Corporate Policy & Procedure Policy No: ACC-01 Effective Date: October 16, 2009 Supersedes: None Section: Accessibility Subject: Accessible Customer Service policy

Purpose

The Township of Woolwich strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all people. The Township of Woolwich is also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

Policy Requirements

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

The Township of Woolwich will provide goods and services to people with disabilities, with particular consideration of the following areas:

Communication

The Township of Woolwich will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. Staff who communicate with customers will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

The Township of Woolwich is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. Staff will be trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language, to speak clearly and slowly and to tailor their responses as much as possible in support of the individual.

The Township of Woolwich will offer to communicate with customers by other means, including relay service or e-mail, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Assistive Devices

The Township of Woolwich is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. Staff will be trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

The Township of Woolwich will also ensure that staff know how to use the assistive devices available on our premises.

Billing

The Township of Woolwich is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in large print or by e-mail upon request.

Any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

Service Animals and Support Persons

Service Animals

The Township of Woolwich is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. All staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public will be properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- i. If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons
 - relating to his or her disability; or
- ii. 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

The Township of Woolwich is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Township of Woolwich buildings 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 Township premises.

A 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.

No admission will be charged to the support person for recreation programming offered by the Township of Woolwich when a PAL (Personal Attendant for Leisure) Card is presented. The PAL Card:

- Identifies that the person named on the card requires the assistance of an accompanying personal attendant. All regular program fees/registration fees apply.
- Authorizes that the accompanying personal attendant will not be charged an additional fee.

PAL Cards will be recognized at the Woolwich Memorial Centre. The PAL will also be recognized anywhere a PAL Card from the Cities of Guelph, Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge is recognized.

PAL Cards can be obtained by contacting the Council and Information Services Department. Customers will be informed of this by a notice that will be posted in the Woolwich Memorial Centre and the Township of Woolwich website.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

The Township of Woolwich will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the Township, by posting it on the Township's website or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Training

The Township of Woolwich will provide training to:

- Every person who participates in developing the policy, practices and procedures under Ontario Regulation 429-07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Services;
- Every person who deals with the public on behalf of the Township, including third parties (i.e. employees, agents and volunteers)
- Current employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf;
- All those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures;
- Members of Township Council;
- New employees, volunteers, management, etc. will receive training as soon as practicable after commencing duties;
- Agents working on various projects for the municipality and who have been approved by successful tender shall be responsible for providing their own training to meet the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use the automatic door openers at Township buildings;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Township of Woolwich goods and services;
- Township of Woolwich's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Training Records

Training records shall be kept, including the dates when the training is provided, number of individuals to whom the training was provided and the signature of all those individuals trained on a particular date.

Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of the Township of Woolwich is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving all people, including those with disabilities. Comments regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Township of Woolwich provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by using a feedback form, by mail, e-mail, or verbally. All feedback should be directed to the Deputy-Clerk. Customers can expect a response within thirty (30) days.

Modifications to This or Other Policies

The Township of Woolwich is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of the Township of Woolwich that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions About This policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, inquiries should be referred to the Deputy-Clerk of the Township of Woolwich.

Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Thank you for visiting the Township of Woolwich. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit:

Staff member(s), department(s) or service location you visited:

Did we respond to your customer service needs today? YesNo

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

YesSomewhatNo (please explain below)

Did you have any problem accessing our goods and services?

YesSomewhat (please explain)No (please explain)

Please add any other comments you may have:

Contact Information (optional)

Name: Address: Tel: Email:

Personal information on this form is collected under the authority of the Municipal Act, R.S.O. 1980, c.302 (as amended), and will be used to providing additional information on accessible customer service measures.

Training Booklet

Guidelines for Delivering Accessible Customer Service at the Township of Woolwich

Part 1: Accessible Customer Service at the Township of Woolwich

The Township of Woolwich is committed to providing client-centered service. We know that focusing on meeting client needs will help us build trust and confidence with our community. It's a key focus for our organization, and it's the right thing to do. That's why we are committed to ensuring that we comply with Provincial standards to provide accessible customer service to all our customers including those with a disability.

