

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF CHISHOLM ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the Township of Chisholm is committed to providing quality programs and services that are accessible to all persons served by the Township.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the Township's obligation to facilitate the implementation of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act 2005 (AODA)*, and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Accessibility Standards for Customer Service) and addresses the following:

- The provision of programs 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;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availabilities and format of documents.

DEFINITIONS

“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;

“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, 1997;

“Service animal” an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,

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

“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 programs or services.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION

a) The Provision of Programs and Services to Persons with Disabilities:

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

- The Township’s programs and services are provided in a matter that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;

- The provision of the Township's programs 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 programs and,
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, or benefit from the Township's programs or services.

b) Assistive Devices

A person with a disability may provide their own device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's programs and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Township has determined 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 of assistance in obtaining, using and benefiting from the Township's programs and services, where the Township has such other measures available.

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

c) Service Animals

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Township shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Township shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's programs and services.

If it is not readily apparent the animal is a service animal, the Township may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his/her disability. The Township may also, or instead, ask for 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/her service animal is kept in control at all times.

d) Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Township shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the 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 will not charge such fee for the support person.

e) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Service and Facilities

Temporary disruptions in Municipal services or 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.

Disruptions of service are any instances where the public cannot gain access to the programs and services provided by the township.

Examples of disruptions of services or programs are: road closure, park closures, and full staff meeting where no one customer service is available.

If the disruption is anticipated, the Township will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption.

The Township will provide notice by posting a “**NOTICE OF DISRUPTION**” in a visible location where service is disrupted, posting the information on the Township website (chisholm.ca), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as possible.

f) Feedback Process

Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvement.

The public can provide feedback to the Township on the delivery of programs and services to persons with disabilities:

- (a) by mail addressed to: (Mrs.) Linda Ringler
Clerk-Treasurer
Township of Chisholm
2847 Chiswick Line, R.R.#4
Powassan, ON P0H 1Z0
- (b) by telephone at: (705)724-3526
- (c) in person at: Township Office
2847 Chiswick Line
- (d) or by email at: twpchisholm@ontera.net

Feedback will not be acted upon unless the person providing same includes his or her name, mailing address and daytime telephone number. Email addresses are not sufficient.

The Township will strive to provide acknowledgment to feedback within 10 business days from its receipt. Information about the feedback process will be available at the Township office.

g) Customer Service Training for the Municipal Staff

All Township employees, volunteers, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the Township and those involved in

developing customer service policies, practices and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness Training.

Contractors providing services on behalf of the Township to the public will be required to ensure staff has received the appropriate training. Contractors and agents will be required to submit in writing to the Township the number of persons trained and when the training occurred.

Training will be provided as soon as practicable upon the 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 programs and services to persons with disabilities.

The Township will keep records of the training provided, including dates training is provided and the number of persons trained.

Accessibility Awareness Training will include the following:

- i) How to provide programs and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- ii) How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- iii) The process for people to provide feedback to the Township about its provisions of programs and services to persons with disabilities, and how the Township responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- iv) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person to access programs and services;
- v) Review of the purposes of the AODA and Customer Service Standard
- vi) How to use equipment or devices available on township premises or provided by the Township;
- vii) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Township's programs and services.

h) **Notice of Availability and Format of Documents**

The Township shall notify persons to whom it provides programs and services that the documents required by the Customer Service Regulation 429/07 are available upon request. The notice will be given by posting the information at the Township office, by posting on the website at chisholm.ca and by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

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

The Township and the person with the disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

This policy is to take effect on January 1, 2010.