



## THE CORPORATION OF THE UNITED TOWNSHIPS OF HEAD, CLARA & MARIA

### POLICY AND GUIDELINES ON ACCESSIBLE CUSTOMER SERVICE

#### POLICY STATEMENT

The Municipality of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria is committed to being responsive to the needs of all of its residents. To do this, we must recognize the diverse needs of each resident and respond by striving to provide services and facilities that are accessible to all. As an employer, and a provider of services, the Municipality is committed to ensuring its services are provided in an accessible manner.

The Municipality will promote accessibility through the development and implementation of policies, procedures and practices and by ensuring that each considers people with disabilities. To do this we must ensure the policies, procedures and practices address **integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity.**

This policy applies to all employees, volunteers, Council members, Board members and contractors of all boards, commissions and bodies of the Municipality of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria.

#### PRINCIPLES

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- (a) That goods and services shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.

## GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Guidelines and procedures will strive to reflect or achieve the following:

- (a) Communication will occur, in a manner that takes into consideration a person's disability.
- (b) All staff and volunteers will receive appropriate customer service training.
- (c) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a guide dog or service animal will be permitted in those areas of the premises owned or operated by the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria that are open to the public.
- (c) Persons with disabilities accompanied by a support person will be permitted to be accompanied by that support person in areas open to the public.
- (d) Admission fees will be waived for Municipal events for the support person who accompanies a person with a disability.
- (e) If a support person is admitted to an event on Municipal property and fees are payable to a third party, the support person is permitted to attend the event at their own cost or without fee at the discretion of the third party.
- (f) Notice will be provided when facilities or services that people with disabilities rely on to access Municipal services are temporarily disrupted.
- (g) The Municipality will establish a feedback process which will allow people to comment on how well or how poorly we are providing services to those with disabilities.
- (h) The Municipality will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Municipality.

## GUIDELINES

## A. SUPPORT PERSON

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. The Municipality will allow people with disabilities, who require, to be accompanied by a support person in all municipally owned and operated public facilities. The Municipality reserves the right to request the person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, if Municipal staff considers it necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises.
3. Where admission is payable to the Municipality, the Municipality will waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability:
  - (a) Staff should be notified of the presence of the support person.
  - (b) If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the person with the disability.
4. Where admission fees to an event on Municipal property are owing to a third party the support person may attend the event at their own cost or free of charge at the discretion of the third party.

## B. FEEDBACK PROCESS

5. To submit a complaint:

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

- (a) The individual with the complaint or concern should primarily discuss the situation with the staff person involved in the incident or responsible for providing the service.
- (b) Should the discussion not resolve the complaint or should the person with the disability be uncomfortable discussing the issue with the staff person; the individual should fill out a complaint form for submission to the Clerk. The staff person

may assist with the complaint form in a manner that takes into consideration the individual's disability while respecting confidentiality.

- (c) The information to be provided by the person with the disability 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 Clerk.
- (e) The Clerk will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of staff, Council and our Municipal solicitor if warranted.
- (f) The member of the public will be contacted once a resolution has been reached.

6. To submit a suggestion:

Should a member of the public wish to provide the Municipality with a suggestion on how to improve our service in order to assist any accommodation process:

- (a) The individual will inform a staff member of the suggestion.
- (b) The staff member will assist the individual in filling out the suggestion form, should they require assistance.
- (c) The individual will be notified in a timely manner of how the Municipality will proceed with their suggestion.
- (d) Staff response should include: if possible, an explanation of how we will implement the suggestion; a response indicating further investigation or an explanation of why we are unable to implement the suggestion.

All complaints and suggestions should be recorded on a complaint form, and forwarded to the Clerk for appropriate resolution and or accommodation.

### C. SERVICE DISRUPTION

7. 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 in whole or in part, the Municipality shall give notice of the disruption to the public.
8. Notice of the disruption shall include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration and a description of alternate facilities or services, if any, that are available.
9. Notice will be given by posting the information at a conspicuous place on premises owned or operated by the provider of goods or services, as well as by posting it on the Municipal website.
10. If the Municipal website should expect a temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible, keeping with the conditions of section 8, shall be provided on the website.

### D. SERVICE ANIMALS

11. For the purpose of this policy, a 'service animal' is defined as either:
  - (a) A "guide dog" as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*, or
  - (b) 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;
    - (i) if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability;  
or
    - (ii) if the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.
12. The Municipality will allow the person and the animal into all municipally owned and operated public facilities that are open to

13. If a service animal is otherwise 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 while maintaining their dignity and independence.

#### E. FORMAT OF DOCUMENTS

14. Should the Municipality be required to give a copy of a document to a person with a disability, the Municipality shall give the person the document, or the information contained in the document, in a format that takes into account the person's disability. See details under Section 16.
15. Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Corporation of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria should contain a note indicating, "alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information. See details under Section 16.
16. The United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria and the person with a disability will attempt to come to an agreement upon the format to be used for the document or information, subject to Section 17 of this policy.
17. Alternate formats that may be considered by the Municipality and the person with the disability will include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Print Requests:

Requests for alternate 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 by staff that the production of the format requested is not feasible, then other alternate 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) Employee receives request from member of the public for alternate format;
- (ii) Employee fills out alternative format request form;
- (iii) Forwards request to the Clerk;
- (iv) The Clerk and Treasurer (in conjunction with the Municipal Solicitor where warranted) determine feasibility; or advises that no alternative is available;
- (v) If feasible, proceeds with alternate format request; and
- (vi) If not feasible; contacts the individual with an alternative solution advising them that no alternative is available.

(b) American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreter Request:

- (i) Employee receives request from public for ASL Interpreter;
- (ii) Employee fills out alternative format request form;
- (iii) Forwards request onto the Clerk;
- (iv) The Clerk contacts the Canadian Hearing Society to make a request;
- (v) Once the Canadian Hearing Society confirms attendance of ASL Interpreter, the Clerk contacts the individual; and
- (vi) If ASL Interpreter is not available, the Clerk contacts the individual with an alternate solution or to advise them that no alternative is available.

18. The feasibility of supplying documents will be determined based upon cost in relation to size of document and time associated with processing 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 an alternate format, General Administration shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not the public requestor.

In-house printing, where possible, should adhere to the CNIB's Clear Print Standards where applicable.

#### F. TRAINING

19. The Municipality of the United Townships of Head, Clara & Maria 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 other 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 Municipality's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.
20. 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.
21. The Municipality will log and retain records which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, format, and date the training was completed.
22. The Municipality will customize the training going forward, based on the actual experiences, usage of the persons with disability within municipally owned or operated facilities and legislative requirements as amended from time to time by the province.

#### G. ASSISTIVE DEVICES

23. The Municipality will allow persons with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from the services offered by the Municipality.
24. 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 will ensure the following measures:
- (a) Determine if service is inaccessible, based upon individual requirements.
  - (b) Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.
  - (c) Notify person with disability of alternative service and how they can access the service, temporarily or on a permanent basis.