



## **ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

**Adopted Date: April 2010**

**Revision Date(s): April 2012, April 2014, April 2016**

**Review Date: April 2018**

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### **Introduction**

The Wainfleet Township Public Library is committed to the independence and integration of persons with disabilities and all who live, learn, work, play and invest in our community.

### **Purpose**

This policy is intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and all related standards and regulations introduced under this legislation, ensuring that persons with disabilities are provided equal opportunities and standards of service.

### **Responsibilities**

- Wainfleet Township Public Library goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- Library staff, Board and volunteers will listen to, be courteous and treat all citizens with dignity and respect at all times.
- The Wainfleet Township Public Library will take the initiative to understand the needs of each individual in order to provide effective and efficient service to all.
- The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities will be integrated within existing methods wherever possible unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to aid a person with disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- The Wainfleet Township Public Library will provide people with disabilities with equal service. If this is not possible, the staff will provide choices and options regarding the service(s), and will work with customers to find acceptable and workable alternatives.
- The Wainfleet Township Public Library will take the initiative to identify and prevent problem situations wherever possible and propose/provide workable alternatives.

## **Scope**

1. The Library will make every reasonable effort to ensure that services and programs are accessible by:
  - a. encouraging the use of personal assistive devices to access our services and programs;
  - b. encouraging the inclusion and access of support persons accompanying people with disabilities;
  - c. waiving fees for support persons assisting users and when fees are required providing advance notification. Fees are required when the support person intends to attend/participate in the program;
  - d. Permitting service animals to assist users and provide alternative accommodation when an animal is disallowed under the law.
  
2. The Library will make every effort to communicate with users in a manner that enables the use of services and programs by providing:
  - a. reasonable notification of all interruptions that especially relate to the provision of services and programs for people with disabilities;
  - b. the Accessible Customer Service Policy and, upon request, making it available in alternative formats;
  - c. a feedback, response and cyclical annual facility/services evaluation process that enables increased integration of users and accessibility to goods and services;
  - d. information on the provision of customer services for people with disabilities and accessible services and programs, such as Visiting Library Service, alternative formats to print or personal assistance in the books stacks.
  
3. The library provides training on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities to:
  - a. those who participate in developing policies and procedures on the provision of service to the public;
  - b. every person who deals with the public on behalf of the library;
  - c. new workers who deal with the public on behalf of the library.

## **Addendum: Township of Wainfleet's Accessible Customer Service Policy**



**ADDENDUM TO THE ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY - TOWNSHIP OF WAINFLEET'S ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY**

**Adopted Date: March 2010**

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) is intended to facilitate full accessibility throughout the Province of Ontario for persons with disabilities. The AODA will develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility by 2025 in the following areas:

- customer service
- information and communications
- transportation
- built environment
- employment

The Township of Wainfleet is committed to providing excellent customer service to all its citizens and to improving accessibility for persons with disabilities in a manner that respects dignity, independence, integration and equality of opportunity. This policy is intended to foster those aims and to meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (herein after referred to as the AODA) and it's first regulated accessibility standard Customer Service, 429/07.

## **2.0 GENERAL POLICY**

This Accessible Customer Service Policy sets out the responsibilities of all persons in the employ of the Township, its elected officials, volunteers and those serving the Township in an appointed capacity.

### **2.1 DEFINITIONS**

Under the AODA, disability is defined as follows:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a

- brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness, or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
  - (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
  - (d) a mental disorder, or
  - (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997;

The above definition includes disabilities that are non-visible, are temporary, may be intermittent or have varying degrees of severity.

**“Barrier”** means:

Anything that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of his or her disability including a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice.

**“Customer”** means:

A person who buys receives or uses goods or services.

**“Assistive Devices”** means:

Any aids including communication, cognition, personal mobility, medical or technical aids that are used by to increase, maintain, or improve the functional abilities of persons with disabilities. Assistive devices include, but are not limited to: wheelchairs, walkers, speech synthesizers, TTY’s, computer technologies, canes and hearing devices.

**“Guide Dog”** means:

A dog as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights’ Act.

**“Service Animal”** means:

An animal that is of service to a person with a disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability. Verification of a service animal’s status can be provided by way of government certification or by a letter from a physician or nurse confirming the animal is required for reasons relating to the disability.

