

Policy: Accessible Customer Service Policy

Main Contact: Clerk

Last Revision: 2023

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Policy Statement

The Corporation of the Township of Whitewater Region delivers services that are focused on the customer. We are committed to providing excellent customer service in every aspect of our business.

Purpose

This policy is to provide general guidelines as to the level of customer service expected from the Township of Whitewater Region staff to supply the most efficient and effective service delivery.

Definitions

In this policy, the following terms have the meanings set out below:

“**Alternative Service**” means a service generally intended to be temporary that approaches the desired result until such time as the barrier is removed or an equivalent service is put in place;

“**Assisted Device**” means an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids);

“**Disability**” means the same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code;

“**CAO**” -means the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designate;

“**Department Head**” includes managers or their designate;

“**Employee**” means the employees of the Township;

“**Support Animal**” means an animal for a person with disability if:

- (a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person's disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- (b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals as listed in Section 80.45 (4) (b) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/22, confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability;

“Support Person” means another person who accompanies them in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods, services or facilities. Support persons may be employed by a person with a disability to provide assistance to them in the form of communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs, or with access to the receipt of goods or services. Support persons may be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member, or friend of the person with a disability.

“Township” means the Township of Whitewater Region;

Policy Requirements

1. Policies Practices and Procedures

- 1.1. Goods or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- 1.2. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services;
- 1.3. Communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability including accessible notifications and response to questions;
- 1.4. Township employees will be trained to communicate, provide appropriate assistance and services in a manner that takes into account the person's disability;
- 1.5. Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the Township, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, with no additional charge, in respect of the support person.
- 1.6. Policies will deal with the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the goods, services or facilities or with the availability of other measures, if any, which enable them to do so.
- 1.7. Shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services or facilities that the documents required are available on request.

2. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

- 2.1. The Township will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities which will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.
- 2.2. The Township shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services or facilities that the document is available on request.
- 2.3. The notices providing information regarding the distribution will be posted at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

3. Use of Assistive Devices, Support Persons and Support Animals

- 3.1 The Township will provide customers with assistance in the use of assistive devices.
- 3.2 Support persons and/or support animals may accompany a person with disabilities in the access of goods and services. If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the provider shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- 3.3 If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the provider shall ensure that other measures are available to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods, services or facilities.
- 3.4 If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the provider shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.
- 3.5 The provider may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, but only if, after consulting with the person with a disability and considering the available evidence, the provider determines that,
 - 3.5.1 a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises; and
 - 3.5.2 there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and the health or safety of others on the premises.

- 3.6 If an amount is payable for a person's admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence on the premises, the provider shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.
- 3.7 If the provider requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, the provider shall waive payment of the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person's admission to the premises or in connection with the support person's presence on the premises.
- 3.8 Documents describing its policies with respect to the matters governed by this section and, on request, shall give a copy of any such document to any person.

4. Documentation

- 4.1 When required by Regulation, any documentation requested by a person with a disability shall be given in a format that takes into account the person's disability upon request.

5. Training

- 5.1. Township training will include the following:

- 5.1.1. *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard, Human Rights Code accessible training on work relevant to staff duties, and other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Right Codes related to persons with disabilities;
- 5.1.2. All persons who participate in developing the organizations policies; And
- 5.1.3. All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.
- 5.1.4. How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- 5.1.5. How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- 5.1.6. The process for people to provide feedback to the Township about its' provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the Township responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- 5.1.7. How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog service animal or a support person to access goods and services.

- 5.1.8. How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods, services or facilities to a person with a disability.
- 5.1.9. What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods, services or facilities.
- 5.1.10. Every employee shall be trained as soon as practicable.
- 5.1.11. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in respect of any changes to the policies, including Customer Service Standard.
- 5.1.12. The Employer shall keep records of the training provided under this section, including the dates on which the training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided.

6. Feedback Process:

- 6.1 The Township shall establish a process for receiving and responding to:
 - 6.1.1 Feedback about the manner in which it provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities; and
 - 6.1.2 The feedback process must specify the actions that the provider will take if a complaint is received about the manner in which it provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities.
- 6.2 Every provider shall ensure that the feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports, on request.
- 6.3 Information about the feedback process readily available to the public.
- 6.4 A document describing the feedback process and, on request, shall give a copy of the document to any person.
- 6.5 The Township shall notify persons to whom it provides goods, services or facilities that the document required is available on request.
- 6.6 The notice required may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider, by posting it on the provider's website, if any, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

7. Format of documents

Corporate Policy

7.1. On request, the provide shall provide or arrange for the provision of the document, or the information contained in the document, to the person in an accessible format or with communication support:

7.1.1. in a timely manner that takes into account the person’s accessibility needs due to disability; and

7.1.2. at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

7.1.3. The provider shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

Monitoring

The Clerk is responsible for ensuring compliance with this policy.

Authority

Ontario Regulation 429/07 of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* sets out requirements for Municipalities to establish a policy for governing provisions of its goods and services to people with disabilities.

Clerk
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Change History

	Effective Date	Significant Changes	By-law No.
Accessible Customer Service Policy	December 1, 2019	New Policy	19-12-1230
	September 5, 2023	Revision	23-09-1625