



Township of Centre Wellington

Accessible Customer Service Policies and Procedures

Required for the Implementation of the
Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act
(AODA 2005)

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Accessible Customer Service Policies & Procedures

1. Background

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the “AODA”) is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service” came into force on January 1, 2008. The Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

The policies and procedures contained herein are in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and address the following:

- the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- the use of assistive devices by persons with disabilities;
- the use of service animals by persons with disabilities;
- the use of support persons by persons with disabilities;
- notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- training;
- customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and
- notice of availability and format of documents.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the Customer Service Standard Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in Regulation 429/07 to establish policies and procedures for the Township of Centre Wellington for governing the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.

3. Application

The policies and procedures shall apply to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer, student on placement, or otherwise.

4. Definitions

“Accessibility Coordinator” shall mean the person appointed by Council as Accessibility Coordinator for the Township of Centre Wellington.

“Assistive Devices” shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (ie. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).

“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, an information or communications barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or a practice. (AODA)

“Dignity” means persons with disabilities will be treated the same as any other customer and are as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer. Persons with disabilities will not be treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. Service delivery will take into account how people with disabilities can effectively access and use services and show respect for these methods.

“Disability” shall mean the following:

- 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. (AODA)

“Equal Opportunity” means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of services, it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way the Township provides goods or services to others. Persons with disabilities should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain a service and they should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience. Equal opportunity can be achieved by taking steps to ensure that individual needs are taken into account when providing goods or services. Individuals do not have equal opportunity if they cannot have full benefit from the Township’s goods or services because of barriers to their access or participation.

“Guide Dog” is defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons’ Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons’ Rights Act.

“Independence” means freedom from control or influence of others – freedom to make your own choices and to do things in your own way. People who may move or speak more slowly should not be denied an opportunity to participate in a program or service because of this factor. A staff person should not hurry them or take over a task for them if they prefer to do it themselves in their own way.

“Nurse” is a Registered Nurse or Registered Practical Nurse who is a registered member in good standing with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

“Physician” is a registered member, in good standing, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

“Service Animal” is any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

“Support Person” is someone who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services. The support person can be a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend.

5. **Policy Statement**

The Corporation of the Township of Centre Wellington is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons that we serve.

6. General Principles

a) Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

The Township of Centre Wellington will use reasonable efforts to ensure that the policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- the Township's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- the provision of the Township's goods and services to persons with disabilities are integrated with those provided to persons who do not have disabilities unless an alternative measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods or services, and
- persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services.

b) Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Township will do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

c) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

The Township is aware the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public; however, temporary disruptions in the Township's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the Township's control or knowledge.

The Township will make reasonable efforts to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that may be available. The Township will make reasonable efforts to provide prior notice of a planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of an unplanned, temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the Township will provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur to the Township's services or facilities, the Township will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the Township's website (www.centrewellington.ca), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

d) Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's goods and services.

It should be noted it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

e) Service Animals

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated by the Township accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Township will ensure alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Township may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

The Township may also, or instead, ask for a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

It should be noted it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

f) Support Persons

A person with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated, by the Township with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on Township premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable. Staff should be notified when a person with a disability is to be accompanied by a support person. If confidential information will be disclosed, consent must be given by the person with the disability.

g) Feedback

The Township of Centre Wellington is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.

Information about the feedback process will be readily available to the public and notice of the process will be posted on the Township's website (www.centrewellington.ca) and/or in other appropriate locations. All feedback should be directed to the Municipal Clerk/Accessibility Coordinator.

h) Training

The Township will ensure all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services. The content of the training will include the following:

- a review of the purposes of the AODA;
- the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07);
- instruction on the Township's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- how to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Township's goods and services;
- how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal, and
- information about the equipment or devices available on the Township's premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Timeline for Training

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon an individual being assigned the applicable duties as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Township's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Records of Training

The Township will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes.

7. Availability and Format of Documents Required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ont. Reg. 429/07)

All documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, including the Township's Accessible Customer Service policies, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and written feedback process are available upon request.

When providing a document to a person with a disability, the Township will provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

8. Notice of the Availability of Documents

Notice of the availability of all documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be posted on the Township's website (www.centrewellington.ca), and available through the Clerk's Office.

Contact Information:

Accessibility Coordinator
c/o Clerk's Department
Township of Centre Wellington
1 MacDonald Square
P. O. Box 10
Elora, Ontario N0B 1S0
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Adopted by Council this day of 2009.