**“Support Person”** means:

A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

### **3.0. PROCEDURES**

- a) Municipal goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- b) The Township will listen to, be courteous, and treat all citizens with dignity and respect at all times;
- c) The Township will take the initiative to understand the needs of each individual in order to provide effective and efficient service every time;
- d) The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities will be integrated within existing methods wherever possible unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to aid a person with disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services;
- e) The Township will provide people with disabilities with equal service. If this is not possible, the Township will provide choices and options regarding how the Township provides services and will work with customers to find acceptable and workable alternatives;
- f) The Township will take the initiative to identify and prevent problem situations “up front” and propose workable alternatives

### **3.1 ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

Assistive Devices include but are not limited to: wheelchairs, walkers, speech synthesizers, TTY's, computer technologies, white canes and hearing devices.

People with disabilities will be permitted to access, use and/or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

In the event a person utilizing an assistive device cannot access municipal goods or services, the Township will accommodate the customer by using any other temporary measures available and deemed appropriate, such as but not limited to providing access to other facilities, devices or a Support Person.

### **3.2 SERVICE ANIMALS**

Service animals, such as but not limited to Guide dogs, Hearing dogs, Seizure dogs and other Assistance animals shall be permitted entry to all municipal facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public, except where prohibited by law (such as where food preparation is being undertaken).

The Township will display decals at the main entrances of all municipally managed facilities reading "Support Persons and Certified Service Animals Permitted".

### **3.3 SUPPORT PERSONS**

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all municipal facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public, except when there are fees applied against participants by a third party leasing or renting the facility.

The Township shall provide notice of any fee(s) applicable to support persons accompanying a person with disability when accessing goods and services provided by the Township. Notice of such fee(s) shall be in accordance with The Township's Notice User Fee By-law as amended from time to time, if applicable, and prepared in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Act, 2001

### **3.4 NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTIONS**

In the event that a temporary service disruption occurs which would limit a person with a disability from gaining access to the goods and service, the Township will post notice or otherwise make the disruption known to customers in the following methods/places:

- Notice on all facility entrances where the disruption has occurred; and
- Reception and Information Counters; and

- Notification by Staff (where applicable) and;
- Township Web site; and
- Municipal Automated Answering Service – voice and TTY

All notices of disruption shall include:

- The name of the event/service; and
- The normal service location being impacted; and
- Alternate service locations; and
- Alternate service methods; and
- Hours of service availability; and
- Contact information; and
- Any other information which impacts the delivery of goods and services.

If an unexpected disruption occurs, persons with disabilities will be accommodated by the use of other means possible to deliver the goods and service, if available such as:

- the goods and service delivery agent may provide the goods or service directly to the person with a disability at an alternate place and time, as deemed appropriate; or
- If appropriate or required, deliver the goods and service to the person's place of residence; or
- Any other assistive measures available and deemed appropriate to deliver goods and services.

### **3.5 TRAINING**

All employees, agents and volunteers of the Township who are in direct contact with the public (e.g. face-to-face or telephone communication) shall be trained in the various aspects of accessible customer service delivery.

All training, regardless of format, shall have regard for:

- An overview of the purposes of the AODA;
- Instruction on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- Instruction on interacting with people with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a guide dog, other service animal or a support person;
- Instruction on the use of equipment or devices available, such as wheelchairs and TTY;
- Instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing services.

Training shall be mandatory for all employees upon their initial indoctrination and every 3 years thereafter.

### **3.6 FEEDBACK PROCESS**

The Township is committed to meeting customer expectations while serving all persons, including those with disabilities. Feedback from customers gives the Township opportunities to learn and the Township welcomes and appreciates comments, complaints and suggestions regarding its provision of goods and services.

Feedback may be provided by a person with a disability in the manner deemed most convenient to them, such as in person, by telephone, in writing, or by delivering an electronic text by email or otherwise.

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or to the Township Clerk at:

31940 Hwy. No. 3  
PO Box 40  
Wainfleet, Ontario  
L0S 1V0

All feedback will be kept in strict confidence and used to improve customer service.

The Responsible Officer for the Accessible Customer Service Policy will acknowledge concerns within ten (10) business days and will respond in a timely manner with information regarding how the issue will be addressed.

The Township will make every effort to understand the problem, identify the appropriate contact and work towards a resolution.

In addition, the author of the feedback will be provided a response in a format identified as accessible to him or her.

### **3.7 NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS**

This policy and any other document deemed to be key in the delivery of goods and services will be made available upon request in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Notwithstanding the above, this policy will be made available on the Township's website, and made available to any person to whom it provides goods or services using any other method or format as are reasonable in the circumstances.



### **3.8 REVIEW PROCESS**

At minimum, this policy will be reviewed annually by appropriate municipal staff. However, the review process may be affected by AODA Regulations as they are announced. Therefore, this policy will also be reviewed upon announcement of any new Accessibility Standards of the AODA, 2005 to ensure integration and consistency with this policy. The policy may be modified to ensure full compliance with the AODA, 2005.