

Town of Hearst

POLICY ON ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

**By-law No. 85-09
November 17, 2009**



PREAMBLE

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* was enacted by the Province to create standards for improving opportunities for people with disabilities to participate and be involved in all aspects of life in communities within Ontario. Regulations made pursuant to the *AODA* currently establish or will establish standards to improve accessibility in customer service, transportation, employment and the built environment. This policy has been prepared in compliance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 to address the delivery of customer services by the Corporation of the Town of Hearst.

COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

The Council of the Corporation of the Town of Hearst is committed to:

- The continual improvement of access to all municipally owned facilities, premises and services for persons with disabilities.
- The provision of quality services to all members of the community in an equitable manner.

POLICY STATEMENT ON ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

1. Application

- 1.1 This policy shall apply to every person, employee, agent, contractor, organization, volunteer or other third party who deals with the public on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Hearst for goods and services under its jurisdiction.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of this policy, the following meanings shall apply to words used in this policy:
- a) assistive device shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids, for example canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.;
 - b) disability shall mean have the same meaning as its definition under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*;
 - c) Municipality shall mean the Corporation of the Town of Hearst;
 - d) person with a disability shall mean those individuals that are afflicted with a disability as defined under the *Ontario Human Rights Code*;

- e) provider shall mean an employee, agent, contractor, organization, volunteer or other person or third party who deals with the public on behalf of the Corporation of the Town of Hearst for goods and services under its jurisdiction;
 - f) service animal shall mean an animal that provides a service, does work or performs tasks for a person with a disability, whether that animal is specifically trained or not, and includes guide dogs as defined under the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*; and
 - g) support person shall mean in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help such person with communications, mobility, personal care, medical needs and/or access to goods and services, whether or not said support person is a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend.
- 2.2 In this policy, words in the present tense include the future, words in singular include plural, words in the masculine gender include the feminine, and vice versa.

3. Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures

- 3.1 The Municipality shall establish policies, practices and procedures from time to time as deemed advisable to govern the provision of municipal goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- 3.2 The Municipality shall use all reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:
- a) Goods and services provided by the Municipality shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
 - b) The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities shall be the same as and shall be integrated with the provision of goods and services to others, unless an alternate method of provisions is necessary either on a temporary or permanent basis to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from such goods and services.
 - c) Persons with disabilities shall be given an opportunity equal, as reasonably possible, to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from goods and services provided by the Municipality.

- 3.3 When communicating with or providing a service to a person with a disability, a provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

4. Use of Service Animals

- 4.1 Any species may be a service animal for a person with a disability, provided it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his disability or the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the animal is required by the person for reasons relating to his disability.
- 4.2 If a person with a disability is accompanied by a service animal, the Municipality shall ensure that such person is permitted to enter the municipal premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him at all times, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.
- 4.3 If it is not readily apparent that the animal accompanying a person with a disability is a service animal, the Municipality has the right to request a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires such animal for reasons relating to his disability.
- 4.4 If an service animal is excluded by law from the municipal premises, the Municipality shall ensure that other means are available to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Municipal goods and services by:
- a) bringing the goods or services to such person in a location within the premises where the presence of the service animal is not prohibited;
 - b) offering a safe and secure non-restricted location where the service animal can wait while such person obtains the goods or services, provided the person with the disability is able to be separated from his service animal; or
 - c) when practicable, delivering the goods or service to such person in an alternate location where the service animal is not prohibited.
- 4.5 The Municipality shall ensure that all providers are adequately trained in interacting and assisting persons with disabilities that are accompanied by service animals.
- 4.6 A person with a disability who is accompanied by a service animal shall maintain control of such animal at all times while on municipal premises.

- 4.7 If a provider or other customer has an allergy to the service animal, the Municipality shall make reasonable effort to meet the needs of such individuals by:
- a) having another provider deliver the goods or services to the person with the disability that is accompanied by the service animal;
 - b) delivering the goods or services to the person accompanied by the service animal in another location within the premises where the presence of the service animal will not affect other customers; or
 - c) as a final recourse, delivering the goods or service to such person in an alternate location outside of the municipal premises in question.

