

The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods

CORPORATE POLICY

POLICY NAME:

ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

COUNCIL APPROVAL:

DATE OF ADOPTION: 2016

DATE MODIFIED: April 15 2021

POLICY STATEMENT:

It is the policy of The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods that all people achieve accessibility, consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity as set out in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Purpose/Application:

This Policy is intended to provide the overarching framework to guide the review and development of other policies, standards, procedures, By-laws and guidelines of the Township in order to comply with the standards developed under the *Accessibility for Ontarians With Disabilities Act*, (AODA) 2005, and the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service established by Ontario Regulation 429/07, and the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) established by Ontario Regulation 191/11, and all regulations pursuant to this Act.

APPLICATION:

This Policy applies to all Township employees, volunteers, and to third parties who provide goods services or facilities to the public on behalf of the Township and who develop policies on behalf of the Township.

PRINCIPLES

The Township of Lake of the Woods:

- Is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence.
- Believes in inclusion and equal opportunity.
- Is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner,
- Is committed to preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The Township of Lake of the Woods is a designated public sector organization under the AODA and is committed to meeting the accessibility needs of people with disabilities.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Township does not have an Accessibility Advisory Committee however the Council of the Township will work with people with disabilities within the community to ensure all issues relating to citizens with disability are dealt with on a timely manner.

ACCESSIBILITY PLANS AND POLICIES

The Township has produced a Multi-year Accessibility Plan. The Multi-year Accessibility Plan will be:

- reviewed and updated at least every five years, and
- established, reviewed and updated wherever possible in consultation with persons with disabilities.

If through public consultation, feedback, and our own accessibility action and planning processes, it is determined that the Multi-year Accessibility Plan needs revisions, the Township will update it to reflect these insights.

A periodic status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan will be prepared. The Multi-year Accessibility Plan and accompanying status report will be available in an accessible format upon request.

PROCUREMENT

When procuring goods, services or facilities, the Township will when practicable incorporate accessibility criteria and features.

TRAINING

All Township employees and volunteers and third parties providing goods and services to members of the public on the Township's behalf, as well as those who develop the policies, practices and procedure governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties will receive accessibility training.

This training shall include:

- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07)
- A review of the requirements of the accessibility standards referred to in the AODA Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and on the Human Rights Code as it pertains to persons with disabilities.
- **Don't make assumptions** about people or their disabilities. Don't assume you know what someone wants, what they feel, or what is best for them. If you have a question about what to do, how to do it, what language or terminology to use, or what assistance to offer, ask the person. That should be your first and best resource.
- **Ask before you help.** Before you help a person, ask if they would like help. In some cases, a person with a disability might seem to be struggling, yet they are fine and would prefer to complete the task on their own. Follow the person's cues and ask if you are not sure what to do. Don't be offended if someone declines your offer of assistance.
- **Talk directly to the user,** not to the interpreter, attendant, or friend. You don't need to ignore the others entirely; just make sure to focus your interaction with the user. When a user who has an interpreter, the user will look at the interpreter as you are talking. It might take a little extra effort to remember to face the user rather than the interpreter. If you will be speaking for some time with a person in a wheelchair, sit down so that you are at eye level with the person so that the person does not have to strain their neck to look up at you.
- **Speak normally.** Some people have a tendency to talk louder and slower to people with disabilities; do not do that. Don't assume that because a person has one disability, that the person also has a cognitive disability or is hard of hearing. For example, a person with cerebral palsy might use a wheelchair, have uncontrolled upper body movements, have difficulty speaking, and yet have very good hearing, cognitive abilities, and intelligence.
- **Use "people first" language** when referring to people with disabilities, unless they prefer different wording. People-first language means put the person first and the disability second. For example, say "a person who is blind" rather than "a blind person" and a person who uses a wheelchair" instead of "a wheelchair-bound person". As a default, use people-first language when speaking with people with disabilities, and when speaking and writing about people with disabilities.

