

## **1. Purpose**

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* all municipalities must meet the requirements of accessibility standards established by regulation. This policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer service for the Township in accordance with Ontario Regulation 191/11.

## **2. Scope and Responsibilities**

Council and Township Staff are to be trained on how to provide customer service to people with disabilities in accordance with the core principles of the accessibility standard. Training must be delivered to all full-time, part-time and seasonal Township employees, Councillors, volunteer firefighters, Township Committees, local boards and volunteers that might reasonably be expected to interact with the public on behalf of the Township or influence the development of policies, practices and procedures. The level of training and awareness will be determined by the CAO or his/her designate. Township agents and staff of contracted service providers must provide proof of Accessible Customer Service training prior to conducting business associated with the Township, if they are expected to interact with the public or influence policies and practices.

## **3. Policy Statement**

The Township of Scugog is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service for its customers. Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence to all customers. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated wherever possible.

Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of the Township.

The Township of Scugog will make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of the standard:

- dignity
- independence
- integration, except when alternate measures are necessary to meet the needs of people with disabilities
- equal opportunity

By considering these principles when developing policies, practices and procedures, accessibility planning becomes entrenched with the decision making process and satisfies the spirit with which the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) was enacted.

**Dignity and Independence** – Customer service will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. People with disability should not be forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience as a result of their disability.

Service delivery must consider how people with disabilities can effectively access and use the services provided. Awareness and respect of any individual is paramount when providing customer service.

**Integrated Services** – that allow people with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar manner as other customers. Service provision and associated procedures will be inclusive of all customers and clients. There are occasions when customer service must be provided using alternative measures which are not integrated. Alternative measures will only be employed when they cannot be integrated and are the only means of providing customer service to a person with a disability.

**Equal Opportunity** – People with disabilities will be given an equal opportunity to use and benefit from services provided by the Township. People with disabilities should not be required to put forward a greater effort in order to access, use and/or benefit from a service. As a result, additional services may be extended to people with disabilities in order to ensure they do not need to put forward a greater effort.

#### 4. Definitions

**Accessibility Standard:** Ontario Regulation 429/07 created under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* which provides for standards to enhance the accessibility of an organization (“the standard”).

**Assistive Device:** Any device that is designed and/or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task (for example, canes, crutches, walkers, wheel chairs, personal sound amplification devices, ventilators, etc.)

**Disability (as per the AODA):**

- a. Any degree of physical 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 impairment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speed impediment or physical reliance on a guide dog, or other animal or on a wheelchair on 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,
- 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*.

**Customers:**

- a. All staff
- b. Mayor and members of Council
- c. Other political representatives
- d. Citizens and visitors to the Township of Scugog
- e. Businesses
- f. Volunteers and agents recognized by the Township
- g. All community stakeholders

**Township** means the Corporation of the Township of Scugog.

## **5. Notice of Availability of Documents**

The Township will take measures to notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports by posting notice on the premises and on the website.

In accordance with the Townships Alternate Formats Policy, documents will be made available in alternative format upon request by completing and submitting the Township of Scugog Request for Alternative Format Form to document their request (available on the Township of Scugog website).

This policy is available in accessible formats or with communication supports, on request.

## **6. Format of Documents**

If the Township is required by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Township will take into account the persons' ability to access the information and will provide the document or information contained in the document in a format that meets those needs as agreed upon with the person.

## **7. Use of Support Persons**

A support person is an individual hired or chosen by a person with a disability to provide services or assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or to assist with accessing services. People with disabilities are permitted to be accompanied by a support person in any area that is open to the public if that support person is essential to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others in the premises. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure that people with disabilities are not prevented from having access to their support person while on the premises.

If an amount is payable by a person for admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence at the premises, the Township shall

ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the support person to provide consent to regulations specific to the service provided or, if necessary, agree to a confidentiality clause.

The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when in a municipal facility, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others in the facility. Before making that decision, Township representatives shall:

- Consult with the person with the disabilities to understand their needs
- Consider the health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises
- Waive the admission fee or fare for the support person if one exists

## **8. Use of Assistive Devices**

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining or using Township 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 the person with a disability or to the health and safety of others on Township premises. In these situations, the Township may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining and using Township services, where the Township has such other measures available.

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.

## **9. Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

The Township will provide notice of temporary disruptions.

The notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of any available, alternative services.

If feasible, notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on the premises, by posting it on the Township's website or by such other method as is determined reasonable in the circumstances.

## **10. Training for Staff, Volunteers and Service Providers**

Every person who works for the organization or who participates in developing the Township's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to the public including every full-time, part-time and seasonal Township employee, Volunteer Firefighters, Township Committee's, local boards and volunteers who provide service on behalf of the Township, will receive training regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

The level of Training and awareness will be determined by the CAO or designate as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned the applicable duties.

Training will also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

A record of the dates on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided will be kept.

Township agents and staff of contracted service providers must provide proof of Accessible Customer Service training prior to conducting business associated with the Township, if they are expected to interact with the public or influence Township policies and practices.

## **11. Service Animals**

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Township will ensure that the person is permitted to enter

Township facilities with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. Where a service animal is excluded by law, the Township will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use and benefit from the Township's goods and services.

The service animal must be under the care and control of the individual at all times. If the service animal is not easily identifiable, the employee can request the individual to provide documentation from a regulated health professional verifying it is a service animal.

## **12. Feedback Process**

All individuals will have the opportunity to submit feedback regarding the provision of accessible customer service.

The feedback process and feedback form will be promoted on the website and through other printed outreach methods.

The feedback process will permit persons to provide their feedback in person, by telephone, by mail, e-mail, fax or otherwise in an accessible manner.

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