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Policy Statement


The County of Perth is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and visitors. To do this, the County of Perth must recognize the diverse needs of all of the County's residents and visitors by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. As a provider of goods and services, the County of Perth is committed to ensuring its goods and services are provided in an accessible manner.

The County of Perth will promote accessibility through the development of policies, practices and procedures that consider people with disabilities. To do this the County of Perth will make reasonable efforts to ensure the policies, practices and procedures address **dignity, independence, integration, and equal opportunity.**

Principles

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- i) That goods and services are 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 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 equal opportunity to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

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Definitions

For the purpose of this policy ‘**disability**’ is defined according to the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, as:

- i) 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, physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- ii) a condition of mental impairment or developmental disability,
- iii) learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols of spoken language,
- iv) a mental disorder; or,
- v) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*.

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.

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For the purpose of this policy, a ‘**support person**’ is defined as:

- i) another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to assist him or her with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

For the purpose of this policy, ‘**staff**’ is defined as:

- i) employees, volunteers, agents and others working for the County of Perth.


Procedures and Practices

1. Communication

- i) Communication with persons with disabilities will be conducted in ways that take into account their disability.
- ii) The County of Perth will ensure staff who communicate with customers and third parties are trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- iii) The County will offer a variety of communication methods for people to access its goods and services to allow individuals to select the method most accessible to them; e.g. telephone, email, mail, in person.

References

Appendix A: Accessibility Guidelines for Communicating with Customers with Disabilities

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2. Format of Documents and Information

- i) Upon request, the County of Perth will provide County documents (e.g. forms, print materials, bills, etc.) or the information contained within the documents in formats that take into account a person's disability.
- ii) The County of Perth will consult the person requesting the document to determine what a reasonable accessible alternate format of the document or information would be.
- iii) When staff receive a request for alternative format they should fill out *Form A: Request for Information and Assistance in an Alternative Format* and submit the form to the Accessibility Coordinator. The Accessibility Coordinator will work with the Director of the department of origin to fulfill the request.
- iv) The time frame attached to the conversion process will vary depending on the media chosen, the size, complexity, quality of source documents and number of documents to be converted. Documents will be returned in a timely manner with consideration of these factors.
- v) Should documents contain information required by the customer sooner than the conversion will be ready; the information will be communicated in a way that is accessible to the customer.
- vi) Customers will not be charged fees for documents in alternative formats that exceed the fees charged for the document in its original state.

References

Appendix B: Accessibility Guidelines for the Formatting of Documents and Information

Form A: Request for Information and Assistance in an Alternate Format

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3. Assistive Devices


- i) The County of Perth welcomes persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the County of Perth.
- ii) Should a person with a disability be unable to access the County's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the County of Perth will ensure the following measures are taken:
 - a) Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual; and
 - b) Identify alternative services and how a person with a disability can access the services, either temporarily or on a permanent basis.
- iii) Further, the County will ensure staff are trained on the use of all assistive devices available for their customers at the location(s) in which they provide service.

References:

Appendix C: Assistive Devices Instruction Manual

4. Service Animals

- i) The County of Perth welcomes persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal on all areas of the premises owned or operated by the County of Perth that are typically open to the public unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law.

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- ii) In the case where a service animal is excluded from the premises by law, the County will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with the disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider’s goods and services.

This could include:

- a) offering the person with a disability a safe place for their animal to remain while obtaining goods or services, along with personal support in obtaining the goods and services; or
- b) offering goods and services at an alternate location that allows for service animal accompaniment

5. Support Persons


- i) The County of Perth welcomes persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person to remain with that support person on all areas of the premises owned or operated by the County of Perth.
- ii) If a fee is required for admission to the premises or in connection with a person’s presence at the premises, the County of Perth will waive the fee for support persons.
 - a) All advertising indicating the fee amounts will also indicate that fees do not apply to support persons.
 - b) Members of the public should notify a staff member about the presence of a support person.
- iii) When attended by a support person, consent from the person being supported must be obtained prior to disclosing confidential information.

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- iv) Support persons may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement in some situations.
- v) The County of Perth reserves the right to request a 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 the disability or others on the premises.