- **Avoid potentially offensive terms or euphemisms.** Commonly accepted terminology includes “people with disabilities” and “a person with a visual/hearing/physical/speech/cognitive impairment.” Many people find annoying or offensive: restricted to a wheelchair, victim of, suffers from, retarded, deformed, crippled, and euphemisms such as physically challenged.
- **Be aware of personal space.** Some people who use a mobility aid, such as a wheelchair, walker, or cane, see these aids as part of their personal space. Do not touch, move, or lean on mobility aids. This is also important for safety.
- **Do not interact with guide dogs or other service animals.** Do not ask if you can pet the animal and do not talk to the animal. When guide dogs are wearing their harness, they are working to guide and protect their owners. It is important not to distract the dog or service animal in any way
- **Assistive Devices.** Some people may need assistance with any equipment or devices we have provided on site. The employees will be required to review all operating manuals for such equipment and or devices. The employees will be instructed as well on the proper use and be trained on such equipment and or devices.
- **Assisting persons access our goods, services or facilities.** Some persons with disability may have difficulty accessing any of our goods, services or facilities and therefore the employees will be required to be familiar with how to access such goods, services and facilities within that employee’s area of jurisdiction or authority.
- **Training.** Prior to the employee starting duties in a particular job training on these various areas dealing with persons with a disability will be required. On an annual basis each employee will review our policies, manuals and operating instructions in relations to their duties while dealing with persons with a disability.
- **Accommodation.** Should any accommodation be requested by an employee with a disability their supervisor shall work with that employee to ensure the required accommodation is provided to the best ability of the municipality.

The training provided will be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers or third party. Training will take place as soon as practical and upon completion, the Township will keep a record of the training provided including the dates on which accessibility training took place.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

Accessible Formats and Communications Supports

Except as otherwise provided by AODA, the Township shall, upon request, and in consultation with the person making the request, provide or make arrangements to provide accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities. Accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided in a timely manner, taking into account the person’s accessibility needs and at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

Websites and Web Content

Internet websites and web content controlled directly by the Township will conform to the World Wide Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 in accordance with the schedule set out in the Information and Communication Standards of the IASR.

EMPLOYMENT

The Township is committed to creating an inclusive work environment for all and providing accessibility for people with disabilities throughout the employment life cycle in accordance with the requirements and timeliness set out in the Employment Standards of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation and existing requirements under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

TRANSPORTATION

The Township does not operate any form of public transportation services at the present time. If and when any public transportation services are offered by the Township it will be provided in accordance with the Transportation Standard of the IASR.

BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Township will as practicable, comply with the AODA Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for The Built Environment) when undertaking new construction and redevelopment of public spaces in the following areas:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes;
- Outdoor public use eating areas;
- Outdoor play spaces;
- Exterior paths of travel;
- Accessible Parking;
- Obtaining Services; and
- Maintenance of accessible elements.

This policy does not apply to construction that is external to the Township for which the Township has provided a permit however compliance with the AODA Built Environment Standards should be encouraged.

The Township will ensure that the Township's Accessibility Design Standards reflect the AODA Built Environment Standards.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD:

The Township of Lake of the Woods is committed to the provision of excellent customer services. The Accessible Customer Services Policy of March 10 2010 outlined the customer service standards as required by the AODA. The contents of this Policy are now included in this document where appropriate.

Guide Dogs, Service Animals:

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Township will permit the person to enter municipal premises with the animal and keep it with him or her, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises. If the guide dog or service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Township will look to other available measures to enable the person with disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township/s goods and services.

Support Persons:

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, they are permitted to enter the premises together and are not prevented from having access to each other while on the premises. The Township may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person while on its premises, but only if a support person is necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability or to protect the health or safety of others on the premises. Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the Township, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person.

Disruption of Services:

If there is a temporary disruption in a particular facility or service used to allow a person with a disability to access goods or services, the Township will give notice of the disruption to the public.

Assistive Devices:

If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access goods or services of the Township, they are allowed to use such devices.

Accessibility Feedback:

The Township will use the form attached as Schedule "A" hereto to allow the public to provide feedback. Feedback on how services are delivered to people with disabilities shall be invited, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked. Feedback can be provided in multiple formats including in person, by mail, phone and email.

NON COMPLIANCE

Failure to comply with the AODA regulations can result in administrative penalties as defined in Part V: Compliance of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11. Employees who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to disciplinary action. Agents who fail to comply with this policy may be subject to contract termination.

The Corporation of the Township of Lake of the Woods

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ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE FEEDBACK FORM

Regarding provision of Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

Thank you for visiting the Township of Lake of the Woods. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please tell us the date and time of your visit: _____

Staff Member, Department or Service Location you visited: _____

Did we respond to your customer service needs today?

YES

NO

Was our customer service provided to you in an accessible manner?

YES

SOMEWHAT – Please explain: _____

NO – Please explain: _____

Did you have any problems accessing our goods and services?

YES – Please explain: _____

SOMEWHAT – Please explain: _____

NO

Please add any other comments you may have: _____

Contact information (optional):
