



## **POLICY**

Human Resources

**Policy #:** 400.34

Issue Date: January 2010

Revision Date: January 2021

### **AODA (Accessible Customer Service Standard)**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

The Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls is committed to being responsive to the diverse needs of all its residents by striving to provide equal access to its programs, services and facilities, including people with disabilities.

#### **2. PROCEDURE**

The Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls will develop policies, procedures and practices which address integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity, to comply with the legislative requirements prescribed under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), and to promote accessibility. The policy is a complement to the Corporation's existing Customer Service policy (400.30).

#### **3. SCOPE**

This policy applies to the Council and staff of the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls, including volunteers, contractors, agents and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties, on behalf of the City.

#### **4. ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

If a person with a disability requires assistive devices to access goods or services from the City, they are allowed to use such devices. The City does provide assistive devices (i.e., wheelchairs) at some of its facilities.

#### **5. GUIDE DOGS / SERVICE ANIMALS**

Service dogs can assist adults and children who are visually impaired, have autism, spina bifida, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, mobility related disabilities, hearing problems and seizure disorders, amongst other disabilities.

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

#### **6. 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.

**Submitted By: Director**

**Recommended By: CAO**

**Approved By Council On:**

**Report #:**

The City 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 the health or safety of others on the premises. If the person with a disability requires to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, the City will waive payment of the amount, if any, payable in respect of the support person's admission to the premises or in connection with the support person's presence on the premises.

Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the City, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person.

## **7. DISRUPTION OF SERVICES**

If there is a disruption in a particular facility or service used to allow a person with a disability to access goods or services, the City will give notice of the disruption to the public by posting the reason for the disruption. Further, the City will provide notice on the anticipated duration of the disruption and, notify if any alternative facilities or services may be available.

This posting will be in a conspicuous place on the premises of the affected City building, or by other reasonable methods in the circumstances. If the disruption is anticipated, the City will provide a reasonable amount of advance notice of the disruption and provide notice in a local newspaper. If the disruption is unexpected, notice will be provided as soon as possible.

## **8. TRAINING**

The City will provide training about the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities. All City employees, volunteers, agents, contractors and others who deal with the public or other third-parties and those involved in developing customer service policies, practices, and procedures, will receive Accessibility Awareness Training within six months of beginning their duties. The City will also provide ongoing training with respect to changes in its policies, practices, and procedures to those individuals who require such training as soon as practicable. Lastly, the City will keep records of all staff who have received training (e.g., dates, trainer, etc.).

### **8.1 Accessibility Awareness Training will include the following:**

- 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 City, its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the City 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 Municipal policies, practices, and procedures dealing with the AODA;
- A review of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the customer service standard.

- How to use equipment or devices available on City premises or provided by the City that may help with the provision of goods and services; and
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the City's goods and services.

## **9. FEEDBACK PROCESS**

The public can provide feedback on the accessibility of the provision of goods and services by the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls through the Mayor's Disability Advisory Committee:

- by mail addressed to: 4310 Queen Street, Niagara Falls, ON, L2E 6X5  
1 Mayor's Disability Advisory Committee
- by phone to: 905 356-7521 ext. 4294, 4271 or 4202
- in person at: 4310 Queen Street, Niagara Falls, ON, L2E 6X5
- by email to: [accessibility@niagarafalls.ca](mailto:accessibility@niagarafalls.ca)

Feedback will be responded to within three (3) business days of its receipt by the City.

## **10. DEFINITIONS**

### **10.1 "Assistive Devices"**

Assistive Devices are auxiliary aids such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, scooters or hearing aids).

### **10.2 "Disabilities"**

As per the Ontario Human Rights Code, disability means:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;
- a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability;
- a learning disability or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language;
- a mental disorder; or
- An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

### **10.3 "Employees"**

Employees are person(s) who deal with members of the public, or other third parties on behalf of the Corporation of the City of Niagara Falls, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

#### **10.4 “Persons with Disabilities”**

Persons with Disabilities are individuals who are afflicted with a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

#### **10.5 “Service Animals”**

Service Animals are any animal individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability.

#### **10.6 “Support Persons”**

Support Persons are 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.