



City of Belleville

Subject: Accessible Standards for Customer Service & Use of Assistive Devices

Date: August 21, 2017

Revised:

1. POLICY

The Corporation of the City of Belleville (the “Corporation”) is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and customers. To do this, we must recognize the diverse needs of all individuals and respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to everyone. As an employer and a provider of services, the Corporation is committed to ensuring its services are provided in an accessible and inclusive manner.

The Corporation will promote accessibility by ensuring they consider people with disabilities when developing policies, procedures and practices. The Corporation will ensure the policies, procedures and practices address **integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity**.

2. SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees and volunteers of the Corporation.

3. PRINCIPLES

The Corporation is committed to providing outstanding accessible service for our residents and customers. The delivery or access of our goods, services, and facilities will be offered in a manner which:

- Respects the dignity and independence of all persons
- Ensures all persons have equal opportunity to benefit from the goods, services, or facilities
- Ensures all persons can access goods, services or facilities in the same manner
- Takes into account a person’s disability, and unique strengths or needs

This policy conforms with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*; *Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Customer Service Standard)* and the *Ontario Human Rights Code*.

4. PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Training

The Corporation shall ensure that all employees and volunteers of the Corporation receive training about the provision of its goods or services to people with disabilities.

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 outlined 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 Corporation 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 Corporation will log and retain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed.

The Corporation will customize the training going forward, based on the actual experiences in City owned or operated facilities.

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.

The Corporation will allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person in all City owned and operated public facilities; support persons will be permitted to enter with the individual whom they support, and the person with the disability will not be denied access to their support person while on the premise. In consultation with a person with a disability, *the Corporation 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 City of Belleville will waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability into facilities where admission is charged.

1. Member of public should notify a staff member of the presence of the support person.
2. Admission fees will be waived for the support person.
3. If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the person with the disability.

Service Animals

For the purpose of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as:

- (i) A "guide dog," as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*, or

- (ii) An animal that is readily identified as one being used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability, as apparent through visual indicators such as a vest or harness; or
- (iii) An animal specified in a letter from any regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

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

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.

Assistive Devices

Assistive devices which are provided by the Corporation are available at the various City owned locations and facilities, and may differ for each specific location. Training in the operation of assistive devices will be provided for all employees and volunteers by their Supervisor or Manager.

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

Should a person with a disability be unable to access the City's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Corporation will take 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.

Format of Documents

The Corporation will make available to the public any documents related to accessibility and customer service policies. Notice of the availability of these documents will be posted in a conspicuous location at all City owned facilities. Upon request the Corporation will provide the document or the information in the document in a format that takes into account a person's disability.

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

The Corporation will consult the person with a disability to agree upon the format to be used for the document or information, subject to feasibility requirements of this policy.

Service Disruption

If there is a temporary disruption to facilities or services which enable access to the Corporation's goods or services, notice of such a disruption will be given to the public.

A notice of disruption will include the following information: reason for the disruption, anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services that are available. Service disruption notifications will be posted in a conspicuous place on City owned premises, as well as on the City of Belleville's website.

If the City of Belleville website should expect a temporary service disruption, advanced notice will be provided on the website.

Feedback Process

The Corporation has a feedback process through which people with disabilities, or a member of the public on their behalf, are encouraged to provide comments and concerns regarding the goods or services they receive through the City.

Feedback can be submitted by:

- i) Down loading the form on the City's website and submitting it to City Hall.
- ii) Sending comments in writing to City Hall by way of a letter in the mail.
- iii) Coming in person to City Hall where a staff member can provide a feedback form, in an alternate format if requested, and if requested will assist with its completion.
- iv) Via email or by phone to any staff member; comments or concerns received through these means will be documented by the staff member who receives them.

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 is encouraged to have a discussion with the staff person at the City of Belleville who is involved in the situation. The staff person at the City of Belleville should try working with the individual to determine "how can we best assist you?"
- (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 will be asked to submit their concerns through the established feedback process and can do so in a manner which takes into account their disability. When requested, a staff member can assist the individual in submitting feedback through their method of choice.
- (c) The information to be provided by the member of the public should include the date, a description of the complaint, and what the member of the public requests to resolve the complaint. If not already, this information should be documented in writing. If the individual requests a response, they will also be asked to provide their personal contact information and confirm the method in which they would like to receive the response (ex. Email, written letter, phone call, in person meeting etc.).

- (d) The complaint will be forwarded to the Manager and Director responsible for the department in which the situation occurred, and the AODA Coordinator will also be copied.
- (e) The department Manager will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of the AODA Coordinator.
- (f) The Corporation will follow up and respond to the individual who submitted the complaint within 10 business days, and will do so in the manner requested, or in a manner which takes into account the individual's disability.

Should a member of the public wish to provide the Corporation with suggestions on how to improve our services or facilities:

- a) The member of the public can:
 - Send an email to a staff member of the City
 - Call a staff member of the City
 - Come to City Hall and speak with a staff member of the City
 - Submit suggestions in writing through the mail by either downloading the feedback form from the City's website or writing a personal letter, and sending it to City Hall.
 - When requested, a staff member will assist the member of the public in documenting the suggestion in writing, and do so in a manner which takes into account a person's disability.
- (b) Member of the public will be notified within 10 business days of how the Corporation will proceed with their suggestion.

Response on behalf of the Corporation as appropriate will:

- a) Include an explanation of how we will implement the suggestion.
- b) Indicate further investigation or follow up that will be required and possible time line.
- c) An explanation of why we are unable to implement the suggestion.
- d) If we are unable to implement the suggestion and the comments are concerning a barrier in the provision of goods, services, or facilities the Corporation will offer alternate methods of accommodation.

All complaints and suggestions will be recorded on a feedback form, and forwarded to the responsible Manager, Director, the Human Resources Department, and AODA Coordinator.