Provincial Accessibility Standards

The **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005** (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province in five areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Transportation
- Employment
- Built Environment

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service is the first of the five standards and will take effect on Jan. 1, 2010. This standard details specific requirements for all service providers, including municipalities.

The following is a summary of the key requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service:

- 1) Establish policies, practices and procedures for providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
- 2) Communicate with a person with a disability in a way that takes their disability into account.
- 3) Set a policy to allow people to use their own personal assistive devices to access our goods or services.
- 4) Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of our premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law.
- 5) Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
- 6) Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on our behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the Customer Service Standards.
- 7) Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how you provide goods or services to people with disabilities. Also outline how you will respond to any feedback and take action on complaints.
- 8) Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on are unavailable.

Part 2: What do we mean when we say 'Disability'?

Disabilities come in many different forms, sometimes obvious and sometimes not.

A 'disability' as defined by the AODA includes:

- Any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness;
- A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- A mental disorder.

Part 3: What is Accessible Customer Service?

Accessible customer service encompasses a variety of elements. The Township of Woolwich is committed to providing customer service to persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- Respects their dignity and independence;
- Is integrated as fully as possible into the method of service delivery;
- Ensures reasonable efforts are made to provide an opportunity equal to that offered to other customers to obtain and use our goods or services;
- Allows persons with disabilities to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in a similar way as other customers; in other words, an equality of outcome;
- Is sensitive to an individual's need;
- Is responsive by delivering service in a timely manner, considering the nature of the service and the specific accommodation required

Accessible customer service can mean many things. Mostly, it is the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation for the service we provide.

Some examples of this include:

- A person who is blind may need to have information read aloud to them;
- An individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down;
- Someone who uses a wheelchair may need help in finding an accessible route.

Accessible customer service is good customer service — courteous, helpful and prompt.

Part 4: How should I interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices, the assistance of a service animal or a support person?

Assistive Devices:

Definition	Do	Don't
 Devices that people may bring with them or that are already on the premises and are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services provided by the Township of Woolwich. Include, but are not limited to, wheelchairs, walkers, white canes used by people who are blind or who have low vision, note- taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal 	 Ensure that the customer is permitted to enter the premises with the assistive device and to utilize the device unless excluded by law. Remove potential barriers to the use of assistive devices where possible. Offer assistive devices in a manner that respects the person's dignity and independence. Ensure persons with disabilities are aware of assistive devices available on the providers' premises 	• Lean on or reach over a customer or their device.
oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.	or otherwise supplied by the provider.	

Service Animals:

Definition	Do	Don't
•An animal trained specially	 Allow service animals 	 Talk to, touch or make
to assist an individual with a	anywhere customers	eye contact with the service
disability. Many times it is	normally have access.	animal.
readily apparent that the		
animal is used by a person	Permit the customer to	
with a disability for reasons	keep the service animal	
relating to their disability.	with him or her, unless	
For example, a guide dog	the animal is otherwise	
wearing a harness.	excluded by law from the premises i.e. areas where	
If it is not apparent that	food is prepared. They are	
the animal is a service	permitted access to dining	
animal, then a letter from a	or food ordering areas.	
physician or nurse		
confirming that the person		
requires the animal for		

Definition	Do	Don't
reasons relating to a disability, or the customer may be asked to present a certificate to confirm that the service animal has been trained to assist a person with a disability by a professional service animal institution.	• Leave the care and supervision of the service animal with the customer.	

Support Persons:

 Those who accompany a person with a disability to help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services. Provide the person with a disability access to their support person while on the premises. Obtain consent from the customer if confidential information is going to be shared when a support person is present. Speak directly to your 	Definition	Do	Don't
customer, not to the support person.	• Those who accompany a person with a disability to help them with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to	 Permit customers and their support person to enter the premises together. Provide the person with a disability access to their support person while on the premises. Obtain consent from the customer if confidential information is going to be shared when a support person is present. Speak directly to your customer, not to the 	• Do not charge support persons an admission fee or access fee for recreation programming if a PAL card

Part 5: How can I provide excellent service to customers with disabilities?

Each table below defines a specific category of disability and outlines some tips to help you provide service to customers.

