Accessible Standards for Customer Service & Use of Assistive Devices Policy and Procedures

TOWNSHIP OF WELLINGTON NORTH
POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL

DEPARTMENT		**POLICY NUMBER**
SECTION		**EFFECTIVE DATE: January 2009**
SUBJECT	**Accessible Standards for Customer Service & Use of Assistive Devices**	
AUTHORITY	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Customer Service Standard)	

PURPOSE

The Township of Wellington North is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents. To do this, we must recognize the diverse needs of all of our residents and respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. As an employer, and a provider of services, the Township of Wellington North is committed to ensuring its services are provided in an accessible manner.

The Township of Wellington North will promote accessibility through the development of policies, procedures and practices and by ensuring they consider people with disabilities. To do this we must ensure the policies, procedures and practices address **integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity.**

PRINCIPLES

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

(i) That goods and services be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.

(ii) The provision of goods and services to people with disabilities, and others, 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.

(ii) People with disabilities will be given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES:

Procedures and practices will strive to reflect or achieve the following:

(i) Communication will be considered, in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability.

(ii) Staff will receive appropriate training.

(iii) People 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 Wellington North that are open to the public.

(iv) People with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises open to the public.

(v) Admission fees will be waived for a support person who accompanies a person with a disability.

(vi) Notice will be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access Wellington North services are temporarily disrupted.

(vii) Wellington North will establish a feedback process to allow people to provide feedback on how we are providing services to person's with disabilities.

(viii) Wellington North will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Township of Wellington North.

PROCEDURES

Support Persons

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.

Wellington North will allow people with disabilities, who require, to be accompanied by a support person in all Township owned and operated public facilities. *Wellington North reserves the right to request the person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.*

The Township of Wellington North will waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability, into facilities where admission is charged.

(a) Member of public should notify a staff member the presence of the support person.

(b) Admission fees will be waived for the support person.

(c) If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the person with the disability.

Feedback Process

To submit a complaint:

Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint regarding the service they have received:

(a) The member of the public with the complaint or concern should have a discussion with the staff person at Wellington North who is involved in the situation.

(b) Should the discussion not resolve the complaint or the member of the public is uncomfortable discussing the issue with the staff person, the member of the public should fill out a complaint form. A staff person can assist the member of the public with the *complaint form* in a manner that takes into consideration their disability.

Feedback Process (continued)

(c) The information to be provided by the member of the public should include their personal contact information, the date, a description of the complaint, and what the member of the public requests to resolve the complaint. This information should be documented on the complaint form.

(d) The complaint should be forwarded to the department head (or designate) responsible for the department.

(e) The department head (or designate) will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of the CAO/Clerk (or designate).

(f) The member of the public will be contacted once a resolution has been reached.

To submit a suggestion:

Should a member of the public wish to provide the Township of Wellington North with a suggestion on how to improve our service:

(a) Member of the public will inform staff member of suggestion.

(b) Staff member will assist member of the public in filling out the complaint form, should they require assistance.

(c) Member of the public will be notified in a timely manner of how the Township of Wellington North will proceed with their suggestion.

(d) Staff response should include: an explanation of how we will implement the suggestion, a response indicating further investigation or an explanation why we are unable to implement the suggestion.

All complaints and suggestions should be recorded on a suggestion form, and forwarded to the responsible department head (or designate) and CAO/Clerk (or designate)

Service Disruption

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, people with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the provider (for example, elevators) and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, Wellington North shall give notice of the disruption to the public.

Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider of goods or services, as well as by posting it on the Township of Wellington North website.

If the Township of Wellington North Website should expect a temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible, keeping with the conditions of the service disruption section of this policy, shall be provided on the website.

Service Animals

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,

(a) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the 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.

Wellington North will allow the person and the animal onto all Township of Wellington North owned and operated public facilities, and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. *areas that are open to the public

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

Format of Documents

Should the Township of Wellington North be required to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, Wellington North shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Corporation of the Township of Wellington North should contain a note indicating, "alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.

The Township of Wellington North and the person with a disability will try to agree upon the format to be used for the document or information, subject to feasibility requirements of this policy.

Alternative formats that should be considered by the Township of Wellington North and the person with the disability will include, but are not limited to:

(i) Print Requests:
Requests for alternative formats should be honoured in the most practical manner depending on the media chosen, the size and complexity of the document, the quality and source of the documents, the feasibility of the request (including the cost) and the number of documents to be converted. It should be noted that when request for one of these formats is received and deemed feasible, staff should make every attempt to respond to the request in the most practical manner and to the satisfaction of the requestor. If it is determined that the format requested is not feasible, then other alternative methods of providing the information should be explored that will still meet the needs of the requestor (e.g. Audio CD or explaining the information verbally etc.).

(a) Staff members receives request from member of the public for alternative format.

(b) Employee fills out alternative format request form.

(c) Forwards request onto the responsible department head (or designate).

(d) The responsible department head (or designate), and CAO/Clerk (or designate) will determine feasibility, if feasible;

(e) Proceed with alternative format request.

(f) If not feasible; contact individual with feasible solution.

(ii) ASL Interpreter Request:

(a) Employee receives request from public for ASL Interpreter.

(b) Employee fills out alternative format request form.

(c) Forwards request onto the responsible department head (or designate).

(d) The responsible department head (or designate) contacts Canadian Hearing Society to make request.

(e) Once Canadian Hearing Society confirms attendance of ASL Interpreter, the responsible department head (or designate) contacts individual.

(f) If ASL Interpreter is not available, individual will be contacted with an alternative solution.

Feasibility will be determined based upon cost in relation to size of document and time associated with processing document requests.

The time frame attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

Conversion shall be processed in-house wherever possible. When a member of the public requests a piece of Township documentation in a multiple format, the department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not the public requestor.

In-house printing, where possible, should adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards.

Training

The Township of Wellington North shall ensure that the following people receive training about the provision of its goods or services to people with disabilities:

(a) 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.

(b) Every person who participates in developing the Township's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this policy and instruction about the following matters:

(a) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disability, as outline in this policy and procedures.

(b) How to interact with people 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 procedures.

(c) How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.

(d) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider's goods or services.

The Township of Wellington North will log and retain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, date the training was completed.

The Township of Wellington North will customize the training going forward, based on the actual experiences and usage of the people with disability in Wellington North owned or operated facilities.

Assistive Devices

The Township of Wellington North will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by Wellington North.

Should a person with a disability be unable to access the Township's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Township of Wellington North will ensure the following measures:

(a) Determine if service is inaccessible, based upon individual requirements.

(b) Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.

(c) Notify person with disability of alternative service and how they can access the service, temporarily or on a permanent basis.

Contact Information

For more information about this policy, or questions related to accessibility at the Township of Wellington North, please contact us:

Township of Wellington North
7490 Sideroad 7 West,
P. O. Box 125,
Kenilworth, ON N0G 2E0
Phone: 519-848-3620 Fax: 519-848-3228
Email: township@wellington-north.com

Links

Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07:
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005:
http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm

Ministry of Community and Social Services:
http://www.mcss.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario

AccessON: www.accesson.ca