

Municipality of Killarney

Background: Accessible Customer Service Policy

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario legislature in July 2007, with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province.

The Ontario Government is issuing five sets of standards to achieve the vision of a barrier-free Ontario by 2025 (Customer Service, Built Environment, Employment, Information and Communication, and Transportation).

The first set of standards is the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, which came into force on January 1, 2008. This standard applies to every person or organization that provides goods or services to members of the public or other third parties and that has at least one employee in Ontario.

By January 1, 2010, municipalities must have policies, practices and procedures in place. Training on the policy and procedures, must be provided to:

- every person who deals with the public, or third parties on behalf of the public, including employees, volunteers, contractors and agents
- every person who participates in developing the provider's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services (i.e. Council members, Committee members).

Municipalities must provide this training prior to January 1, 2010.

Accessible Customer Service - Requirements for Policies

Policies must not violate the principles of Accessible Customer Service, which are:

- Dignity
- Independence
- Integration
- Equal Opportunity
- Respect

Policies must address the following aspects of the Customer Service Standard:

- Accessible customer service procedures and policies must be established;
- Staff must be trained;
- A feedback method must be established for relevant suggestions/complaints;
- Alternate communication methods must be available;
- A method must be outlined for providing notice of a disruption in accessible services.

Accessible Customer Service - Best Practices and Procedures

This manual establishes policies, practices and procedures on providing goods and services to people with disabilities. It outlines various disabilities and provides practices and procedures on how to deal with specific disabilities whether readily apparent or not.

Staff will be trained on the following:

- the purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and requirements of the legislation;
- how to interact and communicate with persons with various disabilities and those who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person;
- how to use assistive devices at municipal facilities;
- what to do if a person is having difficulty accessing services or premises.

Once Council has adopted the *Accessible Customer Service Policy* and the *Best Practices and Procedures Manual*, a training schedule can be implemented. More preparation is required before group training sessions can begin so that we can determine appropriate timing for this training.

Council members and Committee members will also have to be trained. Frontline staff (those who have direct contact with the public) will require more intensive training than those individuals who may have occasional contact.

Training must be provided on an ongoing basis if policies, practices and procedures change. After the initial training for all staff in 2009, all new employees will be trained as soon as possible after they commence employment.

ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE POLICY

The Municipality of Killarney strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all people. The municipality 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 do other non-disabled members of the public.

Exclusion

This Accessibility Customer Service Policy shall not apply during any period where the Mayor, or the Mayor's designate, has declared a "State of Emergency" as defined under the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*.

PROVIDING GOODS AND SERVICES TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The municipality will provide goods and services to persons with disabilities, with particular consideration to the following areas:

Communication

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

The municipality is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to the public. Staff will be trained to communicate with persons 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 municipality will offer to communicate with persons by other means, including e-mail, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Assistive Devices

The municipality 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 become familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by persons with a disability while accessing our goods or services. The municipality will also ensure that staff members know how to use any assistive devices which are available or become available on our premises.

Correspondence, Invoices and Other Documentation

The municipality is committed to providing accessible information to the public. For this reason, upon request, correspondence, invoices and other documentation will be provided in large print or by e-mail.

Municipal staff may provide a document, or information contained in a document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability. Municipal staff and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information. Any questions customers may have about the content of a document will be answered in person, by telephone or e-mail.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

Service Animals

An animal is a service animal for a person with disabilities if:

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

The municipality is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal, in those areas of our premises that are normally 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 persons who are accompanied by a service animal.

Support Person

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.

The municipality 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 the municipality's 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 municipal premises.

Where any admission fee is required to utilize the municipality's facilities or to attend municipal events, no admission fee will be charged to the support person who is accompanying a person with a disability. Where relevant, the public will be informed of this policy by a notice that will be posted at each building or event which charges admission fees.

Notice of Disruption in Service

The municipality will provide the public 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 at the municipal office and other relevant premises owned or operated by the municipality, and by posting it on the municipality's website or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

Training

The municipality will provide training to:

- every person who participates in developing policies, practices and procedures under Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
- every person who deals with the public on behalf of the municipality, including 3rd parties, i.e. employees, agents and volunteers
- current employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third- parties on their behalf will receive training by January I, 2010
- all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures will receive training by January I, 2010
- members of Council, who will receive this training by January 1, 2010

New employees, volunteers, councillors, etc. shall receive training as soon as practicable after commencing duties, and further training if policies or procedures change.

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 who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- how to use the automatic door openers on the municipality's premises
- what to do if a person has difficulty accessing the municipality's goods and services
- the municipality's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Training records shall be kept:

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 municipality's ultimate goal is to maintain an excellent reputation for meeting high quality service standards when dealing with the public, including those with disabilities. Comments regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the municipality's accessible services policy/procedures can be provided by using a feedback form, by mail, e-mail, or verbally. All feedback should be directed to the Clerk- Treasurer. The public can expect a response to their feedback within thirty (30) days.

Modifications to This or Other Policies

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

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

Questions About This Policy

This policy exists to promote service excellence regarding persons with disabilities as well as the general public. If anyone has a question about this policy, or if the purpose of this policy is not understood, inquiries should be referred to the Clerk-Treasurer.

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Notice of Disruption Form

Accessible Services for Persons with Disabilities

Date:

Location of Disruption:

Type of Disruption:

Reason for Disruption:

Restoration of Service (Estimated Date/Time):

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Feedback Form

Accessible Services for Persons with Disabilities

Municipal Building/Location Visited: _____

Date of Visit: _____ Time of Visit: _____

What services were you looking for?

Thank you for taking the time to comment on our services. Please submit this form to the Clerk-Treasurer's office.

Municipality of Killarney
32 Commissioner Street
Killarney ON P0M 2A0

Tel: 705-287-2424

Fax: 705-287-2660

Email:

inquiries@municipalityofkillarney.ca

Was our service provided in an accessible manner? _____ (Yes/No/Partly)

What can we do to make it easier for you to access our goods and services?

If you would like us to contact you, please leave your name, along with your address, telephone number and/or email address.