

Accessible Customer Service Policy

Approved by: County Council

By-law: N/A

Replaces: MS-ACC-001/MS-ACC-001-001

Section: Municipal Services

Policy: **MS-ACC-001**

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Policy Statement

Grey County is committed to providing accessible and inclusive services to people of all abilities.

Purpose

The Accessible Customer Service Policy meets the municipal requirements under Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*: Information and Communications Standards, Employment Standards, Transportation Standards, Design of Public Spaces Standards (Accessibility Standards for the Built Environment), and Customer Service Standards.

Scope

This policy provides direction to fulfill Grey County's commitment to providing accessible and inclusive services to people of all abilities. This policy applies to Grey County Council, employees and volunteers.

1.0 Definitions

- 1.1 "Accessible" means: Capable of being entered or reached, approachable; easy to get at; capable of being influenced; obtainable; easy to understand or appreciate.
- 1.2 "Disability" means (Ontario Human Rights Code definition):
 - any degree of physical, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, induces diabetes, mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical coordination, blindness or visual

impediment, hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a dog guide or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device;

- a condition of mental impairment of 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;
- an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety Insurance Act, 1997.

1.3 “Service animal” means: an animal trained in providing assistance to a person with a disability; and

- a) it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the animal is required for reasons relating to the disability:
 - i) A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario.
 - ii) A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario.
 - iii) A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario.
 - iv) A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario.
 - v) A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario.
 - vi) A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
 - vii) A member of the College of Physiotherapists of Ontario.
 - viii) A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario.
 - ix) A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.

1.4 “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 service.

2.0 Statement of Commitment

2.1 Grey County is committed to providing accessible and inclusive services to people of all abilities in a timely manner.

- 2.2 The Grey County Multi-Year Accessibility Plan explains how the County is improving accessibility. It also explains how Grey County follows provincial accessibility laws.

3.0 Training

- 3.1 Grey County is committed to training staff and volunteers in Ontario's accessibility laws and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.
- 3.2 Grey County trains its employees and volunteers on accessible customer service as well as other accessibility training as it relates to their specific roles.
- 3.3 Grey County keeps records of the training provided in accordance with legislation.

4.0 Information and Communication

- 4.1 Grey County staff ask how they can best help. When asked, County staff provide information about the organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports. County staff meet the needs of its customers
- 4.2 Grey County meets internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws. Information related to accessibility is posted on grey.ca.
- 4.3 Automated updates on a variety of topics are available by signing up for Grey County News / Updates on grey.ca.

5.0 Maintenance of Public Spaces

- 5.1 Service Disruption (Scheduled and Unexpected)

Grey County Housing staff coordinate maintenance of accessible features. Notice of Scheduled Service Disruption and Notice of Unexpected Service Disruption forms are posted on the County's website and at the location of the service disruption.

- 5.2 Long-Term Care

The Long-Term Care department maintains a policy for the County's long-term care facilities: V-C-10.00 Preventative Maintenance Program

6.0 Service

6.1 Providing Goods, Services, or Facilities

Grey County is committed to complying with all accessibility legislation while providing excellence in customer service to all customers. Grey County's accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people of all abilities.

6.2 Self-service Kiosks

Grey County incorporates accessibility features and considers accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Grey County staff are available to help when asked.

6.3 Assistive Devices

The use of assistive devices by individuals as required, in accessing goods and/or services provided by the County is recognized unless otherwise prohibited due to health and safety or privacy issues. Where possible, the County shall make assistive devices available in the form of lifts, wheelchairs, audio and visual enhancements, etc.

If a person with a disability is unable to access the County's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the County will:

- Determine if service is accessible based upon individual requirements
- Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual
- Explain and help with accessing the alternative service

6.4 Service Animals

Please refer to Grey County's Pets and Service Animals in the Workplace policy.

6.5 Support Persons

Grey County recognizes the need for a support person to support and assist an individual with a disability when accessing goods and services provided by the County. The County of Grey reserves the right to request the person with a

disability 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.

Grey County does not charge admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability.

Grey County staff will obtain consent from the person with the disability before confidential information is discussed.

7.0 Employment

- 7.1 Grey County notifies employees, potential hires and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring.
- 7.2 During orientation, staff are advised that supports are available for those with disabilities. Individual accommodation and/or customized emergency information plans are created as needed.
- 7.3 Grey County's performance management, career development and redeployment processes consider the accessibility needs of all employees.

8.0 Purchasing

- 8.1 Grey County considers accessibility in the design, criteria and features when purchasing new goods, services or facilities. If this is not possible or practical, an explanation will be provided upon request.

9.0 Design of Public Spaces

- 9.1 Grey County meets accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Public spaces include:
 - Recreational trails/beach access routes
 - Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
 - Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities
 - Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, rest areas and accessible pedestrian signals
 - Accessible off-street parking
 - Accessible on-street parking

- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas

10.0 Feedback Process

- 10.1 The County provides a feedback form so members of the public can comment on the provision of goods and services to people of all abilities. Feedback can also be received in any form (i.e. in person, by telephone (TTY), in writing, fax or in electronic format, including email). Feedback and responses are logged by the County and maintained through the County's records management policy.
- 10.2 All questions and concerns received shall be acknowledged within a maximum of two days from the date of receipt, response time to such submissions shall be dependent on the complexity of the issue, but shall not exceed 15 business days, unless there are extenuating circumstances that have been communicated to the submitter.

11.0 Responsibilities

- 11.1 All Departments are responsible for:
- Working with the Clerk's Department to respond to and track feedback
 - Providing documents in a suitable format upon request
 - Ensuring compliance with Ontario Regulation 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards
 - Notifying the Clerk's Department of any additional training requirements
 - Budgeting for accessibility requirements
 - Following Grey County's Pets and Service Animals in the Workplace Policy
- 11.2 The Clerk's Department is responsible for:
- Reporting to Grey County Committee of the Whole and Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee as necessary
 - Submitting legislated reports as required
 - Maintaining accessibility feedback forms
 - Coordinating accessibility training
 - Providing leadership to the Grey County Joint Accessibility Advisory Committee
 - Providing incidental advice on accessibility

12.0 Grey County Accessibility Policies

- 12.1 Grey County will modify or remove existing policies that do not respect and promote dignity and independence.
- 12.2 The Long-Term Care department maintains the policy III-J-10.00 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)

13.0 Legislated Requirements

Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2011

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005

Ontario Human Rights Code

Integrated Accessibility Standard-Ontario Regulation 191/11

Grey County Corporate Policy: Pets and Service Animals in the Workplace

Forms

[Feedback Form](#)

[Notice of Scheduled Service Disruption](#)

[Notice of Unexpected Service Disruption](#)