfere with hearing speech (for anyone). All present should avoid noises such as flipping pages, rocking chairs and sliding coffee mugs while speaking. Likewise, if the overhead projector is not being used, it should be turned off. Consider visual noise as well. One example is to avoid cluttering the wall directly behind the presenter with flip chart paper. Avoid mannerisms or bright clothing that create visual distractions.
Reading Time
Presenter should pause to allow participants to look at overheads, papers, or other visuals. Stop speaking and wait for the participants to resume eye contact.
Service Methods

WAYS TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE
TO CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITIES
(a modification of information available on the Ministry website)

- Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Patience, optimism, and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Smile, relax, and keep in mind that people with disabilities are just people.
- Do not make assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities a person has.
- Some disabilities are not visible. Take the time to get to know your customers’ needs.
- Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- If you’re not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I help you?"
- If you can’t understand what someone is saying, just politely ask again.
- Staff must be fully attentive to customer.
- Ask before you offer to help — don’t just jump in. Your customers with disabilities know if they need help and how you can provide it.
- Find a good way to communicate. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Look at your customer, but don’t stare. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their interpreter or someone who is with them.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Do not touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Ask permission before touching a wheelchair or a piece of equipment.
- Do not tell a person using a wheelchair to sit; instead provide a waiting area / space that accommodate wheelchairs.
- Every business should have emergency procedures for customers with disabilities. Make sure you know what they are.

Visual Disabilities

- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to them.
- Speak normally and clearly.
- Never touch your customer without asking permission, unless it’s an emergency.
- If you offer assistance, wait until your receive permission.
- Offer your arm (the elbow) to guide the person and walk slowly.
• Do not touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
• If you’re giving directions or verbal information, be precise and clear. For example, if you’re approaching a door or an obstacle, say so.
• Do not just assume the individual can’t see you.
• Do not leave your customer in the middle of a room. Show them to a chair, or guide them to a comfortable location.
• Identify landmarks or other details to orient your customer to the environment around them.
• Do not walk away without saying good-bye.
• Be patient. Things may take a little longer.

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

• Always ask how you can help. Do not shout.
• Attract the customer’s attention before speaking. The best way is a gentle touch on the shoulder or gently waving your hand.
• Make sure you are in a well-lighted area where your customer can see your face.
• Look at and speak directly to your customer. Address your customer, not their interpreter.
• If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier, for example a pen and paper.
• Do not put your hands in front of your face when speaking.
• Be clear and precise when giving directions, and repeat or rephrase if necessary. Make sure you have been understood.
• Do not touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
• Any personal (e.g., financial) matters should be discussed in a private room to avoid other people overhearing.
• Be patient. Communication for people who are deaf may be different because their first language may not be English. It may be American Sign Language (ASL).
• If the person uses a hearing aid, try to speak in an area with few competing sounds.

Deaf-Blind

• Do not assume what a person can or cannot do. Some people who are deaf-blind have some sight or hearing, while others have neither.
• A customer who is deaf-blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them or give you an assistance card or a note explaining how to communicate with them.
• Speak directly to your customer as you normally would, not to the intervenor.
• Identify yourself to the intervenor when you approach your customer who is deaf-blind.
• Do not touch or address service animals – they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
• Never touch a person who is deaf-blind suddenly or without permission unless it’s an emergency.

Physical Disabilities

• Speak normally and directly to your customer. Don’t speak to someone who is with them.
• People with physical disabilities often have their own ways of doing things. Ask before you help.
• Be patient. Customers will identify their needs to you.
• Do not touch assistive devices, including wheelchairs, unnecessarily unless it’s an emergency.
• Provide your customer information about accessible features of the immediate environment (automatic doors, accessible washrooms, etc.).
• Remove obstacles and rearrange furniture to ensure clear passage.

Speech or Language Impairments

• Just because a person has one disability doesn’t mean they have another. For example, if a customer has difficulty speaking; don’t assume they have an intellectual or developmental disability as well.
• If you don’t understand, ask your customer to repeat the information.
• If you are able, ask questions that can be answered ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
• Be patient and polite, and give your customer whatever time he/she needs to get his/her point across.
• Do not interrupt or finish your customer’s sentences. Wait for them to finish.
• Patience, respect and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.

Mental Health Disabilities

• Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
• Be confident and reassuring. Listen carefully and work with your customer to meet their needs.
• If someone appears to be in a crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.
Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities

- Do not assume what a person can or cannot do.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Make sure your customer understands what you’ve said.
- If you can’t understand what’s being said, don’t pretend. Just ask again.
- Provide one piece of information at a time.
- Be supportive and patient.
- Speak directly to your customer, not to their companion or attendant.

Learning Disabilities

- Patience and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- When you know that someone with a learning disability needs help, ask how you can best help.
- Speak normally and clearly, and directly to your customer.
- Take some time — people with some kinds of learning disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Try to find ways to provide information in a way that works best for them. For example, have a paper and pen handy.
- If you’re dealing with a child, be patient, encouraging and supportive.
- Be courteous and patient and your customer will let you know how to best provide service in a way that works for them.

