

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Board motion number:	Date of next review:	September 2027

Date: September 27, 2023 Date of original motion: May 27, 2009

Policy type: Public Chair's signature: _____

Purpose:

This policy addresses accessibility requirements of Regulation 429/07 Accessibility Standards for Customer Services under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Scope:

Orangeville Public Library remains committed to eliminating barriers to all library goods, services, information, and resources for persons with disabilities. All policies, practices and procedures will respect the dignity of persons with disabilities and treat them as customers who are valued and deserving of effective and full service. The library will ensure them freedom of choice and being able to do things in their own way; will provide integrated services that will allow the full benefit from the same services, in the same place and way as other customers; and will provide equal opportunities to benefit from the library's goods and services as others do.

Policy:

The Orangeville Public Library Board has chosen to adopt and abide by the Policies and Procedures set out by the Town of Orangeville for Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

A copy of the Town of Orangeville – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – Policies and Procedures is attached and forms an integral part of this policy.



Corporate Policy

Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

Department: Community Services

Attachments: Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form,

Notice of Service Disruption, Accessibility

Standards for Customer Service

Related Documents/Legislation: Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

Ontario Human Rights Code

Approved: by Council: August 10, 2009

Resolution No. 23

By-Law No. 99-2009 (September 14, 2009)

1. Policy Statement

The Town will strive to provide its services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities and is committed to giving persons with disabilities the same opportunity to access its goods and services, as well as allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

2. Purpose

The Ontario Government is issuing five sets of standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) to achieve the vision of a barrier-free Ontario by 2025. The first set of standards is the Accessibility Standards for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 429/07, which came into force on January 1, 2008. By January 1, 2010, municipalities, being designated public sector organizations, must have policies, practices and procedures in place. Other providers of goods and services are required to have their policies and procedures in place by January 1, 2012.

The purpose of the Customer Service Standards Policy is to fulfill the requirements set out in the regulation by establishing a policy for the Town to govern the provision of its goods or services by its employees, agents or volunteers to persons with disabilities. In general, the Town must deliver its services in a way that is in keeping with the key principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

3. Definitions

- "Accessibility Coordinator": shall mean the staff liaison for the Accessibility Committee.
- "Assistive Devices": shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (i.e. canes, crutches, wheelchairs, or hearing aids).
- "Contractors and Third Parties": shall mean any contractor, agent, volunteer or otherwise, who provide customer service and/or develop policies and procedures on behalf of the Town of Orangeville.
- "Disabilities": shall mean the same definition of disability as found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- "Employee": shall mean individuals directly employed by the Town of Orangeville.
- "Persons with Disabilities": shall mean those individuals that have a disability as defined under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- "Service Animal": shall mean any animal individually trained or required to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of a person with a disability. If the work of the service animal is not readily apparent, the person can provide a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that they require the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
- "Support Person": shall mean any person whether paid professional, volunteer, family member, or friend who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communications, personal care / medical needs, or with access to goods or services.
- "Town": shall mean the Corporation of the Town of Orangeville.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the Town's organization including members of Council, full-time, part-time and contract staff, members of Advisory Boards and Committees and volunteer and to all persons who deal with members of the public or contractors and third parties on behalf of the Town, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

5. Policy

5.1 Best Practices and Procedures

Accessible Customer Service provided by Town employees will follow four basic principles, which are defined as follows:

Dignity

Persons with disabilities will be treated the same as any other customer and are as deserving of effective and full service as any other customer. Persons with disabilities will not be treated as an afterthought or forced to accept lesser service, quality or convenience. Service delivery will take into account how people with disabilities can effectively access and use services and show respect for these methods.

Independence

In some instances, independence means freedom from control or influence of others – freedom to make your own choices. In other situations, it may mean the freedom to do things in your own way. People who may move or speak more slowly should not be denied an opportunity to participate in a program or service because of this factor. A staff person should not hurry them or take over a task for them if they prefer to do it themselves in their own way.

