

# THE CORPORATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ARRAN-ELDERSLIE

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**Policy Name:** *Accessible Standards for Customer Service and Use of Assistive Devices*      **Policy No:** *HR1*

**Department:** *Municipality Wide*

**Effective Date:**

*Date Revised:*

**Authority:** *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Customer Service Standard)*

## **Purpose:**

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie is committed to responding to the needs of its residents and to do this we must recognize the diverse needs of all of the residents. The Municipality will respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. As both an employer and a provider of services, the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie is committed to ensuring its services are provided in an accessible manner.

The Municipality will promote accessibility through the development of policies, procedures and practices and ensuring that all such policies, procedures and practices take into consideration people with disabilities. To do this we must ensure that the policies, procedures and practices address integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity.

This policy will apply to all services provided by the Municipality and to all providers of service by the Municipality, including all employees, contractors, agents and volunteers of the Municipality.

## **Background:**

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie is a designated public sector organization under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and Ontario Regulation 429/07 (Customer Services Standard).

In 2007, O. Reg. 429/07 was enacted which requires that designated public sector organizations must comply with the requirements set out below on and after January 1, 2010:

1. Establish policies, practices and procedures on providing goods or services to people with disabilities.
2. Set a policy on allowing people to use their own personal assistive devices to access the Municipality's goods and use its services and about any other measures the Municipality offers (assistive devices, services, or methods) to enable individuals to access the Municipality's goods and use the Municipality's services.
3. Use reasonable efforts to ensure that policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the core principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity.
4. Communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability.
5. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who interact with the public or other third parties on the Municipality's behalf on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
6. Train staff, volunteers, contractors and any other people who are involved in developing the Municipality's policies, practices and procedures on the provision of goods or services on a number of topics as outlined in the customer service standard.
7. Allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by their guide dog or service animal in those areas of the premises the Municipality owns or operates that are open to the public, unless the animal is excluded by another law. If a service animal is excluded by law, use other measures to provide services to the person with a disability.
8. Permit people with disabilities who use a support person to bring that person with them while accessing goods or services in premises open to the public or third parties.
9. Where admission fees are charged, provide notice ahead of time on what admission, if any, would be charged for a support person of a person with a disability.
10. Provide notice when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access or use the Municipality's goods or services are temporarily disrupted.
11. Establish a process for people to provide feedback on how the Municipality provides goods or services to people with disabilities and how the Municipality will respond to any feedback and take action on any complaints. Make the information about the Municipality's feedback process readily available to the public.

## **Definitions:**

**Accessibility Coordinator** – the person appointed by the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie as Accessibility Coordinator.

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

**Disability** – the same definition of disability as found in the Ontario Human Rights Code.

**Employee** – any person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.

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

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

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

## **Principles:**

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- i) That goods and services be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- ii) The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- iii) Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

## **Procedures and Practices:**

Procedures and practices will strive to reflect or achieve the following:

i) Communication will be considered, in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability. ii) Staff will receive the appropriate training. iii) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal will be

permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie that are open to the public. iv) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises open to the public. v) Admission fees will be not waived for a support person who accompanies a person with a disability. vi) Notice will be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access Municipality of Arran-Elderslie services are temporarily disrupted.

vii) The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will establish a feedback process to allow people to provide feedback on how we are providing services to person with disabilities.

viii) The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie.

## **Procedures:**

### **Support Persons:**

Support person means, 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.

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will allow people with disabilities, who require, to be accompanied by a support person in all Municipally owned and operated public facilities. *The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie reserves the right to request the person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.*

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will not waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability into facilities where admission is charged.

i) The member of public should notify a staff member of the presence of the support person. ii) If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the person with the disability.

### **Feedback process:**

To submit a complaint:

Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint regarding the service they have received:

i) The member of the public with the complaint or concern should have a discussion with the staff person at the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie who is involved in the situation.

ii) Should the discussion not resolve the complaint or the member of the public is uncomfortable discussing the issue with the staff person, the member of the public should fill out a complaint form. A staff person can assist the member of the public with the *complaint form* in a manner that takes into consideration their disability.

iii) The information to be provided by the member of the public should include their personal contact information, the date, a description of the complaint, and what the

member of the public requests to resolve the complaint. This information should be documented on the complaint form. iv) The complaint should be forwarded to the manager responsible for the department and the department head. v) The department head will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of the Chief Administrative Officer. vi) The member of the public will be contacted once a resolution has been reached.