Visiting or Delivering to Customers with Disabilities at Home

- Do not arrive unexpectedly, and confirm the details before you arrive.
- Be patient. You may need to wait a few moments for your customer to open the door.
- Introduce yourself clearly. Some customers may not be able to read identity cards and may instead have a password. Check before you visit.
- Keep your customer up to date on what you’re doing.
- If you need to move some of your customer’s possessions, make sure that you leave their house exactly as when you arrived. For example, you don’t want someone with a vision disability to trip because you moved the sofa.
- If you can’t complete the job, clearly explain what will happen next. Make another appointment, and leave a contact number in case there are problems.

Dealing with Customer with Disabilities on the Telephone

- Speak normally, clearly and directly.
- Don’t worry about how their voice sounds. Concentrate on what’s being said.
• Be patient, don’t interrupt and don’t finish your customer’s sentences. Give your customer time to explain him/herself.
• Do not try to guess what your customer is saying. If you don’t understand, don’t pretend. Just ask again.
• If you’re not certain what was said, just repeat or rephrase what you’ve heard.
• If a telephone customer is using an interpreter or a TTY line, just speak normally to the customer, not to the interpreter.
• If your customer has great difficulty communicating, make arrangements to call back when it’s convenient to speak with someone else.
1. How will the proposed standard help to improve accessibility for people with disabilities?
   - eliminate barriers to employment
   - make employers aware of obligations
   - onus to request accommodation should shift from employee to employer

2. What do you like or dislike about the proposed standard?
   - On page 6, Item 3.3 – small organizations (Class A) should be required to have an employment policy statement because people with disabilities may be employed in a small organization
   - throughout the document the phrase “upon request” is used – this suggests that these standards do not apply if not requested
   - if this is the case, people with disabilities will still be centred out and will still be intimidated to apply
   - individual accommodation plans should definitely be provided to the employee, in fact, should be developed with the employee

3. Is the proposed standard clear and understandable?
   - sections 7 & 8 should be at the front of the document to provide clarity before reaching the standards
   - the term “organization” needs to be more clearly defined (e.g. a small organization with 5 employees may be a subsidiary of a larger franchise so its “class category” is not clear)
   - section 3.2 (page 5 (g)) “provide disability awareness training to employees” the term employees needs to be better defined to include all employees including staff and management
   - page 7 – provide disability awareness training to which employees (all?). If this training refers to people with disabilities, they should also be educated about where they go if they have problems in the workplace – 2nd paragraph is not clear that the training is required to be provided to all employees
   - page 7 – the requirement to “periodically review content of training”, should be more specific with respect to the timing of when the review should happen
   - page 9 – how do clauses 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 relate to disability? Perhaps documented in alternate format? Rationale for this clause is unclear.
   - Clause 4.6 – is not clear that websites and on-line applications for employment are included (Information & Communication Standard)

4. What are your views about the scope and application of the proposed standard?
   **Scope/application comments:**
   - Class A organizations should not be exempt from accessible employment policies
- page 8 – time frame of implementation for classes A, B & C – these could be extended by an extra year to allow the financial impacts to be spread out over a longer timeframe; however, all classes should have to comply with all requirements
- Classes A, B, & C should have an additional year to comply over the timeframe required for classes D, E, & F
- class A & B organizations should not be exempt from any standards – perhaps just be allowed longer implementation periods
- individual needs must be addressed by individual accommodation plans, even if the needs are not covered in the standard
- if needs not addressed by standards or procedures, further modification must be required to meet the needs

What is missing from the standards?
- requirement of organization to actively recruit people with disabilities for employment
- reach out to peripheral agencies to recruit people with disabilities (e.g. Ability, Edge, Ability Magazine, LIME, Path Employment, ACT, etc.)
- requirement for policies and practices that actively promote the advancement of people with disabilities within the organization
- provide supports and learning opportunities the same as provided to all able-bodied employees, with appropriate modifications
- requirement for organizations to develop policies & practices that promote the hiring of managers in their hiring practices so that they do not bear the cost of accommodation within existing budgets
- policies that promote hiring targets of employees with disabilities
- monitoring of success in terms of employees being hired, retained and promoted; future regulations might require targeted change after 5 years if success is not apparent in terms of hiring, and promotion of employees with disabilities
- agencies whose sole purpose is to provide services to people with disabilities should have a strong presence of employees with disabilities at all levels in the organization
- not-for-profit organizations whose sole purpose is to provide services to people with disabilities must have policies which promote a strong presence of people with disabilities on their Board of Directors (i.e. DARTS)
- organizations that have a paid Board of Directors must consider their boards in the same respect as their employees by establishing common policies and practices to promote the presence of people with disabilities at that table
- requirement that organizations must establish layoff and return to work policies to ensure that persons with disabilities are treated equitably.

5. What will be some of the potential positive or negative effects on your organization?
- all positive effects
- there may be a financial issue for implementation
most of the change required to make employment accessible is attitudinal.

6. Are the requirements of the proposed standard appropriate in terms of scope, application, technical feasibility, and timelines for implementation?
- reasonable timeframes