



Purpose:

This policy establishes the customer service standard for all Township employees to provide accessible service to our customers and governs the manner of conduct to ensure the dignity and independence of all our customers.

Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (“the AODA”), ‘disability’ is defined accordingly:

- (a) 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 co-ordination, 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,
- (b) A condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) A learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) A mental disorder, or
- (e) An injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

As such, the Township of Zorra is committed to providing exceptional and accessible service for our customers, including those with disabilities. Goods and services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence to all customers. The provision of services to persons with disabilities will be integrated wherever possible. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others, to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services provided by and on behalf of the Township of Zorra.

This policy was originally drafted in accordance with Ontario Regulation 429/07 entitled “Accessibility Standards for Customer Service,” but has been amended to adhere to the *Integrated Accessibility Standards* (Ontario Regulation 191/11) (the “IASR”) accordingly, following the consolidation of O. Reg. 429/07 into the IASR. As such, the Township’s Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Policy addresses the following:

- (a) The development, implementation and maintenance of policies governing the provision of goods, services and facilities to persons with disabilities;
- (b) Use of service animals and support persons;
- (c) Notice of temporary disruptions;
- (d) Training for staff, etc.;



- (e) Feedback process required; and
- (f) Format of documents.

Definitions:

N/A

Policy:

1.0 Establishment of Policies

- 1.1. The Township of Zorra shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that the policies regarding the provision of goods, services and facilities are consistent with the following principles:
 - (a) The goods, services or facilities must be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
 - (b) The provision of goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities must be integrated with the provision of goods, services or facilities to others, 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, services or facilities;
 - (c) Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods, services or facilities; and
 - (d) When communicating with a person with a disability, the provider shall do so in a manner that takes into account the person's disability.
- 1.2. The Township's **Purchasing Policy** reflects these principles.

2.0 Support Persons

- 2.1. 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.
- 2.2. The Township of Zorra will allow people with disabilities the opportunity to be accompanied by a support person in all municipally owned and operated public facilities. The Township shall ensure that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises. The Township of Zorra 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 and if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability and the health or safety of others on the premises.
- 2.3. If an amount is payable for a person's admission to the premises or in connection with a person's presence on the premises, the Township shall ensure that notice is given in advance about the amount, if any, payable in respect to the support person. Additionally, if the Township requires



a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person when on the premises, the Township shall waive the admission fee payable in respect to the support person's admission.

- 2.4. The Township of Zorra will waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability, into facilities where admission is charged by the municipality.
- (a) Member of public should notify a staff member that a support person is present.
 - (b) Admission fees will be waived for the support person.
 - (c) If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the person with the disability.

3.0 Service Animals

3.1. 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.

3.1. The Township of Zorra will allow the person and the animal onto all Township of Zorra owned and operated public facilities (areas that are open to the public), and will ensure that the person is permitted to keep the animal with him or her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. The care and control of a service animal is the responsibility of the owner and/or support person.

3.2. If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, 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 provider's goods or services.

4.0 Notice of Temporary Disruptions

4.1. The Township of Zorra is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in the Municipality's services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the Municipality's control or knowledge.

4.2. The Director or his/her Designate of the affected "disruption" will ensure that the notice is provided to the public and municipal staff is informed if needed.

4.3. Advance notice will be provided where possible to the public in a variety of forms. These forms include:

- (a) Posting of signage in affected areas



- (b) Township website

4.4. The notice must include the following information:

- (a) The reason for disruption in service
- (b) Anticipated duration
- (c) Description of alternate facilities or services, if available
- (d) Contact information

4.5. If the Township of Zorra website should experience a temporary service disruption, advanced notice where possible, keeping with the conditions of the service disruption section of this policy, shall be provided on the website.

5.0 Training for Staff etc.

5.1. The Township of Zorra shall ensure that the following persons receive training about the provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities:

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

5.2. The training will include a review of the purposes of the Act and the requirements of this policy and instruction about the following matters:

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

5.3. The Township of Zorra 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.

5.4. The Township of Zorra will customize the training going forward, based on the actual experiences and usage of the persons with disabilities in Township of Zorra owned or operated facilities.



