

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

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Policy Statement

The City of Kenora is committed to ensuring its services are provided in an accessible manner. The City recognizes the diverse needs of all residents and strives to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all.

The City of Kenora shall promote accessibility through the development of policies, practices, and procedures which ensure people with disabilities are considered. The City shall ensure that policies, practices, and procedures related to customer service address integration, independence, dignity, and equal opportunity.

Operating Principles

Reasonable efforts shall be made to ensure the following:

- i) That goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- ii) The provision of goods and services to people with disabilities, and others, are 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 provided by the City of Kenora; and
- iii) People with disabilities are given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use, and benefit from the goods and services provided by the City of Kenora.

Procedures

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

- i) Communication is conducted in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability;
- ii) Staff receive appropriate training on providing accessible customer service;
- iii) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a service animal shall be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the City of Kenora that are open to the public; Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person shall be permitted to be accompanied by that support person on City premises open to the public;

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- iv) Prior notice shall be provided by the City for any admission fees applicable to support persons who accompany persons with disabilities;
- v) Notice shall be provided when it is known that facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access City of Kenora services are temporarily disrupted;
- vi) A feedback process shall be established which allows people to provide feedback on how we are providing services to persons with disabilities;
- vii) Persons with disabilities shall be allowed to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use, or benefit from the services offered by the City of Kenora; and
- viii) City policies, practices, and procedures related to providing accessible customer service shall be available to the public.

Guidelines

Support Persons

For the purpose of this policy, a 'support person' is defined as, 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 City of Kenora shall allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person as required in all City owned and operated public facilities. The City of Kenora reserves the right to request the person with a disability to 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.

Before making a decision, the City of Kenora will:

- i. consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- ii. consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- iii. determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

In such a situation, where a support person is deemed necessary the City of Kenora will waive the admission fee or fare for the support person, if one exists.

Service Animals

For the purposes 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*, R.S.O. 1990, c.B.7; or
- ii) An animal used by a person with a disability, including but not limited to a dog, if:

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- a. It is readily apparent that such animal is used by the person for reasons related to his or her disability; or
- b. If the person provides documentation from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires such animal for reasons relating to his or her disability.

The City of Kenora shall allow the person and the animal into all public facilities owned and operated by the City, and shall 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 otherwise excluded by law from City premises, the City of Kenora shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use, or benefit from goods or services provided by the City.

Assistive Devices

For the purposes of this policy, 'assistive devices' are defined as any piece of equipment or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of persons with disabilities.

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

Should a person with a disability be unable to access the City's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the City of Kenora shall work with the individual to:

- i) Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual; and
- ii) Identify alternative services and how a person with a disability can access the services, either temporarily or on a permanent basis.

Formats of Documents

For the purposes of this policy, 'alternate formats of information' are defined as data, facts, knowledge, and subject matter, presented in a format that take into account a person's disability. This information may exist in many formats, such as text, numbers, image, or audio.

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

Should the City of Kenora be required to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the City shall provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

The City of Kenora and the person requesting the document or information may agree upon the format to be used for any document or information, subject to feasibility requirements of this policy.

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

For timeframe attached to the process to convert the document to an alternate format of information may vary depending on the media, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be provided in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

Converting documents to an alternate format of information shall be processed in-house whenever possible. When a member of the public requests a document in an alternative format of information, the City department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not the public requestor.

Service Disruption

For the purposes of this policy, a 'facility of service disruption' is defined as planned and unplanned unavailability of facilities or services operation by the City of Kenora, including but not limited to closed washroom facilities, elevators that are inoperable due to maintenance and websites that are temporarily unavailable.

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

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Notice of any facility or service disruption shall be given by posting the information in a conspicuous location on the relevant City premises and, whenever possible, by posting it on the City of Kenora website.

Notice of any facility or service 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.

If the City of Kenora website should experience a planned temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible, keeping with the conditions of the facility or service disruption section of this policy, shall be provided on the website.

Feedback Process

The City of Kenora has established a process for receiving and responding to feedback on the manner in which the City of Kenora provides goods and services to persons with disabilities. Information about this process shall be made available to the public.

Should a member of the public wish to provide feedback to the City of Kenora on the goods or services provided by the City of Kenora, feedback can be provided in the following manner:

- i) In person, at 1 Main St South
- ii) By telephone, via the General Inquiries telephone line, at 807-467-2000
- iii) By email, via the General Inquiries email address at service@kenora.ca

Once feedback has been received, the following process will be implemented:

- i) The Receptionist, as the case may be, will document the receipt of feedback in the Service Tracking System;
- ii) All feedback shall be forwarded by the internal Customer Service Accessibility Committee, to the relevant Staff contact;
- iii) The relevant Staff contact shall take appropriate action upon receiving feedback; and
- iv) If appropriate, the Staff contact or a representative of the Customer Service Accessibility Committee will follow-up with the person who provided the feedback.
- v) The Staff contact will ensure that feedback is provided or arranged in an accessible format or with communication supports, on request.

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- vi) The Staff contact, together with the Customer Service Accessibility Committee, shall assess current policies, practices, and procedures to determine if any changes are required.

Training

The City of Kenora shall ensure the following people receive training about the provision of its goods and services to people with disabilities:

- i) Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer, or otherwise; and
- ii) Every person who participates in developing the City's policies, practices, and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

Training shall include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, S.O. 2005, c.11, the requirements of this policy, and instruction in the following matters, as necessary:

- i) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities as outlined in this policy and guidelines;
- ii) How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person, as outlined in this policy and guidelines;
- iii) How to use equipment or devices available on City owned or operated premises, or otherwise provided by the City of Kenora, that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability; and
- iv) What to do if person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the City's goods or services.

The City of Kenora shall log and maintain records which record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed. Training shall also be provided on an ongoing basis when changes are made to this policy and guidelines.

See Also

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
 Ontario Regulation 429/07, *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.*
Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c.H.19

Note

Any reference to a statute herein is to such statute and to the regulations made pursuant to such statute as such statute and regulations may at any time be amended or modified

and in effect, and to any statute or regulations that may be passed that have the effect of supplementing or superseding such statute or regulations.