

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HOWICK

ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS FOR CUSTOMER SERVICE & USE OF ASSISTIVE DEVICES

I. PURPOSE

The Township of Howick 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 as a provider of services, the Township of Howick is committed to ensuring its services are provided in an accessible manner.

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

II. 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 persons with disabilities.
- (ii) The provision of goods and services to persons 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.
- (iii) Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

III. PRACTICES

Practices will strive to reflect or achieve the following:

- (i) Communication in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability.
- (ii) Enable persons with disabilities to be accompanied by a guide dog or service animal in areas and premises owned or operated by the Township of Howick that are open to the public.
- (iii) Allow persons with disabilities requiring a support person to be accompanied by that support person in premises open to the public.
- (iv) Provide that admission fees will be waived for a support person who accompanies a person with a disability.
- (v) Ensure that staff receives appropriate training in providing services that are accessible to all.

- (vi) Provide appropriate notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on are temporarily disrupted.
- (vii) Establish a process to allow people to provide feedback on how we are providing services to persons with disabilities.
- (viii) Allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Township.

IV. PROCEDURES

1. Support Persons

Support person, in relation to a person with a disability, means another person who accompanies him or her in order to provide assistance with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or access to goods or services.

The Township of Howick will allow people with disabilities, who so require, to be accompanied by a support person in all Township owned and operated public facilities. *The Township of Howick reserves the right to request that 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 Howick will waive admission fees for a support person who accompanies a person with a disability into facilities where admission is charged.

- a) Member of public should notify a staff member of 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.

2. Service Animals

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

A "guide dog," as defined in section 1 of the '*Blind Person's Rights' Act*'; or 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 a disability.

The Township of Howick will allow the person and the animal onto all Township owned and operated public facilities that are open to the public, and will ensure that the animal is permitted to accompany the person unless an 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.

3. Assistive Devices

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

Should a person with a disability be unable to access Township services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Township 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.

4. Format of Documents

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

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

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 a 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.).

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

Print Requests:

- a) Employee receives request from member of the public for alternative format.
- b) Employee fills out alternative format request form.
- c) Forwards request to the relevant department head and the Township Clerk.
- d) The department head and the Township Clerk determine if feasible.
- e) Proceeds with alternative format request.
- f) If not feasible; contact individual with feasible solution.

ASL Interpreter Request:

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

- b) Employee fills out alternative format request form.
- c) Forwards request to the relevant department head and the Township Clerk.
- d) The department head or the Clerk contacts Canadian Hearing Society to make request.
- e) Once Canadian Hearing Society confirms attendance of ASL Interpreter, the department head or the Clerk contacts the 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 documentation in alternate 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.

5. Service Disruption

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, persons 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, the Township 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 Howick website.

If the Township of Howick website should expect a temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible shall be provided on the website.

6. Training

The Township of Howick shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of goods and services to persons 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 instructions about the following matters:

- a) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability, as outline in this policy and procedures.
- b) How to interact with persons 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 Howick 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 training was completed, and will customize the training going forward, based on actual experiences, usage of Township facilities and services by persons with disability, and future legislative requirements

7. 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 Township staff person 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. The staff person can assist the member of the public with the *complaint form* in a manner that takes into consideration his or her disability.
- c) The information to be documented on the complaint form by the member of the public should include personal contact information, the date, a description of the complaint, and what the member of the public requests to resolve the complaint.
- d) The complaint should be forwarded to the manager responsible for the department, and to the Township Clerk.
- e) The department manager will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of Township Administration.
- 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 Howick with a suggestion on how to improve our service:

- a) Member of the public will inform a staff member of suggestion.
- b) The staff member will assist member of the public in filling out a complaint form, should they require assistance.
- c) Member of the public will be notified in a timely manner of how the Township 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.

THE CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF HOWICK

BY-LAW NO. 14 – 2009

**To adopt Accessibility Standards for Customer Service & Use of Assistive Devices
for the Township of Howick**

WHEREAS the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Section 1(a)* prescribes the development, implementation and enforcement of accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for all Ontarians with disabilities with respect to goods, services, facilities, accommodation, employment, buildings, structures, and premises on or before January 1, 2025,

AND WHEREAS *Section 1(1) of Ontario Regulation 429/07* under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* establishes accessibility standards for customer service that apply, on and after January 1, 2010 (per *Section 2*), to every designated public sector organization that provides goods and services to members of the public,

AND WHEREAS *O. Reg. 429/07, Section 3(1)* stipulates that every provider of goods and services shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods and services to person with disabilities,

AND WHEREAS the Council of the Township of Howick wishes to implement effective policies, practices and procedures to ensure that its goods and services are provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities and gives them equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services,

NOW THEREFORE Council of the Corporation of the Township of Howick enacts as follows:

1. THAT the '**Accessibility Standards for Customer Service & Use of Assistive Devices**' for the Township of Howick, attached hereto as Schedule 'A' of this by-law, is hereby adopted.
2. THAT Schedule 'A' attached hereto is composite of and forms an integral a part of this by-law.
3. THAT this by-law comes into force and effect immediately upon the date of passing, and shall remain in force until amended or repealed by the Council of the Township of Howick.

READ A FIRST AND SECOND TIME THIS 19th DAY OF MAY, 2009.

READ A THIRD TIME AND FINALLY PASSED THIS 19th DAY OF MAY, 2009.