To submit a suggestion:

Should a member of the public wish to provide the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie with a suggestion on how to improve its service:

i) The member of the public will inform a staff member of the suggestion ii) The staff member will assist the member of the public in filling out the suggestion form, should

they require assistance. iii) The member of the public will be notified in a timely manner of how the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will proceed with their suggestion.

iv) The staff response should include: an explanation of how the Municipality will implement the suggestion, a response indicating further investigation, or an explanation as to why the Municipality is unable to implement the suggestion.

All complaints and suggestions should be recorded on a standard form and forwarded to the responsible manager or department head.

### **Service Disruption:**

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from the Municipality's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the Municipality (for example, elevators) and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie shall give notice of the disruption to the public.

Notice of the disruption must include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the Municipality as the provider of the goods or services, as well as by posting it on the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie's website.

If the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie website should expect a temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible, keeping with the conditions of the service disruption section of this policy, shall be provided on the website.

### **Service Animals:**

For the purpose of this policy, a "service animal" is defined as either:

i) A "guide dog" as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights Act*; 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:

a.

If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability; or

b.

If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will allow the person and the animal onto all Municipality of Arran-Elderslie owned and operated public facilities (areas that are open to the public only), and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

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

### **Format of Documents:**

Should the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie be required to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Corporation of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie should contain a note indicating, "alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie and the person with a disability will try to agree upon the format to be used for the document or information, subject to feasibility requirements of this policy.

Alternate formats that should be considered by the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie and the person with the disability will include, but are not limited to:

i) Print Requests: Requests for alternative formats should be honoured in the most practical manner depending on the media chosen, the size and complexity of the document, the quality and source of the documents, the feasibility of the request (including the cost) and the number of documents to be converted. It should be noted that when request for one of these formats is received and deemed feasible, staff should make every attempt to respond to the request in the most practical manner and to the satisfaction of the requestor. If it is determined that the format requested is not feasible, then other alternative methods of providing the information should be

explored that will still meet the needs of the requestor (e.g. Audio CD or explaining the information verbally, etc.)

- a. The employee receives request from member of the public for alternative format.
- b. The employee fills out alternative format request form.
- c. The employee forwards request onto the responsible manager.
- d. The Chief Administrative Officer will determine feasibility, if requested by the manager.
- e. The employee proceeds with alternative format request.
- f. If not feasible, employee contacts individual with feasible solution.

ii) ASL Interpreter Request:

- a. The employee receives request from member of public for ASL Interpreter.
- b. The employee fills out alternative format request form.
- c. The employee forwards request onto the responsible manager.
- d. The responsible department contacts the Canadian Hearing Society to make the request.
- e. Once the Canadian Hearing Society confirms attendance of the ASL Interpreter, the responsible department contacts the individual.
- f. If an ASL Interpreter is not available, the individual will be contacted with an alternative solution.

For the purposes of this policy, feasibility will be determined based upon cost in relation to the size of the document and the time associated with process document requests.

The time frame attached to the conversion process varies depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents shall be returned in a timely manner depending on the factors previously noted.

Conversion shall be processed in-house wherever possible. When a member of the public requests a piece of Municipal documentation in multiple format, the department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, material and distribution, not the public requestor.

### **Training:**

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:

- i) Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Municipality, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- ii) Every person who participates in developing the Municipality'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 a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this policy and instruction about the following matters:

- i) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability, as outlined in this policy and procedures document.
- ii) 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, as outlined in this policy and procedures.
- iii) How to use equipment or devices available on the Municipality's premises or otherwise provided by the Municipality that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- iv) What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the Municipality's goods or services.

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will log and retain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed.

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will customize the training going forward, based on the actual experiences and usage of the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie owned or operated facilities.

### **Assistive Devices:**

The Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie.

Should a person with a disability be unable to access the Municipality's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie will ensure the following measures:

- i) Determine if service is inaccessible, based upon individual requirements.
- ii) Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.
- iii) Notify the person with disability of alternative service and how they can access the service, temporarily or on a permanent basis.

### **Contact Information:**

For more information about this policy, or questions related to accessibility at the Municipality of Arran-Elderslie, please contact us:

Clerk Municipality of Arran-Elderslie 1925 Bruce Road 10

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Useful Links:

Customer Service Standard, Ontario Regulation 429/07:

[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws\\_src\\_regs\\_r07429\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/source/regs/english/2007/elaws_src_regs_r07429_e.htm)

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005:

[http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/heml/statutes/english/elaws\\_statutes\\_05a11\\_e.htm](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/heml/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_05a11_e.htm)

Ministry of Community and Social Services:

<http://www.mcsc.gov.on.ca/mcss/english/pillars/accessibilityOntario>

AccessON: [www.accesson.ca](http://www.accesson.ca)