5. Use of Support Persons

- 5.1 If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Municipality shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that while on the municipal premises, the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to his support person.
- 5.2 The Municipality may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on municipal premises, but only if the Municipality has determined that the presence of the support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with the disability or the health or safety of other persons on the premises.
- 5.3 The Municipality may request written consent if confidential information or documents will be disclosed to a person with a disability in the presence of his support person.
- 5.4 If a fee is payable by a person for admission to municipal premises or in connection with a person's presence at such premises, the Municipality shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount payable, if any, with respect to the attendance and/or presence of a support person accompanying a person with a disability.
- 5.5 Notice of such fees shall be given in a form and manner deemed reasonable by the Municipality.

6. Use of Assistive Devices

- 6.1 If a person with a disability requires the use of an assistive device for reasons relating to his disability, the Municipality shall ensure that such person is permitted to enter the premises and that while on the municipal premises, the

person with a disability is not prevented from having access to or using his assistive device in the locations where physical accessibility is anticipated.

7. Notice of Temporary Disruptions

7.1 If in order to obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality's goods or services, person with disabilities usually use particular facilities, premises or services of the Municipality, and should there be a temporary disruption preventing access to or use of such facilities, premises or services in whole or in part, then the Municipality shall give notice to the public of such temporary disruption.

7.2 Notice of such disruption shall include the following information:

- a) reason for the temporary disruption;
- b) anticipated duration of the temporary disruption; and
- c) description of alternate facilities, premises or services that are available, if any.

7.3 Notice of such temporary disruption shall be given in both official languages on the prescribed notice form set out in Appendix A to this policy.

7.4 Notice of the temporary disruption shall be posted in the following manner:

- a) in a conspicuous place at or adjacent to the location of the temporary disruption, which may include any or all entrances;
- b) on the Town of Hearst web site;
- c) on the Community television channel; and/or
- d) such other manner as is deemed reasonable in the circumstances.

8. Training

8.1 The Municipality shall ensure that its providers receive training with respect to the provision of municipal goods and services to persons with disabilities.

8.2 The training shall include a review of the purposes of the *AODA* and the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07 and instructions on the following matters:

- a) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;

- b) How to interact with persons who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of service animals or support persons;
 - c) How to use equipment or devices available on municipal premises that may facilitate the provision of municipal goods or services to persons with disabilities; and
 - d) What to do if persons with particular types of disabilities are having difficulty accessing municipal goods or services.
- 8.3 Training shall also include a review of the Municipality's policies, practices and procedures governing the delivery of municipal goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- 8.4 Training shall be provided to each provider as soon as is practicable after such provider has been assigned or assumed his applicable duties.
- 8.5 Training shall be provided prior to the modification or alteration of this policy or municipal practices and procedures with respect to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- 8.6 The method, extent and content of training programs for providers shall be geared to the role of various providers in delivering municipal goods and services, the degree of contact providers have with the public, the nature of municipal goods and services delivered by such providers, and the requirements of individual municipal departments.
- 8.7 The Municipality shall appoint a "Trainer" for the purposes of carrying out the training required pursuant to this policy.
- 8.8 The Trainer shall maintain a record of training sessions given, including the date, names of participants and type of training provided.
- 9. Feedback Process**
- 9.1 The Municipality shall receive and respond to feedback on the manner in which it provides goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- 9.2 Persons desiring to make comments may do so in person, by telephone, by facsimile, in writing or by delivering an electronic text by email, diskette or otherwise.
- 9.3 A record of such comments shall be kept and shall be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk of the Municipality for review.

9.4 The Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk at his discretion and depending on the circumstances may elect to respond to the person making the comment, provided such person has supplied his contact information.

9.5 Complaints shall be dealt with in accordance to established municipal policies and procedures.

10. Notice of Availability of Documents

10.1 Notice of the availability of this document, including associated forms may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous location in the Hearst Town Hall and by posting the information on the Municipality's web site, or by such other method as is deemed reasonable.

10.2 This policy and associated forms shall be available to anyone upon request.

11. Alternate Format

11.1 If the Municipality is required to give a copy of a document, a form or other information to a person with a disability, it shall give the person such document, form or other information to the person in a format that takes into account the person's disability whenever practicable.

11.2 The Municipality and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document, form or other information.

12. Additional Information and Questions

12.1 Questions, concerns and requests for additional information with respect to this policy should be addressed to the Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk.



Corporation of the Town of Hearst

NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION

There will be a scheduled service disruption at the

(location)

on _____

(date)

from _____ until _____

(time)

The service disruption will involve:

Thank you for your patience in this matter.