6. Disruption to Services

- i) If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from the County's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services (e.g., lifts, elevators, accessible washrooms, particular entrances, ramps) and if there is a disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the County of Perth will give notice of the disruption to the public.
- ii) 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 (see Form B).
- iii) Notice will be given by posting *Form B: Disruption to Services*, containing the above information, on all entrances of the facility undergoing disruption, as well as at the specific site of service disruption within the building (e.g. beside the elevator doors). Information will also be posted on the County of Perth website (www.perthcounty.ca). If deemed appropriate and time permits, planned disruptions of services may also be published in local newspapers and broadcast on local radio stations.

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- iv) Ensuring the posting of Form B at the facilities will be the shared responsibility of the Facilities Supervisor and Facilities Maintenance. The Facilities Supervisor and Facilities Maintenance will also have the responsibility of providing a copy of Form B to the Technology Services Department who will be responsible for posting its contents on the County website.
- v) If a temporary service disruption of the website is planned, advance notice to the extent possible, keeping with the conditions of this section of this policy, will be provided.
- vi) Notice will be given as much in advance as possible; however, in the event of an unplanned service disruption, notice will be given as soon as feasibly possible in the manner described in this section.

References:

Form B: Disruption to Services

7. Feedback Process

- i) The ultimate goal of the County of Perth is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on the County's services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated.

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- ii) Feedback regarding the way the County of Perth provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be directed to the Accessibility Coordinator, via:

Phone: 519-301-1979

Email: accessibility@perthcounty.ca


Mail: Accessibility Coordinator

Corporation of the County of Perth

1 Huron Street

Stratford, ON N5A 5S4

- iii) A response will be provided within 30 days, in the same manner as the comment or concern was received.
- iv) Concerns may also be discussed in-person by bringing them to the attention of the staff serving you, requesting to speak with a manager, or arranging an appointment with the Accessibility Coordinator.
- v) When a comment or concern is received by the Accessibility Coordinator, they will notify the Director responsible for the department. The Accessibility Coordinator will aid the Director in developing a resolution.
- vi) If deemed appropriate, a concern regarding the provision of accessible goods and services may be directed to the Perth County Accessibility Advisory Committee for recommendations on how to address the comment or concern.
- vii) If agreement on the resolution of a concern cannot be reached between the appropriate Director or designate and the complainant, the matter will be directed to the Chief Administrative Officer for disposition.

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- viii) If the Chief Administration Officer is unable to provide a satisfactory resolution to the concern, the complainant has the option of presenting the concern to County Council for final disposition.
- ix) A notice encouraging feedback (see Appendix D: Customer Feedback Notice) will be posted at all County of Perth service counters and the County website (www.perthcounty.ca) and full copies of the feedback process will be available upon request. Staff will draw attention to the request for feedback for customers unable to read the notice.

References:


Appendix D: Customer Feedback Notice

8. Training

- i) The County of Perth will ensure that all employees, volunteers, agents and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, or who are involved in developing policies, practices and procedures that govern the provision of the County's goods and services will receive training on the accessible provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities.
- ii) The training will include a review of the purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*, the requirements of *Regulation 429/07 Accessible Standards for Customer Service*, the requirements of this policy, and instruction about the following matters:

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- a) How to interact and communicate with persons with various types of disability;
 - 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;
 - c) How to use equipment or devices available on premises owned or leased by the County of Perth otherwise provided by the County of Perth that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability; and,
 - d) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing goods and services provided by the County of Perth.
- iii) Training will be provided as soon as possible after hire, incorporated into the existing orientation process as an additional component led by the Accessibility Coordinator (this includes volunteers and students).
- iv) The County of Perth will log and maintain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was complete.
- v) The training of County Councilors will occur at the lower tier level.
- vi) Committee members who are not a part of staff or council (citizen members) will receive training as soon as possible after appointment.
- vii) Contractors who meet the criteria outlined in 8.i will provide the County with documentation indicating that training in accordance with the requirements of regulation 429/07 has been provided to all of their staff working for the County of Perth (*refer to Form C and Appendix E: Guidelines for Determining Contractor Training Requirements*).

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viii) Training will also 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.

References:

Form C: Contractor Accessibility Agreement

Appendix E: Guidelines for Determining Contractor Training Requirements

9. Documentation and Review

- i) A copy of this document will be kept in electronic form and available on the County of Perth’s intranet for employee’s reference, as well as available to employees in other formats upon request.
- ii) A copy of this document will be available to the public on the County’s website (www.perthcounty.ca), as well as available in alternative formats upon request, as outlined in section 2 of this document.
- iii) Review and amendments of this document will be the responsibility of the Accessibility Coordinator, in consultation with the CAO.

10. Non-Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.