Integration

Integrated services are those that allow persons with disabilities to fully benefit from the same services, in the same place and in the same or similar way as other customers. Integration means that policies and procedures are designed to be accessible to everyone, including persons with disabilities. Sometimes integration does not serve the needs of all people with disabilities. In these cases, it is necessary to use alternate measures to provide goods or services.

Equal Opportunity

Equal opportunity means having the same chances, options, benefits and results as others. In the case of services, it means that people with disabilities have the same opportunity to benefit from the way the Town provides goods or services to others. Persons with disabilities should not have to make significantly more effort to access or obtain a service and they should also not have to accept lesser quality or more inconvenience.

Sometimes this may mean that the Town treats individuals slightly different so that they can benefit fully from its services. Equal opportunity can best be reached by taking steps to ensure that individual needs are taken into account when providing goods or services. Individuals do not have equal opportunity if they cannot have full benefit from the Town's goods or services because of barriers to their access or participation. Sometimes the principles need to be balanced in order to achieve the outcome that meets the needs of the person with a disability.

5.2 Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures

The Town shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the four basic principles listed above.

The goods or services must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

- The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternative measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.
- Persons with disabilities may use assistive devices and/or support persons in the access of the Town's goods and services.
- When communicating with a person with a disability, Town employees shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.

This policy shall apply to all persons who deal with members of the public or contractors and third parties on behalf of the Town, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

5.3 Exclusions

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service policy shall not apply during any period where Council has declared a "State of Emergency" as defined under the *Emergency Management Act*. Policies of the County of Dufferin's Emergency Plan would apply.

5.4 Feedback Process

Feedback from our customers gives the Town opportunities to learn and improve. The Town recognizes and encourages our customers to provide us with feedback, either in the form of a complaint, compliment or to make suggestions on ways to improve its services.

To assist the Town in ensuring that the delivery of its goods and services to those with disabilities is provided in an effective and timely manner, the customer is invited to provide the Town with their feedback.

Let us know how we can improve or enhance our accessible customer service. An Accessible Customer Service Feedback form will be available on the Town's website www.orangeville.ca.

Feedback can also be forwarded in writing, in person, email or telephone, addressed to:

Accessibility Coordinator c/o Building and By-law Enforcement Department 87 Broadway, Orangeville, ON L9W 1K1 Phone: 519-941-0440 x228 Fax: 519-941-2979

Email: vdouglas@orangeville.ca

The Accessibility Committee Coordinator will respond either in writing, in person, email or by telephone, acknowledging receipt of feedback and will set out the action to be taken in response to any comments.

5.5 Service Animal

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the Town shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Town shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Town's goods or services.

If a service animal is unruly or disruptive (i.e. jumping on people or exhibiting harmful behavior) an employee may ask the person with a disability to remove the animal from the area in order to continue their access to goods or services. Other reasonable arrangements to provide goods or services shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.

5.6 Support Persons

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the Town shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

The Town may require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the 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.

There will be no fee charged to care providers who access Town facilities and other Town services while they are attending with a disabled person who require their assistance.

In the event that admission fees are charged, advance notice concerning what admission, if any, would be charged to a support person shall be posted in a conspicuous place.

5.7 Personal Assistive Devices

The Town permits persons with a disability to use and keep with them their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services offered by the Town.

If for some reason the use of the personal assistive device could cause harm or injury to the person with a disability while attempting to access our goods or services, then other reasonable arrangements to provide the goods or service shall be explored with the assistance of the person with a disability.

Appropriate staff will be trained and knowledgeable of the presence and use of Town owned assistive devices within their working department. Staff will be available to assist with the assistive devices, if requested, for use by an individual.

5.8 Notice of Service Disruptions

Notice of Service Disruptions must be provided when facilities or services that persons with disabilities may use to access the Town's goods or services are temporarily unavailable or if the goods or services are expected, in the near future, to be temporarily unavailable.

For example, persons with disabilities may often go to a lot of trouble to access services, such as arranging for transportation or relying on the use of an elevator to access another floor. Providing notice can save that person an unnecessary trip.