5.5. The Township of Zorra will incorporate the training into the Health & Safety Orientation for new hires. Presentation materials will also be made available so that they can be used during staff meetings and workshops as required.

6.0 Feedback Process

6.1. The Township of Zorra is committed to providing high quality goods, services and facilities to all members of the public, including those with disabilities. Feedback from the public regarding the manner in which the Township provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities is welcome as it may identify areas that require change and encourage continuous service improvements.

6.2. The Township of Zorra accepts feedback from the public through the following methods:

- (a) Township of Zorra website
- (b) In person
- (c) Telephone
- (d) Written complaint or suggestion

6.3. Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint regarding the way in which the Township provided goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities:

- (a) The member of the public with the complaint or concern should have a discussion with the staff person at the Township of Zorra who is involved in the situation.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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.
- (d) The complaint should be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director responsible for the department.
- (e) The Chief Administrative Officer will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of municipal staff, if necessary.
- (f) The member of the public will be contacted once a resolution has been reached.

6.4. Should a member of the public wish to provide the Township of Zorra with a suggestion on how to improve our services regarding the way in which the Township provided goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities:

- (a) Member of the public will inform staff of suggestion

- (b) Staff member will assist member of the public in filling out the suggestion form, should they require assistance
- (c) The suggestion should be forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer, and the department head.
- (d) Member of the public will be notified in a timely manner of how the Township of Zorra will proceed with their suggestion.
- (e) Staff response should include: an explanation of how we will implement the suggestion, a response indicating further investigation or an explanation why we are unable to implement the suggestion.

- 6.5. All complaints and suggestions should be recorded on a complaint or suggestion form, and where applicable, forwarded to the Chief Administrative Officer of the Township.
- 6.6. Complaint or suggestion forms will be available on the Township website and in each individual department. The Township shall ensure that the feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

7.0 Format of Documents

- 7.1. Should the Township of Zorra be required to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Township of Zorra shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability, unless it is not technically feasible to do so and subject to the provisions of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Privacy Act. Furthermore, the Township shall provide or arrange for the provision of the document, or the information contained in the document, to the person in an accessible format or with communication support,
 - (a) In a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
 - (b) At a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.
- 7.2. The Township shall consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format.
- 7.3. Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Township of Zorra should contain a note indicating, "alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.
- 7.4. The Township of Zorra 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.
- 7.5. Alternative formats that should be considered by the Township of Zorra and the person with the disability will include, but are not limited to:
 - (a) 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 a 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.).

- (i) Staff member receives request from member of the public for alternative format
- (ii) Employee fills out alternative format request form.
- (iii) Forwards request onto the Chief Administrative Officer
- (iv) The Chief Administrative Officer will determine feasibility, if feasible
- (v) Proceed with alternative format request
- (vi) If not feasible, contact individual with feasible solution

(b) ASL Interpreter Request:

- (i) Employee receives request from public for ASL Interpreter
- (ii) Employee fills out alternative format request form
- (iii) Forward request onto the Chief Administrative Officer
- (iv) Chief Administrative Officer or Designate contact Canadian Hearing Society to make request
- (v) Once Canadian Hearing Society confirms attendance of ASL Interpreter, the responsible department contacts individual
- (vi) If ASL Interpreter is not available, individual will be contacted with an alternative solution

- 7.6. Feasibility will be determined based upon cost in relation to size of document and time associated with processing document requests.
- 7.7. 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.
- 7.8. Conversion shall be processed in-house wherever possible. When a member of the public requests a piece of Municipal documentation in a multiple format, the department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not the public requestor.
- 7.9. In-house printing, where possible, should adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards.

8.0 Administration



- 8.1. All members of Council, staff and volunteers or third parties that deal with the public shall follow this policy.

Next revision date: (every five years)

September 2024.

Accessible Formats:

If you require this document to be in an accessible format, please contact the Director of Corporate Services at clerk@zorra.ca or 519-485-2490 ext. 7228.

For accessibility-related definitions and further information on the Township's accessibility practices, please refer to the Township's **Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation Policy**.