

# CORPORATE POLICY & PROCEDURE



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2009

Supercedes: None

Section: Accessibility

Subject: Accessible Customer Service policy

## Purpose

The Township of Woolwich strives at all times to provide its goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of all people. The Township of Woolwich is also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

## Policy Requirements

### Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

The Township of Woolwich will provide goods and services to people with disabilities, with particular consideration of the following areas:

#### Communication

The Township of Woolwich will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. Staff who communicate with customers will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

The Township of Woolwich is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. Staff will be trained to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language, to speak clearly and slowly and to tailor their responses as much as possible in support of the individual.

The Township of Woolwich will offer to communicate with customers by other means, including relay service or e-mail, if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

#### Assistive Devices

The Township of Woolwich is committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. Staff will be trained and familiar with various

assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

The Township of Woolwich will also ensure that staff know how to use the assistive devices available on our premises.

## Billing

The Township of Woolwich is committed to providing accessible invoices to all of our customers. For this reason, invoices will be provided in large print or by e-mail upon request.

Any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

## Service Animals and Support Persons

### Service Animals

The Township of Woolwich is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. All staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public will be properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

An animal is a service animal for a person with a disability:

- i. If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- ii. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

### Support Person

The Township of Woolwich is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter Township of Woolwich buildings with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on Township premises.

A 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.

No admission will be charged to the support person for recreation programming offered by the Township of Woolwich when a PAL (Personal Attendant for Leisure) Card is presented. The PAL Card:

- i. Identifies that the person named on the card requires the assistance of an accompanying personal attendant. All regular program fees/registration fees apply.
- ii. Authorizes that the accompanying personal attendant will not be charged an additional fee.

PAL Cards will be recognized at the Woolwich Memorial Centre. The PAL will also be recognized anywhere a PAL Card from the Cities of Guelph, Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge is recognized.

PAL Cards can be obtained by contacting the Council and Information Services Department.

Customers will be informed of this by a notice that will be posted in the Woolwich Memorial Centre and the Township of Woolwich website.

### Notice of Temporary Disruption

The Township of Woolwich will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Notice may be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the Township, by posting it on the Township's website or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

### Training

The Township of Woolwich will provide training to:

- Every person who participates in developing the policy, practices and procedures under Ontario Regulation 429-07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Services;
- Every person who deals with the public on behalf of the Township, including third parties (i.e. employees, agents and volunteers)
- Current employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf;
- All those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures;
- Members of Township Council;
- New employees, volunteers, management, etc. will receive training as soon as practicable after commencing duties;
- Agents working on various projects for the municipality and who have been approved by successful tender shall be responsible for providing their own training to meet the requirements of Ontario Regulation 429/07.

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard;
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities;
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person;
- How to use the automatic door openers at Township buildings;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing Township of Woolwich goods and services;
- Township of Woolwich's policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

### Training Records

Training records shall be kept, including the dates when the training is provided, number of individuals to whom the training was provided and the signature of all those individuals trained on a particular date.

### Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of the Township of Woolwich is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving all people, including those with disabilities. Comments regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the Township of Woolwich provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by using a feedback form, by mail, e-mail, or verbally. All feedback should be directed to the Deputy-Clerk. Customers can expect a response within thirty (30) days.

### Modifications to This or Other Policies

The Township of Woolwich is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of the Township of Woolwich that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

### Questions About This policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities. If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, inquiries should be referred to the Deputy-Clerk of the Township of Woolwich.