

The Corporation of The City of North Bay

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| POLICIES AND PROCEDURES | APPROVED: MARCH 2, 2009 COUNCIL RESOLUTION 2009-132 |
| | SUBJECT: ACCESSIBILITY POLICY - CUSTOMER SERVICE |

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to recognize the City of North Bay'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 goods 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;
- Training;
- Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities; and
- Notice of availability and format of documents.

DEFINITIONS

"Accessibility standard" means an accessibility standard made by regulation under section 6 of the AODA.

"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.

"Blind person" means a person who because of blindness is dependent on a guide dog or white cane.

"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*; (“handicap”).

"Guide dog" means a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having the qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*.

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

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

POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the City of North Bay is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons served by the Municipality.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND IMPLEMENTATION:

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

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

- The City’s goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- The provision of the City’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 City’s goods or services and,
- Persons with disabilities are given an opportunity equal to that of persons without disabilities to obtain, use or benefit from the City’s goods and services.

b) Service Animals:

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated by the City accompanied by a service animal and keep the animal with them if the public has access to such premises and the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If the service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the City will look to other available measures to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the City's goods and services. The safety, care and protection of the community at large will take priority over any individual.

If it is not readily apparent the animal is a service animal, the City 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 City 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.

c) Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises.

If it is not readily apparent the support person is required, the City may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons relating to his/her disability.

The City may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health or safety of others on the premises.

Where fees for services requiring access by the disabled person to City facilities are advertised or promoted by the City, unless otherwise communicated in advance, the fee charged to a support person accompanying the disabled person will be fifty (50) percent of the value charged to the disabled person. The City may ask, at the time of purchase, the person with the disability for a letter from a qualified medical physician confirming the person requires a support person for reasons related to his/her disability.

d) Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities

Temporary disruptions in City services or facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the City's control or knowledge.

The City will make reasonable effort 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.

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

The City will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the City's website (www.cityofnorthbay.ca), or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

e) 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 City on the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities:

- (a) by mail addressed to: City Clerk
P.O. Box 360,
City of North Bay, ON P1B 8H8
- (b) by telephone: (705) 474-0400
- (c) in person at: City Clerk's Office, 5th Floor City Hall
- (d) or by email to: cathy.conrad@cityofnorthbay.ca

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

The City will strive to provide responses to feedback within ten (10) business days from its receipt. Information about the feedback process will be posted on the City's website (www.cityofnorthbay.ca) and/or in other appropriate locations.

f) Assistive Devices

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the City 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 City may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures of assistance in obtaining, using and benefiting from the City's goods and services, where the City 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.

g) Training

All City employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who deal with the public on behalf of the City and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness Training within six months of beginning their duties.

The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his/her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

Contractors and agents providing services on behalf of the City to the public will be required to ensure staff has received the appropriate training

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 City's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

The City 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:

- (a) How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- (b) How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- (c) The process for people to provide feedback to the City about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the City responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- (d) 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 goods and services;
- (e) Information on other City policies, practices, and procedures dealing with the AODA;
- (f) A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- (g) How to use equipment or devices available on City premises or provided by The City that may help with the provision of goods and services; and
- (h) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing City's goods and services.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This policy comes into effect on January 1, 2010.