



The Corporation of the County of Bruce

Policy: Accessible Customer Service Policy

Department: Clerk-Treasury

Section: Administration

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1. Purchase and Background Information

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (the "AODA") is a Provincial Act with the purpose of developing, implementing and enforcing accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for persons with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures and premises.

Under the AODA, Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled "Accessibility Standards for Customer Service" came into force on January 1, 2008. This Regulation establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) 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

2. Application

This policy applies to all persons who deal with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the County, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer, student on placement, or otherwise and all persons who participate in developing the County's policies, practices and procedures governing the provisions of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.

3. Definitions

Assistive Device

A device used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services of persons or organizations covered by the Customer Service Standard.

County

The Corporation of the County of Bruce, excluding boards and commissions

Disability

- 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, muteness or speech impediment, or 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 a development disability;
- iii)** a 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;
- v)** an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

Guide Dog

A guide dog as defined in section 1 of the Blind Persons' Rights Act is a dog trained as a guide for a blind person and having qualifications prescribed by the regulations under the Blind Persons' Rights Act.

Nurse

A Registered Nurse or Registered Practical Nurse who is a registered member in good standing with the College of Nurses of Ontario.

Physician

A physician who is a registered member, in good standing, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

Service Animal

Any animal used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to the disability where it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or where the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that he or she requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability; or a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

Support Person

A person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

4. Policy Statement

The Corporation of the County of Bruce is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons that we serve.

5. General Principles

(A) The Provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

The County of Bruce will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- The County's goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- The provision of the County'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 County'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 County's goods and services.

(B) Communication with Persons with Disabilities

When communicating with a person with a disability, the County will do so in a manner that takes into account the persons' disability.

(C) Notice of Temporary Disruption in Services and Facilities

The County is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. Temporary disruptions in the County's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the County's control or knowledge.

The County will make reasonable efforts 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. The County will make reasonable efforts to provide prior notice of planned disruption, if possible, recognizing that in some circumstances such as in the situation of unplanned temporary disruption, advance notice will not be possible. In such cases, the County will provide notice as soon as possible.

When temporary disruptions occur to the County's services or facilities, the County will provide notice by posting the information in visible places, or on the County's website or by any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances as soon as reasonably possible.

(D) Assistive Devices and other Measures that Assist with Accessibility

A person with a disability may provide their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and benefiting from the County's goods and services. Exceptions may occur in situations where the County has determined that 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 County may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measures to assist him or her in obtaining, using and benefiting from the County's goods and services, where the County has such other measures available.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

(E) Service Animals

Persons with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, by the County 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 a service animal is excluded by law, the County will ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the County's goods and services.

If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the County may ask the person with a disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

The County may also, or instead, ask for a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her service animal is kept in control at all times.

(F) Support Persons

A person with a disability may enter premises owned and operated, or operated by the County with a support person and have access to the support person while on the premises.

The County may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on County premises in situations where it is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the County's goods and services, will be permitted to attend at no charge where an admission fee is applicable.

(G) Feedback

The County of Bruce is committed to providing high quality goods and services to all members of the public it serves. Feedback from the public is welcomed as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

Feedback from a member of the public about the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities may be given by telephone, in person, in writing, in electronic format or through other methods. Use of the County's Customer Service Feedback Form is encouraged.

(H) Training

The County will ensure that all persons to whom this policy applies receive training as required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service. The amount and format of training given will be tailored to suit each person's interactions with the public and his or her involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services.

The content of this training will include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA;
- The requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)

- Instruction on the County's policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty assessing the County's goods or services;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal; and
- Information about the equipment or devices available on the County's premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities

Timeline for Training

Training will be provided as soon as practical as well as on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the County's policies, procedures and practices governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

Records of Training

The County will keep records of the training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it is provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject to the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA).

6. Availability and Format of Documents

All documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, including the County's Accessible Customer Service policies, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training records and written feedback process are available upon request, subject to MFIPPA.

7. Notice of the Availability of Documents

Notice of the availability of all documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be posted on the County's website, and available through the County Clerk's Office.