



# Township of Algonquin Highlands Customer Service Policy for Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

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## 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 of Algonquin Highlands, in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07.

## 2. APPLICATION

2.1 This policy applies to the following:

- (1) every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township of Algonquin Highlands, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, committee member, agent, volunteer, contracted service staff, or otherwise; and
- (2) every person who participates in developing the Township's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

## 3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 In this policy,

- (1) "assistive device" means any device that is designed, made, or adapted to assist a person perform a particular task, and shall include but is not limited to the following:
  - a) wheelchair
  - b) walker
  - c) TTY machine
  - d) software program
  - e) scooter
  - f) crutches
  - g) cane
  - h) audio recording device
  - i) personal oxygen tank
  - j) monocular or other visual aid

- (2) “customer” means a ratepayer of the Township of Algonquin Highlands, other members of the general public, agents, or other third parties.
- (3) “disability” means,
  - (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
  - (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1977.
- (4) “guide dog” means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the *Blind Persons’ Rights Act*;
- (5) “service animal” means an animal described in subsection 3.2;
- (6) “support person” means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.
- (7) “Township” means the Corporation of the Township of Algonquin Highlands.

3.2 For the purposes of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,

- (1) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the persons for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (2) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

#### **4. POLICY STATEMENT**

4.1 The Township of Algonquin Highlands is committed to providing high quality and accessible goods and services to all persons that we serve.

## **5. GENERAL POLICIES, PRACTICES & PROCEDURES**

### **5.1 Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities**

- (1) The Township will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:
  - (a) The Township's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of all persons with disabilities;
  - (b) 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
  - (c) Persons with disabilities are 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.

### **5.2 Communication with Persons with Disabilities**

- (1) The Township will communicate with people with disabilities in a manner that takes into account their disability.

### **5.3 Assistive Devices**

- (1) The Township is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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.

### **5.4 Service Animals**

- (1) The Township is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal in those areas of the

premises that we own or operate that are open to customers, unless the animal is excluded by another law.

- (2) If the guide dog or other 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 Township's goods and services.
- (3) It is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her guide dog or other service animal is kept in control at all times.
- (4) 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.
- (5) Access to the premises may be denied to the service animal if documentation cannot be provided upon request. Alternate arrangements may be made upon mutual agreement, if requested.

## **5.5 Support Persons**

- (1) The Township is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.
- (2) Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter any premises owned or operated by the Township with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on any premises owned or operated by the Township.
- (3) The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on a premises owned or operated by the Township 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.
- (4) Where admission fees are charged, the Township will provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.

## **5.6 Disruption in Services**

- (1) The Township will make reasonable effort to provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities.

- (2) This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.
- (3) When a temporary disruption occurs 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, or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances, as soon as reasonably possible.

## **5.7 Training**

- (1) 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 level of interaction with customers.
- (2) Training will include the following:
  - (a) a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07);
  - (b) instruction on the following matters:
    - (i) the Township's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
    - (ii) how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
    - (iii) how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
    - (iv) how to use equipment or devices available on the Township's premises or otherwise provided by Township that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability; and
    - (v) what to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Township's goods or services.
- (3) Training will be provided as soon as practicable after an individual has been assigned duties that include interaction with customers, or development of policies, practices and procedures related to customer service.

- (4) Training will be provided on an ongoing basis, as changes occur to the Township's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to people with disabilities.
- (5) The Township will keep records of the training, including the dates on which training is provided and number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

## **5.8 Feedback Process**

- (1) The ultimate goal of the Township is to meet and surpass customer service expectations while serving people with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.
- (2) Feedback regarding the way the Township provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made in person, by telephone, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods.
- (3) 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.

## **6. DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS**

- 6.1 The Township of Algonquin Highlands is committed to giving people with disabilities the opportunity to access all documents required by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, upon request, where reasonable, and subject to the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. These documents include the Township's *Customer Service Policy for Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities*, notices of temporary disruptions, training records, and written feedback process.
- 6.2 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.
- 6.3 Notice of the availability of all documents required by the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service* will be posted in the following locations:
  - (1) on the Township's website;
  - (2) at the Township offices in Stanhope and Dorset; and
  - (3) at the Stanhope and Dorset branches of the Haliburton County Public Library.