



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF FAUQUIER-STRICKLAND

SUBJECT: **Integrated Accessibility Policy**

POLICY TYPE: **Corporate**

POLICY NUMBER: **COR-005**

DATE ADOPTED: _____

REVIEW DATE: _____

POLICY STATEMENT

The Corporation of the Township of Fauquier-Strickland is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration, and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Corporation of the Township of Fauquier-Strickland is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Act Code respecting non-discrimination

The Corporation of the Township of Fauquier-Strickland understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)* and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

The Corporation of the Township of Fauquier-Strickland is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities. Our accessible customer service policy is consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration, and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

TRAINING

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

In addition, we will train:

- a) All persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
- b) All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization.

Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

Training includes:

- Purpose of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- Our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- 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 equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services or facilities to people with disabilities. These include:
 - ✓ Power operated mechanisms for accessible exterior and interior doors
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services, and facilities.

The Township will ensure that training is provided to every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies.

The Township will maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided. The names of individuals trained will be recorded for training administration purposes, subject of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").

ASSISTIVE DEVICES

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices for the purpose of obtaining, using, and benefiting from the Township's goods, services, and facilities. Employees shall ensure reasonable efforts in allowing a person with a disability to use such devices.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant or unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services, and facilities.

The Township ensures that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices we have on site or provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

COMMUNICATION

The Township will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. We will work with people with disabilities to determine what method of communication is suitable for them.

SERVICE ANIMALS

Every employee of the Township shall allow a person with a disability to be accompanied by their service animal unless the animal is excluded by law from the premises. In such case, employees shall offer other reasonable measures to assist the person with a disability in obtaining, using, and benefitting from the goods and services the Township provides.

When it is not readily apparent that an animal is a service animal the Township may ask for documentation (template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologist of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

SUPPORT PERSONS

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises. Fee/fare will not be charged for support persons.

In certain cases, the organization might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- The person with a disability
- Others on the premises

Before making a decision, the Township of Fauquier-Strickland will:

- Consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- Consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- Determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

If the organization determines that a support person is required, the admission fee or fare (if applicable) for the support person, will be waived.

NOTICE OF TEMPORARY DISRUPTION

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, the Township will make every effort to notify customers promptly. The notice must include the following information:

- a) The reason and information for disruption
- b) Anticipated duration
- c) Description or alternate facilities or services, if available
- d) Contact information

The notice will be made publicly available at the physical location of the disruption, on its website and if appropriate will advertise the disruption with local media outlets. The Notice will be posted to allow for sufficient time to inform ratepayers, unless it is an unscheduled disruption and advanced notice is not an option.

FEEDBACK PROCESS

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland welcomes feedback on how we provide and improve accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns. Feedback may be provided to the following:

By mail: Director of Municipal Services
Township of Fauquier-Strickland
P.O. Box 40
POL 1G0

By email: info@fauquierstrickland.com

At the municipal office: 20-A Doyon Street
Fauquier

The Township of Fauquier-Strickland ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS

The Township notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available upon request by posting a notice on the municipal website.

When providing a document to a person with a disability, the Township will provide the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes the person's disability into account. The time frame for providing information in an alternative format will vary depending on the media

chosen, document size and complexity while all attempts will be made to provide same in a reasonable time frame. Any costs will be borne by the Township.

SELF-SERVICE KIOSKS

The Township will incorporate accessibility features or take into account accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

PROCUREMENT

The Township will incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-service kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Township has a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible with people with disabilities upon request.

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that consider their disability. When asked, the Township will provide information about the organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) In a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to their disability; and
- b) At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charges to other persons.

The Township will also consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the Township determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the Township shall provide the requestor with:

- a) An explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) A summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

Notice of the availability of accessible formats and communication supports will be posted on the municipal website and available through the Clerk's Office.

EMPLOYMENT

The Township will notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodation can be made during recruitment and hiring process. Job applicants will be notified, when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, that accommodation is available upon request. If requested, the Director of Municipal Services shall consult with the applicants and provide or arrange suitable accommodation.

Successful applicants shall be notified of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities as soon as practicable following the start of their employment. Employees shall be provided with any

amendments to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that consider an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

Employees shall be consulted when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation and shall be done in a manner that considers the accessibility needs done. The Township will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) Information that is needed to perform the employee's job; and
- b) Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.

Where needed, the Township will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, the Township will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is aiding that employee during an emergency.

The Township will provide information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

The Township will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) When the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) When the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) When the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

The Township has a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees which includes the following steps:

1. We meet with the employee who requests accommodation for an initial discussion and to determine an optional method of individualized assessment, if needed. We consult with the employee throughout the process.
2. If required, the Township will arrange to pay for an expert evaluation, such as functional abilities evaluation, to determine if and how accommodation can be achieved.
3. The employee is welcome to have a representative from the workplace participate in the development of the accommodation plan.
4. Individual accommodation plans will be provided to the employee in an accessible format or with communication supports that consider the employee's particular accessibility needs, due to his/her ability, upon request. All individual accommodation plans inform the employee that the Township provide information in an accessible format or with communication supports, if requested. The plans also identify all accommodations that will be provided. If needed, we include individualized workplace emergency response information, in the accommodation plan.
5. Personal information with respect to the accommodation plan will remain with the respective department and the Director of Municipal Services. It will not be released to any other Township employees without the employee's consent, except in the case of an emergency.

6. The Township reviews and updates individual accommodation plans annually or if or when there is a change with respect to the employee's functional status (e.g. the employee's functional status improves or regresses). The employee is encouraged to provide regular feedback about the efficiency of the accommodation. The review includes a meeting with the employee and consideration of feedback provided by the employee. Any changes that need to be made to the accommodation plan will be discussed with the employee and if necessary, an expert assessment will be arranged for at the Town's expense.
7. If a plan is denied, we will meet with the employee and provide the reasons and upon request, the Township will provide the reasons in an accessible format or with communication supports.

The Township has a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodation to return to work.

The Township will take the accessibility needs and individual accommodation plans into consideration for employees with disabilities during a performance management process, or during career development and advancement or when the employee is redeployed.

DESIGN OF PUBLIC SPACES

We will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Our public spaces include:

- Outdoor eating areas and washrooms;
- Outdoor playgrounds;
- Recreational trails;
- Outdoor paths of travel;
- Accessible off-street parking;
- Accessible on-street parking; and
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas.

CHANGES TO EXISTING POLICIES

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.