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# **CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD POLICY**

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

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## **1.0 PURPOSE**

The Municipality of Mississippi Mills is committed to providing service in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

## **2.0 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

Through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) Ontario is working to make the province fully accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. Under the act, the Province is developing five accessibility standards that organizations will be required to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. The Municipality, as a designated Public Service organization, is required to be in compliance with the standard by January 1, 2010. The standard sets requirements in a number of key areas and will be reviewed provincially at least every five years.

## **3.0 SCOPE**

The Municipality is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

This policy applies to members of Council, all Municipality employees, including full-time, part-time, and temporary employees, summer students and co-op placements and persons acting on behalf of the Municipality (e.g. third parties, consultants, contractors)

## **4.0 DEFINITIONS**

**Alternative Service** means a service generally intended to be temporary that

approaches the desired result until such time as the barrier is removed or an equivalent service is put in place;

**Assistive Device** means an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids);

**Contractor** means a company or person with a formal or informal contract to do a specific job on behalf of Municipality of Mississippi Mills

**Customer** means any person who receives or seeks to receive goods or services from a person or organization in the private, public and non-governmental sector. Customer includes persons who involuntarily receive goods or services imposed by an external authority;

**Disability** means the same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code;

**Equivalent** means having similar effects or identical effects;

**Service Animal** means an animal trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability as defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07;

**Support Person** means any person whether a paid professional, volunteer, family member or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

**Municipality** means the Corporation of the Municipality of Mississippi Mills.

## **5.0 ESTABLISHMENT OF POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES**

**5.1** The Municipality shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its' policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

5.1.1 Goods or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;

5.1.2 Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services;

5.1.3 The Municipality will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability including accessible notifications and respond to questions;

5.1.4 That the Municipality employees will be trained to communicate, provide appropriate assistance and services in a manner that takes into account the person's disability;

5.1.5 Where fees for goods and services are required by the Municipality and where the Municipality requires a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, the Municipality will waive payment of the amount of the fee in respect to the support person's admission to the premises.

## **5.2 Notice of Temporary Disruptions**

5.2.1 The Municipality 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.

## **5.3 Use of Assistive Devices, Support Persons and Service Animals**

5.3.1 The Municipality will provide customers with assistance in the use of assistive devices;

5.3.2 Support persons and/or support animals may accompany a person with disabilities in the access of goods and services.

## **5.4 Documentation**

5.4.1 When required by Regulation, any documentation requested by a person with a disability shall be given in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

## **5.5 Training**

5.5.1 The Municipality will provide training to members of Council, all employees and volunteers or other third parties who deal with the public on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of policies, practices and procedures;

5.5.2 The Municipality will ensure that contractors, agents and other third parties who deal with the public on their behalf have been trained and are aware of the Municipality's policies, practices and procedures;

5.5.3 Applicable 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;

#### 5.5.4 Municipality 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 provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
- How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
- The process for people to provide feedback to the Municipality about its' provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the Municipality responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or a support person to access goods and services;
- Information on other Municipality policies, practices and procedures dealing with the AODA;
- How to use equipment or devices available on Municipal premises or provided by the Municipality that may help with the provision of goods and services;
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Municipality's goods and services.

#### **5.6 Feedback Process:**

5.6.1 Feedback from our customers gives the Municipality staff and Council opportunities to learn and improve;

5.6.2 The Municipality shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods and services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.

### **6.0 AMENDMENTS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES**

**6.1** We are 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;

- 6.2** Any Municipality policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

**7.0 EFFECTIVE DATE**

- 7.1** This policy takes effect on January 1, 2010.