



Title:	Customer Service for Persons Living with Disabilities		
Policy Group: Your Livable Community	Policy Administrator: Community Services, Programs & Initiatives		
Resolution No. CW-242-2022	Policy Number: CSPI-01		
Approval Date: 2022-09-15	Revision Date: 2026-09-15		

1. Policy Statement

- a) The Corporation of the County of Prince Edward (hereafter "The County") is committed to providing accessible service for its customers including those living with disabilities. The County understands that obligations under the 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.
- b) This Customer Service for Persons with Disabilities Policy is consistent with the following core principles:
 - i. Independence;
 - ii. Dignity; F
 - iii. integration; and
 - iv. Equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

2. Purpose

- a) This Policy establishes the accessibility standards for customer service for The County in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.
- b) Ontario Regulation 429/07 establishes accessibility standards specific to customer service for public sector organizations and other persons or organizations that provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties, addressing the following:
 - i. The provision of goods and services;
 - ii. The use of assistive devices;
 - iii. The use of service animals;

- iv. The use of support persons;
- v. Notice of temporary disruptions in services and facilities;
- vi. Training;
- vii. Customer feedback regarding the provision of goods and services;
and,
- viii. Notice of availability and format of documents.

3. Scope

- a) This Policy applies to all persons who provide goods and services to members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the County of Prince Edward, whether the person does so as an employee, member of Council, agent, volunteer or student and all persons who participate in developing the municipality's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods and services to members of the public or other third parties.
- b) This Policy does not apply to elections. The Municipal Elections Accessibility Plan and procedures established by the Clerk ensures the independence and dignity of electors and candidates in the municipal election process.

4. Legislative Authority

- a) Ontario Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Service created under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)*.
- b) Ontario Human Rights Code

5. Definitions - Unless otherwise defined herein, all capitalized terms used in this Policy shall have the meaning ascribed to them in the *AODA*.

- a) **Accessible** means customer service is provided in a manner that is capable of being easily understood or appreciated, easy to get at, capable of being reached, or entered, obtainable.
- b) **Agent** means one who is authorized to act or do business for another or one who represents a government agency.
- c) **Assistive Device** means any device that is designed and/or adapted to assist a person to perform a particular task (for example, canes, crutches, walkers, wheelchairs, personal sound amplification devices, ventilators, etc.)
- d) **Dignity** means service is provided in a respectful manner consistent with the needs of the individual.

- e) **Equality of Opportunity** means access to goods or services equal to that given to another.
- f) **Independence** means services for persons of all abilities shall support their independence while respecting their right to safety and personal privacy.
- g) **Integration (integrated)** means benefiting from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar manner as another.
- h) **Public Service** means those services provided externally to the public including customers, clients and members or other third parties including other businesses and organizations. The customer service standard does not apply to services provided internally within the organization.
- i) **Service Animal** means
 - i. A “guide dog”, as defined in Section 1 of the ‘Blind Persons Rights’ Act R.R.O. 1990, or
 - ii. 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,
 - 1. If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to their disability; or
 - 2. If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- j) **Support Person** means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist them with communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs or with access to goods or service.

6. General

- a) Customer Service Commitments
 - i. Assistive Devices
 - 1. Persons with disabilities shall be permitted to obtain, use or benefit from goods or services through the use of their own assistive devices. Staff will be trained so as to be familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing services.
 - 2. In the event a person with a disability is hindered from accessing any goods or services offered, The County will make every attempt to accommodate the person by offering the use of

another assistive device that is available or an alternative way of delivering the same service.

