



# Accessible Customer Service Policy

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**Department:** City **EFFECTIVE DATE:** January 1, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Accessible Customer Service Policy

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

## **Purpose**

The City of Markham is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents and visitors. To do this, we must recognize the diverse needs of all of our residents and visitors and respond by striving to provide goods services and facilities that are accessible to all. As an employer, and a provider of goods and services. The City of Markham is committed to ensuring its goods services are provided in an accessible manner.

The City of Markham will promote accessibility though the implementation of this policy and by ensuring it considers people with disabilities. To do this we must ensure our policies, procedures and practices address integration independence, dignity and equal opportunity.

## **Principles**

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

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

## **PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES:**

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

- Communication will be considered, in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability.



- Staff will receive appropriate training related to accessible customer service training in relation to their roles.
- People with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the City of Markham that are opened to the public.
- Persons with disabilities, accompanied by a support person, will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in premises open to the public.
- Where admission fees are charged for support person, advance notices will be given.
- Notice will be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access City of Markham services are temporarily disrupted.
- People can offer feedback on how the City of Markham is providing services to people's with a disability by contacting the contact centre.
- The City of Markham will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the city of Markham.

## **PRACTICES**

### **SUPPORT PERSONS**

Support person means another people who accompany him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs with accessing goods or services.

The City of Markham will allow people with disabilities, who require; to be accompanied by a support person in all City owned and operated public facilities. The City of Markham 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 disability or others on the premises.

- Members of public should notify a staff member the presence of the support person.
- Where admission fees are charged for support persons. Advance notice will be given.
- 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:



- Complaints or concerns may be outlined in person, via e-mail or telephone to:
- The director of the department where services were provided: or
- The City of Markham contact centre.
- 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 request to resolve the complaint. This information and the complaint resolution will be recorded in the City's customer request management software.
- The department manager will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of the SR diversity specialist
- The member of the public will be contact once a resolution has been reached.

To submit a suggestion:

Should a member of the public wish to provide the city of Markham with a suggestion on how to improve our service:

- Member of the public can contact the contact centre and provide suggestion via email, telephone or in person.
- All suggestions will be recorded in the customer request management software.
- Member of the public will be notified in a timely manner of how the City of Markham will proceed with their decision
- Staff response should include: an explanation of how the suggestion will be implemented, a response indicating further investigation or an explanation why we are unable to implement suggestion.

All complaints and suggestions should be recorded, and forwarded to the responsible manager, department head and the human resources department.

## **SERVICE DISRUPTION**

If, in order to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, persons with disabilities usually use particular facilities or services of the provider (for example, elevators) and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services as a whole or in part, the City of Markham shall give notice of the disruption in the form and manner established by the City's notice policy.

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 of information at the conspicuous place premises owned or operated by the provider of goods or services, as well as by posting on the City of Markham website.

If the City of Markham website should expect a temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible, keeping with the conditions of the services 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:

- A "guide dog," as defined in section 1 of the blind persons rights act or
- 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, if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reason relating to his or her disability

The City of Markham will allow the person and the animal onto all City of Markham owned and operated public facilities, 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 provider of goods or services shall ensure that other measure are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services

## **FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS**

Should the City of Markham be required to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the City of Markham 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 City of Markham should contain a note indicating " alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.

The City of Markham 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.

Alternative formats that should be considered by the City of Markham and the person with the disability will include, but are not limited too.

- Alternative formats

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 document, 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 are 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 alternatives methods of providing the information should be explored that will still meet the needs of the requestor (e.g. explaining the information verbally etc)

- Staff members receive request from member of the public for alternative format.
- Employee fills out alternative format request form.
- Forwards request onto the responsible manager
- The responsible manager and SR diversity specialist will determined feasibility, if feasible;
- Proceeds with alternative format request.
- If not feasible; contact individual with feasible solution

Feasibility will be determined based upon cost in the relation to size of document and time associated with processing document request.

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 added.

Conversion shall be processed in-house whenever possible. When a member of the public request a piece of city documentation in an alternative format, the responsible department (and not the public requestor) shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion to the alternate format

For greater clarity, if a request by a person with a disability is made pursuant to the municipal freedom of information and protection act, the requestor shall be responsible for payment of the prescribed fee but not for any costs associated with conversion to an alternative format.

In-house printing, where possible, should adhere to the CNIB's clear print standards.

## **TRAINING**

The City of Markham shall ensure that the following persons receive training about provision of its goods or services to persons with disabilities;

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the City, whether the person does so as an employee agent, volunteer or otherwise.



- Every person who participates in developing the City’s policies practice and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.
- The training will include review of the purpose of the act and the requirements of this policy and instructions about the following matters:
- How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device o require the assistance of a guide dog or service animal or the assistance of a support person, as outlined in this policy and procedures.
- 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.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty accessing the provider’s goods and services
- The City of Markham will log and retain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, and how the training was completed.
- When there are changes to policies, practices and procedures, updated training will occur.

## **ASSISTIVE DEVICES**

The City of Markham will allow person with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the City of Markham.

Should a person with a disability be unable to access the City’s services through the use of their own personal assistive devices, the City of Markham will ensure the following measure:

- Determined if service is inaccessible based upon individuals requirements.
- Assess service delivery and potential services options to meet the needs of the individual.
- Notify 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 City of Markham, please contact us first at:

Contact Centre – [customerservice@markham.ca](mailto:customerservice@markham.ca), or by phone: 905-477-5530; then

Senior Diversity Specialist – 905-477-7000 x 2557