The Notice of Service Disruption will include the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice of Service Disruptions will be provided to the public on the Town's website www.orangeville.ca, by posting the information in a conspicuous place at the location of the disruption, or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

In the event of an unexpected disruption in service, notice will be provided as soon as possible and alternative methods of service may be considered, if any, and those impacted by the disruption in service shall be informed of any alternative methods.

5.9 Training

The Town shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of the Town's goods or services to persons with disabilities:

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other contractors and third parties on behalf of the Town, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- Every person who participates in developing the Town's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include, but is not limited to the following:

- Review the purpose of the AODA and requirements of the customer service standards.
- How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disabilities.

- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person.
- How to use equipment or devices available on the Town's premises or otherwise provided by the Town, that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability (i.e. TTY telephones, elevators, lifts, listening devices or other technology).
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Town's goods or services.

All current employees must receive training that complies with the above guidelines.

Contractors and third parties who provide customer service and/or develop policies and procedures on behalf of the Town must provide proof of training on the customer service standard if required by the Regulation. This process will be confirmed and monitored through the Contractor Handbook, if required.

This training must be provided to all new employees as soon as practicable after he or she is assigned their applicable duties. The method and amount of training shall be geared to the trainee's role in terms of accessibility.

The Human Resources Department will coordinate training and will maintain records that include who the training has been provided to and the dates when the training was completed.

Town employees and contractors and third parties will be provided with a handout, "Guidelines to Providing Accessible Customer Service - "May I Help You?", which sets out the standards for providing goods and services to customers with disabilities.

Training will be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.

5.10 Notice of Availability of Documents

A copy of the policies and procedures required under Ontario Regulation 429/07 – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be provided to any person. The Town's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service will be available on its website.

5.11 Format of Documents

If a request is made to the Town to provide a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Town shall provide to that person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability. The Town and the person with a disability may agree upon the format to be used for the document or information.

Attachment 1: Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form



Accessible Customer Service Feedback Form

Thank you for visiting a Town of Orangeville facility. We value all of our customers and strive to meet everyone's needs.

Please indicate which Town of Orangeville facility you visited:						
Please te	ell us the d	ate and tim	ne of your visit	:		_
Did we re	espond to y	your custo	mer service ne	eds today?		
			Yes		No	
Was our	customer	service pro	ovided to you in	n an accessib	le manner?	
	Yes		Somewhat		No (please explain below)	
						_
	nformation			Telephon	e Number:	
Thank yo	ou.					
Please fo	orward to:					

Accessibility Coordinator, c/o Building and By-law Enforcement Department 87 Broadway, Orangeville, ON L9W 1K1



Attachment 2: Notice of Service Disruption



NOTICE OF SERVICE DISRUPTION

Type of Disruption:		
Reason for Disruption:		
Duration of Disruption:		
Alternative facilities or services:		
Contact for Information:		
Authorized by:	Date Posted:	

Please post in a conspicuous place with reasonable amount of notice. Post on the Town's website. Examples of accessibility features, services and facilities include (but are not limited to):

Accessible Parking

Accessible Washrooms

Elevators

Grab bars

Lighting

Pool lifts

Ramps

Sidewalks

TTY's (teletypewriters)



Attachment 3: Accessibility Standards for Customer Service



Accessibility Standards for Customer Service

"May I Help You?"

Guidelines to Providing Accessible Customer Service

The Corporation of the Town of Orangeville 87 Broadway Orangeville ON L9W 1K1 www.orangeville.ca

Information in this package has been obtained from the Ministry of Community and Social Services – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities website.

www.mcss.gov.on.ca

Background

Did you know that just over 15.5% of Ontarians have a disability? That's 1 in every 7 Ontarians and as the population ages that number will grow.

The Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) was passed by the Ontario Legislature with the goal of creating standards to improve accessibility across the province.

Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessible Standards for Customer Service, was the first accessibility standard under the AODA to be enacted. Under this Regulation, the Town of Orangeville is required to:

- 1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- 2. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that our policies, procedures and practices provide accessible customer service to persons with various kinds of disabilities.
- 3. Establish a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access our goods and use our services.
- 4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
- 5. Permit a person with a disability to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of our premises that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by law.
- 6. Permit a person with a disability who uses a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in our premises open to the public or other third parties. If an admission fee is charged for a service, let people know ahead of time what, if any, admission will be charged for a support person.
- 7. Provide notice when facilities or services that persons with disabilities rely on to access or use our goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
- 8. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or the third parties on our behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
- 9. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how we provide goods or services to persons with disabilities and how we will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints.

What is Accessible Customer Service?

The Town of Orangeville is committed to providing customer service to persons with disabilities in a manner that:

- respects their dignity and independence;
- is integrated as fully as practicable into the method of service delivery;
- ensures an opportunity equal to that given to other customers to obtain and use our goods and services; and
- allows persons with disabilities to benefit from the same service, in the same place, and in a similar way as other customers.

Accessible customer service is the understanding that each individual may need a slightly different type of accommodation. For example, a person who is blind may need to have information read aloud to them; an individual with a learning disability may need to have instructions written down; and someone who uses a wheelchair may need help in finding a route they can use.

Accessible customer service is **good** customer service – courteous, helpful and prompt.

What can I do?

In any interaction, always start with addressing the person's service needs, rather than focusing on the disability.

A "**Disability**" as defined by the AODA includes:

- any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness;
- 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 ("handicap").

Here are some ways you can provide better service to our customers with disabilities:

- Treat persons with disabilities with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
- Patience, optimism, and a willingness to find a way to communicate are your best tools.
- Smile, relax, and keep in mind that persons with disabilities are just people.
- Don't make assumptions about what type of disability or disabilities a person has.
- Some disabilities are not visible. Take the time to get to know your customers' needs.
- Be patient. People with some kinds of disabilities may take a little longer to understand and respond.
- Ask before you offer to help don't just jump in. Your customer with disabilities knows if they need help and how you can provide it.

- Find a good way to communicate. A good start is to listen carefully.
- Look at your customer, but don't stare. Speak directly to a person with a disability, not to their interpreter or someone who is with them.
- Use plain language and speak in short sentences.
- Don't touch or address service animals they are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Ask permission before touching a wheelchair or piece of equipment.
- Every business should have emergency procedures for customers with disabilities. Make sure you know what they are.
- If you can't understand what someone is saying, just politely ask again.

And,

• If you're not sure what to do, ask your customer, "May I help you?"

Each table below defines a specific category of disability and outlines some tips to help you provide exceptional service to your customers.

Vision Disability

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 Most individuals who are legally blind have some remaining vision – very few are totally blind. Low or no vision can restrict ability to read signs, locate landmarks, or see hazards. May use guide dog or white cane. May need to view written documents in large print, or with help of magnifier. 	 Don't assume you customer can't see you. Speak directly to your customer. Offer your elbow to guide customer. If they accept, walk slowly, wait for permission. Identify landmarks. Be precise and descriptive with information. Don't leave your customer.

Hearing Disability

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 Deaf – severe to profound hearing loss. Hard of Hearing – a person who uses their residual hearing and speech to communicate. Deafened – hear poorly or not at all. 	 Attract your customer's attention before speaking – a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand. Look directly at the person. May have to use pen and paper. Speak clearly, keep your hands away from your face. Reduce background noise. Ensure appropriate lighting.

Deafblind Disability

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 Cannot see or hear to some degree. Many will be accompanied by a support person (a professional who helps with communication by using Sign language that involves touching the hands of the client). 	 Speak directly to your customer, not the support person. Identify yourself to the support person.

Physical Disability

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 May restrict a person in the following ways: Control or speed of movements. Coordination and balance. Ability to grasp some objects. Ability to walk long distances. Ability to sit or stand for prolonged periods. Can be present at birth, result from disease, injury or be temporary. 	 Speak directly to your customer. Ask before you help. Respect personal space. Don't move any items they may have. Describe what you are going to do beforehand. Don't leave your customer in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position.