Always start with person first language, which means by saying "person with a disability", rather than "a disabled person". In any interaction, it means addressing the person's service needs, rather than focusing on the disability.

Deaf-blind Disability:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
Cannot see or hear to some degree.	Speak directly to your customer, not the
Many will be accompanied by a support	support person.
person to help them communicate.	 Identify yourself to the support person.
	 The customer may explain how you should communicate with them.
	• Use clear, plain print on a contrasting colour on signage.

Hearing Disabilities:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
• Deaf — severe to profound hearing loss.	 Attract the customer's attention before speaking by waving your hand and say
• Hard of Hearing — a person who uses their residual hearing and speech to	'hello' from outside of their personal space.
communicate.	 Look directly at the person.
• Deafened — caused to hear poorly or not at all.	 Use pen and paper to communicate if necessary.
	 Speak clearly; keep your hands away from your face.
	 Reduce background noise.
	Ensure appropriate lighting.

Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
Can mildly or profoundly limit ability to	Don't assume what the customer can or
learn, communicate, do everyday activities	cannot do.
and live independently.	• Use plain language.
• May be an invisible disability.	
	 Take your time, be patient.
	 After assisting, ask: "Do you require
	additional information?"
	 Provide one piece of information at a time step-by-step instruction.

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
	Offer information in simple concepts.

Learning Disabilities:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
• Affects how person acquires, interprets, retains or takes in information.	• Take some time, be patient.
• May affect:	• Demonstrate a willingness to assist.
 – language based learning – mathematics – writing, fine motor skills 	 Speak normally, clearly and directly to your customer.
	• Provide information in a way that works for your customer (i.e. pen and paper).
	 Be prepared to explain any materials you provide.

Mental Health Disabilities:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
Mental illness is not a single disease but a broad classification for many disorders,	Be confident and reassuring.
including: – mood disorders, such as depression and	Do not be confrontational.
bipolar disorder, which affect how one feels;	 If the customer is in crisis, ask how best to help.
 schizophrenia, which affects how one perceives the world; 	• Take your customer seriously.
	 Don't take things personally.
 – anxiety disorders which affect how fearful one perceives places, events or situations to be; 	
 personality disorders, which affect how one sees oneself in relation to others; 	
 – eating disorders, such as anorexia or bulimia, which influence how one feels about food and one's body image. 	

Speech or Language Disabilities:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
May have problems communicating.	Don't make assumptions.
 May have difficulty pronouncing words, may slur or stutter. 	 Give them time to get their point across – be patient.
• May use communication boards or other assistive devices.	• Ask questions that can be answered 'yes' or 'no', if possible.
	 Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences.
	• You may want to use pen and paper.
	• Say: "I don't understand, can you repeat the question?"

Physical or Disabilities Affecting Mobility:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
May restrict a person in the following	 Speak directly to the customer.
ways:	
 – control or speed of movements – co-ordination and balance 	 Ask before you help.
 ability to grasp some objects ability to walk long distances 	Respect personal space.
 ability to sit or stand for prolonged periods 	 Don't move any items the customer may have.
F	
 Can be present at birth, result from disease, injury or be temporary. 	 Describe what you are going to do beforehand.
	• Don't leave your customer in an awkward, dangerous or undignified
	position.

Vision Disabilities:

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 Most individuals who are legally blind 	 Don't assume the customer can't see
have some remaining vision – very few are totally blind.	you.
	 Speak directly to your customer.
 Low or no vision can restrict ability to read signs, locate landmarks, or see hazards. 	 Offer your elbow to guide – if they accept, walk slowly.
• May use guide dog or white cane.	 Identify landmarks along the route.

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 May need to view written documents in large print or use a magnifier. 	 Be precise and descriptive with Information.
	• Don't leave the customer without advising them that you are leaving them.

Most importantly, if you are nervous, relax! People with disabilities are generally aware they may need some accommodations and will work with you; just remember to ask how you can help.

Part 6: What happens if for some reason we can't serve a person with a disability?

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as elevators under repair, renovations that limit access to an area or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruption in service is planned, and expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

Customers with disabilities may go to a lot of trouble to access services such as booking specialized transit or arranging for their support person to attend. By providing reasonable notice of service unavailability, you can save the customer an unnecessary trip. Notice can be provided by several methods, such as on the Township's website, by telephone or in writing.

