



City of Port Colborne

Accessible Customer Service Policy

1. PURPOSE

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11 (the "AODA") and addresses the following:

- a) provision of goods and services;
- b) assistive devices;
- c) service animals;
- d) support persons;
- e) notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- f) training;
- g) feedback process; and
- h) notice of availability of documents.

2. APPLICATION

This Policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Corporation of the City of Port Colborne (the "City"), whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer, or otherwise and to all persons who participate in developing City policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or third parties.

3. DEFINITIONS

Assistive Device

A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

Disability

- 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 co-ordination, 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,

- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- a mental disorder, or
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*;

Service Animal

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

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

4. POLICY

a) Provision of goods and services

The City is committed to providing excellent customer service.

This policy establishes that goods and services shall be provided to persons with disabilities in accordance with the following key principles:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration; and
- Equal Opportunity

b) Assistive devices

A person with a disability shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices.

In the event a person utilizing an assistive device is hindered from accessing goods or services, the City shall offer the person other reasonable measures, to assist the person with obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services, where the City has such other measures available. The other measures shall be offered according to the situation and with the agreement of the person attempting to access the good or service.

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

c) Service animals

Service 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).

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the City shall ensure that other reasonable measures to assist the person with obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services, where the City has other such measures available. The other measures shall be offered according to the situation and with the agreement of the person attempting to access the good or service.

If it is not readily apparent whether the accompanying animal is a service animal, staff may request confirmation of the animal's status. Service animal confirmation may be provided by certification papers of an accepted service animal training school, a government regulating body or by a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

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

d) Support persons

Support Persons shall be permitted entry to all municipal facilities and meeting rooms which are open to the public. If an amount is payable by a support person for admission to the premises or in connection with a support person's presence at the premises, the City shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person by including same on the City's website and in any other manner deemed appropriate

e) Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities

The City shall 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 City will provide notice of temporary disruptions by posting the information in visible places, or

on the City's website, or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

The City will make reasonable effort to provide prior notice of planned disruption if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the City will provide notice as soon as possible.

f) Training

The City will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training shall be tailored to suit the person's level of public interaction and the person's involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

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

- An overview of the purposes and requirements of the AODA, the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, and the City's policy thereto;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use equipment or devices that the City makes available to help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability, such TTY;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing City goods or services.

Training shall be provided to each person to whom this policy applies as soon as practicable and shall be provided every 3 years thereafter. The City shall keep records of the training, including the date on which the training is provided and the name of the person to whom it is provided.

g) Feedback process

Feedback from a member of the public may be provided in the manner deemed most convenient by the person providing the feedback including in person, by telephone, in writing, by email or other electronic format.

Feedback may be provided directly to the service provider or:

Carrie McIntosh
City of Port Colborne
66 Charlotte Street
Port Colborne, ON L3K 3C8
Phone: 905-835-2900 ext. 308

Fax: 905-835-2969

Email: carriemcintosh@portcolborne.ca

Any personal information collected through the provision of feedback is done so under the authority of the *Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25* and shall be used to improve customer service.

The Responsible Officer for the Accessible Customer Service Policy will acknowledge concerns within fifteen (15) business days. The City will make every effort to understand the problem, identify the appropriate contact and work towards a resolution. The response to the feedback shall be provided in the same format as the original feedback, where possible, or in a mutually agreed upon format.

h) Notice of availability of documents

This policy and any other document required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service delivery shall be made available on the City's website and shall be made available upon request to any person to whom it provides goods or services.

When providing a document to a person with a disability, the City shall provide the document or information in the format that takes into account the person's disability as is reasonable in the circumstances and with the agreement of the person with a disability.