Speech or Language Disability

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 May have problems communicating. May be difficult to pronounce words, slurring or stuttering. May use communication boards or other assistive devices. 	 Don't make assumptions. Give whatever time they need to get their point across. Ask questions that can be answered "yes" or "no", if possible. Don't interrupt or finish your customer's sentences. May have to use pen and paper. Say: "I don't understand, can you repeat that?"

Intellectual or Developmental Disability

Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 Intellectual development and capacity that is below average. Can mildly or profoundly limit ability to learn, communicate, do everyday activities and live independently. May be an invisible disability. They may understand you more 	 Don't assume what your customer can or cannot do. Use plain language. Take your time, be patient. Ask: "Do you understand this?" Provide one piece of information at a time – step-by-step instruction.
than you know.	 Offer information in simpler concepts.

Learning Disability

Learning Disability	
	Tips for Serving Customers
Definition	
 Affects how person acquires, interprets, retains or takes in information. In many cases individual has average or above-average intelligence. May affect: Language based learning. Mathematics. Writing, fine motor skills. 	 Take some time, be patient. Demonstrate a willingness to assist. Speak normally, clearly and directly to your customer. Provide information in a way that works for your customer (i.e. pen and paper). Be prepared to explain any materials

Mental Health Disability

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Definition	Tips for Serving Customers
 Defined as the absence of psychological well-being and satisfactory adjustment to society. Some common features of mental health disabilities are: Phobias, panic attacks. Hallucinations. Mood swings. Bipolar disorders (depression & manic phases). 	 Treat your customer with the same level of respect and consideration. Be confident and reassuring. Do not be confrontational. If your customer is in crisis, ask how best to help. Take your customer seriously. Don't take things personally.

How should I interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive equipment, the assistance of a service animal or a support person?

Assistive Equipment

Definition

- Defined as devices that people may bring with them or that are already on the premises and are used to assist persons with disabilities in carrying out activities or in accessing the services provided by the Town of Orangeville.
- Assistive devices include, but are not limited to: wheelchairs, walkers, white canes used by people who are blind or who have low vision, note taking devices, portable magnifiers, recording machines, assistive listening devices, personal oxygen tanks and devices for grasping.

Tips for Serving Customers

- Inappropriate to lean on or reach over your customer's assistive device.
- Ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the device and to utilize the device, unless excluded by law.
- Potential barriers to the use of assistive devices must be removed where possible.
- Ensure persons with disabilities are aware of assistive devices available at Town of Orangeville facilities.
- Assistive devices must be offered in a manner that respects the persons' dignity and independence.

Service Animal

Definition

- Defined as an animal which is specifically trained to assist an individual with disabilities.
- An animal is a "Service Animal" if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by a person with a disability for reasons relating to his or her disability, for example, a guide dog wearing a harness.
- If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a Service Animal, then a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability is required.

Tips for Serving Customers

- Customer is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises (e.g. areas where food is prepared).
- Customer is responsible for the care and supervision of the Service Animal.
- Avoid talking to, touching or making eye contact with the Service Animal.

Support Persons

Definition

- In relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.
- May be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member or a friend.

Tips for Serving Customers

- Both persons are permitted to enter the premises together.
- The person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the Support Person while on the premises.
- Consent is required if confidential information is going to be shared when a Support Person is present.
- Speak directly to your customer, not the Support Person.

What happens if for some reason we can't serve a person with a disability?

It is possible that from time to time there will be disruptions in service, such as an elevator under repair, renovations that limit access to an area, or technology that is temporarily unavailable. If a disruption in service is planned, and expected, it is important to provide reasonable notice.

Persons with disabilities may often go to a lot of trouble to access services (i.e. arranging transportation and support person). By providing notice, you can save that person an unnecessary trip. Notice will be posted on the Town of Orangeville's website www.orangeville.ca and in a conspicuous place at the location of the disruption.

Please refer to the Town of Orangeville's Accessibility Standards for Customer Service – Policies and Procedures to assist you in delivering goods and services on behalf of the Town, to persons with disabilities.