

Township of Alfred and Plantagenet

Title

Policy on customer service for people with disabilities

Legislative Reference

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 ("the standard") and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Effective Date:

January 1st 2010

Applies to:

This policy applies to the members of Council, employees, volunteers, contractors as well as to any other person who deals with the public on behalf of the Township of Alfred and Plantagenet.

Revisions

March 15, 2010

Subject

Accessibility Standards for customer service made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA).

Summary

The Accessibility standards for customer service came into force on January 1, 2008. It is the first accessibility standard created under the authority of the AODA.

All designated public sector organizations must meet all of the requirements of the standard by January 1, 2010 and file a report in 2010.

1. Scope

- a. Applies to all departments, or sections within the Township of Alfred and Plantagenet.
- b. Applies to all employees.
- c. Applies to all volunteers and contractors who interact with the public on behalf of the Township of Alfred and Plantagenet.

2. Purpose

Provide goods and services to persons with disabilities and adapt the services in order to comply with the customer service standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07.

- a. The municipality is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and visitors. To do this, we must recognize the diverse needs of all of our residents and visitors by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all.
- b. The municipality will promote accessibility through the development of policies, procedures and practices and by ensuring they consider people with disabilities. To do this we will make reasonable efforts to ensure the policies, procedures and practices address integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity.
- c. The municipality will communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
- d. The municipality shall ensure to provide training to staff, volunteers, contractors and every person who participates in developing the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services.
- e. The municipality shall use reasonable efforts to provide persons with disabilities an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.
- f. The municipality shall allow that a person with a disability be accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal in the municipal premises or premises open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If excluded by law, to take other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
- g. The municipality shall ensure that a person with a disability be accompanied by a support person to enter the premises together.

- h. The municipality shall ensure that support persons are allowed entry to those premises and give notice in advance of the fee payable, if any, for the support persons.

3. Principles

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- a. That goods and services be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- b. The provision of goods and services will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- c. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

4. Definitions

a. Person with Disabilities:

For the purpose of this policy « disability » is defined according to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* as :

- i. 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, physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- ii. A condition of mental impairment or developmental disability;
- iii. Learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- iv. 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*.

b. Service Animal

For the purpose of this policy, a “service animal” is defined as either:

- i. A “guide dog” as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights’ Act ; or
- ii. A “service animal” for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability,
 - If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability; or
 - If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

c. Support Person

For the purpose of this policy, a support person is defined as another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

5. Procedures and practices

a. Department procedures and practices will strive to reflect or achieve the following:

- i. Communications will be conducted in a manner that takes into consideration a person’s disability.
- ii. Staff, volunteers and contractors who interact with the public or who are involved in the development of policies, practices and procedures regarding the provision of goods or services for the Corporation will receive appropriate training.
- iii. Persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the Township of Alfred and Plantagenet that are typically open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
- iv. Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises normally open to the public.

- v. 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 of Alfred and Plantagenet will ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect to the support person.
- vi. Notice will be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access the Township of Alfred and Plantagenet services are temporarily disrupted.
- vii. The municipality will establish a feedback process to allow people to provide input on whether the municipality is providing accessible goods and services.
- viii. The municipality acknowledges that the persons with disabilities may elect to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Township of Alfred and Plantagenet.

6. Feedback process

- a. Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint regarding the accessible provision of goods or services he / she has received :
 - i. The member of the public can advise the Township of Alfred and Plantagenet of his or her complaint or concern through any of the following means :
 - (a) Make a submission through the on-line feedback form available on the municipality's website (www.alfred-plantagenet.com);
 - (b) Contact the Accessibility Coordinator by mail or phone : Accessibility Coordinator, Township of Alfred and Plantagenet, 205 Old Highway 17, P.O. Box 350, Plantagenet, Ontario, K0B 1L0, (613) 673-4797.
 - (c) Contact by telephone the Department Head or designate responsible for delivering the goods or services for which there is a complaint or comment;
 - ii. Attend the office and meet the Department Head or designate responsible for delivering the goods and services for which there is a complaint or comment;

- iii. A response will be provided to anyone providing a complaint or comment regarding the provision of accessible goods and services, in the same manner as the complaint or comment was received, within 30 days.
- iv. If deemed appropriate, a complaint or comment regarding the provision of accessible goods and services may be directed to the Municipal Advisory Committee for recommendations on how to address the complaint or comment.
- v. If agreement on the resolution of a complaint cannot be reached between the appropriate Department Head or designate and the complainant, the matter will be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer for disposition.
- vi. If the Chief Administrative Officer is unable to provide a satisfactory resolution to the complaint, the complainant has the option of presenting the complaint to Municipal Council for final disposition.

7. Service Disruption

- a. If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from the municipality's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services (for example, elevators) and if there is a planned temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the Township shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
- b. Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or service, in any, that are available.
- c. Notice will be given by posting the information about the service disruption at a conspicuous place on premises owned and operated by the Township, as well as by posting the information of the website (www.alfred-plantagenet.com) and providing audio messages by the automated telephone attendant for the facility where the service disruption is going to take place. If deemed appropriate and time permits, planned disruptions of services may also be published in local newspapers and broadcast on local radio stations.

- d. If a temporary service disruption of the website is planned, advance notice to the extent possible, keeping with the conditions of the service disruption, notice will be given as soon as feasibly possible in the manner described in Section 7.c.
- e. In the event of an unplanned service disruption, notice will be given as soon as feasibly possible in the manner described in Section 7.c.

8. Format of documents

- a. Should the Township be requested to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the municipality shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.
- b. Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Township should contain a note indicating "alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.
- c. The Township will consult the person requesting the document to determine what an accessible alternate format of the document or information would be, in accordance with the provisions of this policy.
- d. The time frame attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of the source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.
- e. Conversion shall be processed in-house whenever possible. When a member of the public requests a document, or portion thereof, in an alternate format, the department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not the public requester.
- f. In-house printing, when possible, should adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards or any subsequent accessible information and communication policies.

9.Training

The customer service standard requires providers to train staff on providing customer service to people with disabilities. This training must be given to everyone in the organization who deals with members of the public as well as other third parties who act on our behalf.

Training must also be given to everyone who develops policies, procedures and practices about the provision of goods or services to the public or other third parties.

Training is provided as soon as practicable after someone is hired.

- a. The Township shall ensure that the following persons are trained on the policies, practices and procedures establishing the accessible provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities:
 - i. Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Township, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
 - ii. Every person who participates in developing the municipality's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.
- b. This training will include a review of the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and the requirements of this policy and instructions about the following matters :
 - i. How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities, as outlined in this policy and associated practices and procedures.
 - ii. 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, as outlined in this policy and associated practices and procedures.
 - iii. How to use equipment or devices available on premises owned or leased by the Township or otherwise provided by the Township that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
 - iv. What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods or services provided by the Township.

10. Assistive Devices

- a. The Township acknowledges that persons with disabilities may elect to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services offered by the municipality.

- b. Should a person with a disability be unable to access the Township's goods and services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Township will ensure the following measures :
 - i. Determine if the provision of the good or service is inaccessible, based upon the individual's requirements.
 - ii. Assess potential accessible service delivery options to meet the needs of the individual.
 - iii. Notify the person with a disability of an alternative method of providing the goods or service and how they can access the alternative, temporarily or on a permanent basis.