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, provide notice quickly and in as many ways as possible. Please refer to the Accessible Customer Service Policy.

Consider offering alternative methods of service while informing those that may be impacted personally.

It is important to recognize that there are internal and external resources available to assist you in delivering service to persons with disabilities:

• Review the Corporate Accessible Customer Service Policy and the Accessibility Plan at <u>www.woolwich.ca</u>.

• Speak to your Supervisor and/or Manager.

• Bell Relay Service Operators (BCRS) are available to assist in placing or receiving calls to and from persons who use a TTY (telephone typewriter or teletypewriter). There is no charge for local calls. To place a call through the BCRS call 1-800-855-0511.

• Book a sign language interpreter at Ontario Interpreting Services www.chs.ca/en/ontario-interpreting-service/ontario-interpreting-services-18.html.

• Contact the Accessibility Coordinator at, 519-669-1647 extension 6005.

Mandatory Training Registration

Thank you for taking the time to review this important information to help you serve customers with disabilities. Your effort will help us serve all of our customers and will help build trust and confidence in our organization. Please complete and submit the registration card to Council and Information Services.

Accessible Customer Service Training is mandatory for Township employees.

DEFINITIONS

The following are definitions as they appear in the AODA .

Disability - means; 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 coordination, blindness or visual impairment, deafness or hearing impairment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or another animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

A condition of mental impairment or a development disability;

A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language.

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 communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, a policy or practice.

Feedback

The Township is required to provide information about the feedback process to the public. The Feedback Form can be obtained from CIS.

Offer as many communication methods for public feedback as possible (large print, e-mail, mail,



ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

The Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07 was created under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA).

The Standard sets out obligations for certain persons, businesses and other organizations to provide goods or services in a way that is accessible to people with disabilities in Ontario.

For further details please refer to the Province of Ontario's Ministry of Communication and Social Services website or www.accesson.ca for details.



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SERVICE?	CCESSIBLE

Providing good customer service is the goal regardless of a person's ability. If you are not sure, just ask "How May I Help You?"

Refer to the Township's policy on accessible customer service for detailed principles and specific rules relating to: communication, assistive devices, support persons, service animals, service disruptions and feedback.

Copies of the policy are available from CIS.

COMMUNICATION

Provide communication in a way that is usable and meaningful to your customer. Offer various methods such as: phone, in-person, electronic, hard-copy, etc. Be patient, be clear, be concise, be respectful. Provide a quiet environment and reduce

Provide a quiet environment and reduce background noise.

Ensure adequate lighting. Provide assistance by asking "May I Help You".

Say goodbye and thank you when a customer is leaving.

Assistive Devices

An assistive device might be a cane, wheelchair, scooter, magnifier, grasping tool, oxygen package, hearing aids, note-taking devices, recording devices, service animal, etc.

Allow customers to keep and use assistive devices as needed.

Make room to accommodate if needed.

Do not touch a person's personal assistive device, or if you must, ask first.

SUPPORT PERSONS

A support person assists a person with a disability for the purposes of participation, communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or access to services.

A support person might be a family member, friend volunteer or paid personnel. Speak to your customer, not the support person.

Do not discuss confidential matters in the presence of a support person without first getting permission.

Where admission fees are charged for Township recreational programming, and a PAL card is presented, the support person is not required to pay admission.

Staff may reserve the right to require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person, if the support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of other persons on Township property.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Service animals are animals that assist a person with a disability. They might open doors, pick up items, predict seizure, alert to sounds, etc.

Service animals are allowed to be with their owner at all times, unless otherwise prohibited by law. Specifically ,a kitchen where food is prepared is one of the few municipal environments for disallowing service animals.

Do not pet or talk to a service animal.

If it is not clear if an animal is a service animal a medical note can be requested.



SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

Any disruption to services shall be posted at all pertinent locations and the Township website.

Notice of the disruption should be posted as soon as possible and the reasons for the disruption, anticipated duration and alternative options should be included.

Ensure signs are posted at all access points and that they are removed immediately after disruption is over.