3. The County will ensure that staff know how to use assistive devices available in their various locations for customers, and inform customers of the assistive devices that are available.

ii. Support Persons

1. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person will be allowed to access any services provided by The County with their Support Person. At no time will The County prevent a person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person from having access to their Support Person.
2. A Support Person may accompany participants who use the facilities or programs free of admission charge where they are assisting the participant with a disability and not participating directly in the activity or program. When traveling on accessible public transit the regular fee or fare will not apply to the Support Person.

iii. Service Animals

1. The County is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a Service Animal on the parts of our premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.
2. The County of Prince Edward identified two service delivery locations where service animals are not included by regulation:
 - Landfill and Transfer sites;
 - Food preparation and food service areas that are open to the public
3. Where a service animal is not included by regulation, the County of Prince Edward will adopt specific procedures to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use and benefit from The County goods and services.
4. It is the responsibility of the owner to ensure the care and control of the service animal at all times. To ensure service animals may be appropriately accommodated, persons are encouraged to advise the County of Prince Edward ahead of time when they will be accompanied by a service animal, and of any special accommodations that will be needed.
5. If a service animal is not immediately recognizable as such, a letter certifying that it is a service animal signed by a physician or nurse may be requested before allowing entry. The County

may also or instead ask for a valid identification card signed by the Attorney General of Canada or a certificate of training from a recognized guide dog or service animal training school.

b) Accessibility Training Policy

- i. The County will provide training to all employees, agents, contractors, volunteers and others who interact with customers public or other third parties on its behalf.
- ii. Training will include the following:
 - The purpose of the AODA;
 - The requirements of the customer service standard; and,
 - Any subsequent legislation
 - The County's policies, and procedures pertaining to the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, including the customer service standard; and
 - How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities and how to assist a person with disabilities.
- iii. New staff will be trained during initial orientation. Following initial training, existing staff will receive training on a regular basis and when changes are made to these policies and procedures or regulations.
- iv. Training will be provided to each person according to their needs and duties and as soon as is practicable after they are assigned the applicable duties.
- v. A record of the training provided and to whom it is provided will be kept.

c) Format of documents and alternative formats

i. Availability of Documents

1. All documents required in accordance with the regulation are available by request and notice to that effect shall be posted in a conspicuous place or on The County's website or by any other such method as is reasonable in the circumstances.
2. All documents required by the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, including the County's Accessible Customer Service policy, procedures and practices, notices of temporary disruptions, training statistics and written feedback process are available in an accessible format.

ii. Alternative Format of Documents

1. If requested, The County will take into account the person's ability to access the information and will provide the document or information contained in the document in a format that meets those needs as agreed upon with the person.

d) Notice of Temporary Disruption

- i. Temporary disruptions of municipal services may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the municipality's control or knowledge. The County will make every reasonable effort to provide notice of disruption to the public as soon as it is reasonably possible to do so.
- ii. The notice will include a description of the service that is unavailable, the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of any available alternative services along with information on how to access these.
- iii. If possible, notice of the disruption will be conspicuous, and will be provided as follows:
 - written posted signage at the location of the disruption, and at the entrance door to the facility in question;
 - posting on the County of Prince Edward's accessible website; and,
 - verbal communication when possible;
 - any other method as is determined reasonable in the circumstances and agreed upon by the customer and employee.

b) Feedback Process

- i. The County has a feedback process through which people with disabilities are encouraged to provide information and feedback about the goods and services they receive.
- ii. Feedback can be received in a variety of ways, in person, by mail or email, by telephone, fax, or otherwise.
- iii. The feedback process is promoted on the County of Prince Edward's website at www.pecounty.on.ca. A copy of the feedback process and feedback form is available upon request.
- iv. Feedback information will be affixed with a tracking sheet and will be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer for recording and forwarded to the appropriate department for action or input. Follow-up will be provided when requested.
- v. Information collected through the Feedback Process will be presented to the Accessibility Advisory Committee according to their mandate from Council.

c) Procurement

- i. The County will endeavour to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilitated.

d) Continuous Improvement

- i. This policy will be reviewed on every four years, or more frequently as needed.

7. Responsibility and Implementation

- a) Council is responsible for approving and making changes to this Policy.
- b) The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) is responsible for
 - i. directing compliance and resolving any conflicts with this Policy;
 - ii. assigning appropriate service departments for the application of this Policy;
 - iii. establishing procedural guidelines; and
 - iv. making routine changes to the Policy, as required.
- c) All employees, member of Councils, agents, volunteers or students of The County are responsible for adhering to the Policy.

8. Documentation and Forms

- a) Accessibility Customer Service Procedures and Practices
- b) Accessibility Feedback Form