

P O L I C Y
The Corporation Of The Township Of Ignace
Policy Manual

Section: Social and Health	Subject: Accessible Customer Service Policy
Effective: August 13, 2018	Previous Policy Repealed: By-Law #37/2009
Approved By: Council	By-law #: 57/2018
Motion # 333/2018	Catalogue #: A-13

STATEMENT OF TOWNSHIP COMMITMENT

The Township of Ignace is committed to preventing, identifying and removing barriers that impede the ability of people with disabilities to access care and services. This includes staff, volunteers, residents and all visitors to the Township of Ignace.

In June, 2005 the Ontario government passed the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA). The purpose of this enhanced Act is to develop, implement and enforce standards of accessibility for all Ontarians. The Township's Accessibility Policy is now consistent with the AODA, 2005 and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline practices and procedures in place at the Township to help identify and remove barriers that impede a person's ability to access care and services.

Under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" came into force on January 1, 2008. That 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.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service and addresses 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;

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- customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- notice of availability and format of documents.

SCOPE

This policy applies 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 and all persons who participate in developing the Municipality's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

CHANGES TO EXISTING POLICIES

The Township will modify or remove an existing policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

STANDARDS OF ACCESSIBILITY UNDER THE AODA

- **Customer Service:** Service delivery to the public; also includes business practices, employee training
- **Transportation:** This standard needs to reflect a variety of environments, financial capabilities of users/providers and the differing modes of travel including conventional and specialized modes, and on-demand taxi services
- **Information and Communication:** Information and communications provided to the consumer or end-user through print, telephone, electronic devices, and in person; also includes publications and software applications

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- **The Built Environment:** Access to, from and within buildings and outdoor spaces; also includes counter heights, aisle and door widths, parking, signage, pedestrian access routes and signal systems
- **Employment:** Hiring and retaining employees; also includes employment practices, policies and processes such as job advertisements and interviewing

PRINCIPLES OF CUSTOMER SERVICE

Dignity: Refers to policies, procedures and practices that treat a person with a disability as a client who is as valued and deserving of effective and full service as any other client. They do not treat people with disabilities as an afterthought or force them to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. Service delivery

Independence: In some instances, independence means freedom from control or influence of others' freedom to make your own choices. In other situations, it may mean the freedom 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.

Integration: Integrated services are those services that allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other clients. Integration means that policies, practices and procedures are designed to be accessible to everyone including people with disabilities. Sometimes integration does not serve the needs of all people with disabilities. In these cases, it is necessary to use alternate measures to provide goods or services. Alternate measures are ways of serving people that are not completely integrated into the regular business activities of the organization, for example, email.

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Equal Opportunity: 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 you provide services as others. They should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain service. They should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience.

DEFINITIONS

Assistive Devices and Measures:

Assistive devices and measures are supports made available by providers to improve access to care for patients with disabilities. For example, wheelchairs, volunteers, real-time captioning services (on-screen typing of what speakers are saying), sign language interpreters or deaf-blind interveners. Other examples include, Telephone Teletypes (TTY) to communicate with clients who are deaf, hard of hearing, have speech impairments or are deaf-blind (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

Disability:

According to the Ontario Human Rights Code, a "Disability" is defined as:

- 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 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,
- 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

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- 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 definition includes disabilities of different severity, visible as well as non-visible disabilities, and disabilities the effects of which may come and go.

Guide Dog

As defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons' 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.

Nurse

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

Physician

A physician who is a registered member, in good standing, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Ontario.

Personal Assistive Devices:

For the purpose of this policy, Personal Assistive Devices are personal supports used by persons with disabilities that enable them to carry out the activities of daily living and allow access to hospital services. Patient-owned equipment such as power-mobility devices (power wheelchairs or scooters) are regarded as Personal Assistive Devices.

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Service Animals:

Service animals are used by people with many different kinds of disabilities. Examples of service animals include dogs used by people who are blind, hearing alert animals for people who are deaf, deafened or hard of hearing, and animals trained to alert an individual to an oncoming seizure and lead them to safety (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

Support Person:

A "Support Person" 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. Medical needs may include, but are not limited to, monitoring an individual's health or providing medical support by being available in the event of a seizure. A Support Person may be a paid professional, a volunteer, family member or friend of the person with a disability (*Guide to the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation*).

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION IN SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Township is aware that 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 effort 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 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 Township will provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur to the Township's services of facilities, the Township will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the

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

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. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Township has determined that the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

In these situations, and others, the Township may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's goods and services, where the Township has such other measures available.

It should be noted that 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.

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 that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality'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 that 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

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of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

It should be noted that 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.

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.

FEEDBACK

The Township of Ignace 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 and/or in other appropriate locations.

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TRAINING

The Township is committed to training staff and volunteers in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

The Township 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 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.

1. The content of the training will include:

- 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 or 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.

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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 trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").

PROCUREMENT

Note: Under the law, only public sector organizations have this requirement.

The Township will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-serve kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

AVAILABILITY AND FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS REQUIRED BY THE ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE (ONTARIO REGULATION 429/07)

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

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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 the person's disability into account.

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, and available through the Township's Clerk's Office and the Township's public library branches.

SELF-SERVICE KIOSKS

Note: Public sector organizations must incorporate accessibility features. Private and non-profit organizations must have regard for accessibility in this requirement.

The Township will incorporate accessibility features/consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Township will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports.

We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

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EMPLOYMENT

We will notify employees, potential hires and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.

We will notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities. We will put in place a process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes will consider the accessibility needs of all employees. Note: This only applies to organizations that already have these processes in place.