



ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

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1.0 PURPOSE

Through the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c. 11* (hereinafter referred to as the “Act”), and *O. Reg 191/11: Integrated Accessibility Standards* (hereinafter referred to as “O. Reg. 191/11”) passed thereunder, Ontario is working to make the province fully accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. Under the Act, standards have been developed that businesses and organizations must follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

This policy describes how the Municipality will meet its obligations under the Information and Communication Standards, Employment Standards, Transportation Standards, Design of Public Spaces Standards and Customer Services Standards identified in O. Reg. 191/11.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Under the Act, O. Reg 191/11 came into force on July 1, 2011.

This policy, the Act and O. Reg. 191/11 are not replacements or substitutions for the requirements established under the Ontario Human Rights Code or other laws respecting the accommodation of people with disabilities.

3.0 DEFINITIONS

“Access Path” – in reference to a Kiosk, includes reach ranges for people using mobility aids, the proximity of the Kiosk to other objects, etc.

“Accessible Formats” – shall mean formats that are an alternative to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible formats may include large print, Braille and audio electronic formats such as DVDs, CDs.

“Assistive Devices” – shall mean an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (ie. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids).

“Career Development” – shall include providing additional responsibilities within an employee’s current position and the movement of an employee from one job to another in the Municipality that may be higher in pay, provide greater responsibility or be at a higher level in the Municipality or any combination of them and, for both additional responsibilities and employee movement, is usually based on merit or seniority or a combination of them.

“Communication Supports” – shall mean supports that individuals with disabilities may need to access information. Some examples include plain language formats, sign language, as well as reading out loud, captioning, or using written notes to communicate.

“Customer” – shall mean any person who receives or seeks to receive goods or services directly or indirectly from the Municipality.

“Kiosk” – shall mean an interactive electronic terminal, including a point-sale device, intended for public use that allows users to access one or more services or products or both.

“Municipality” – shall mean the Corporation of the Township of Montague.

“Performance Management” – shall mean activities related to assessing and improving employee performance, productivity and effectiveness, with the goal of facilitating employee success.

“Redeployment” – shall mean the reassignment of employees to other departments or jobs with the Municipality as an alternative to layoff, when a particular job or department has been eliminated by the organization.

“Service Animal” – shall mean a service animal as defined in O. Reg. 191/11, as amended.

“Support Person” – shall mean any support person as defined in O. Reg 191/11, as amended.

“Structural Features” – in reference to a Kiosk, includes the height and stability of the Kiosk, headset jacks with volume control, and specialized keypads or keyboards, etc.

“Technical Features” – in reference to a Kiosk, includes the colour contrast on the display screen and the options to increase font size, as well as allowing for extra time to complete tasks. Other technical features include voice activating equipment and visual and non-visual modes of operation, etc.

4.0 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

The Municipality is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal

opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner and shall do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting the accessibility requirements under the Act.

5.0 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Accessibility Plans

- The Municipality's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan shall outline the Municipality's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under O. Reg 191/11.
- The Plan shall be posted on the Municipality's website and shall be provided in an accessible format upon request.
- The Plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years.
- The Plan shall be established, reviewed and updated in consultation with persons with disabilities.
- An Annual Status Report on the progress of measures taken to implement the organization's strategy shall be posted on the website and provided in an accessible format upon request.

Procuring or Acquiring Goods, Services or Facilities

- The Municipality shall incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so.
- Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, upon request, an explanation shall be provided.
- The Municipality shall require a declaration from all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the municipality that they are compliant with the Act and O. Reg. 191/11.

Self-Service Kiosks

- The Municipality shall incorporate accessibility features when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service Kiosks.
- The Municipality may consider technical features, structural features, and the access path to the Kiosk.

Training

- The Municipality shall ensure that training is provided on the requirements of the Act, O. Reg. 191/11), and the Human Rights Code, as it pertains to persons with disabilities, and on municipal policies and procedures related to the Act and O. Reg 191/11 to:
 - all employees and volunteers;
 - all persons who participate in developing the Municipality's policies; and
 - all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the Municipality.
- The training provided shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons.
- The training shall be provided as soon as practicable.
- Where there are changes to the Accessibility Policy or any other municipal policy, practice or procedure relating to the Act and O. Reg 191/11, training shall be provided with regard to those changes.
- The Municipality shall keep a record of the dates of when training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

6.0 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARD

Policies, Practices and Procedures

- The Municipality shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:
 - Goods or services shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
 - Persons with disabilities shall be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services;
 - The Municipality shall communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability including accessible notifications and responses to questions;
 - Municipal employees shall be trained to communicate and provide appropriate assistance and services in a manner that takes into account the person's disability;

- Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the Municipality, it shall provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the Support Person.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

- The Municipality shall provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services normally used by people with disabilities.

Use of Assistive Devices, Support Persons and Service Animals

- The Municipality shall provide customers with assistance in the use of Assistive Devices;
- Support Persons and/or Support Animals may accompany a person with disabilities in the access of goods and services.

Documentation

- When required by Regulation, any documentation requested by a person with a disability shall be given in a format that takes into account the person's disability.

Customer Service Training

- Training shall include the following:
 - how to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
 - how to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
 - how to interact with persons with disabilities who use an Assistive Device or require the assistance of a Service Animal or a Support Person to access goods and services;
 - how to use equipment or Assistive Devices available on the Municipality's premises or provided by the Municipality that may help with the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;
 - what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Municipality's goods and services;
 - the process for people to provide feedback to the Municipality about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the Municipality responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint.

Customer Service Feedback Process

- Feedback from our customers gives municipal employees and Council opportunities to learn and improve. The Municipality shall establish a procedure for receiving and responding to feedback about the manner in which it provides goods and services to persons with disabilities and shall make information about the procedure readily available to the public.

7.0 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STANDARD

Feedback

- The Municipality shall ensure that feedback processes are accessible to persons with disabilities and shall provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports, upon request.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

- The Municipality shall, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for persons with disabilities.
- Provision of Accessible Formats and Communication Supports shall be provided:
 - in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability;
 - at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons; and
 - in consultation with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an Accessible Format or Communication Support.
- The Municipality shall notify the public about the availability of Accessible Formats and Communication Supports.
- Where the Municipality is not able to convert the information into an Accessible Format, an explanation shall be provided, along with a summary of the content.

Emergency Procedure, Plans or Public Safety Information

- Where the Municipality prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes the information available to the public, the information shall be provided in an Accessible Format or with appropriate Communication Supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

- The Municipality shall make its internet websites and web content conform with the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA, in accordance with the schedule set out in O. Reg. 191/11.

8.0 EMPLOYMENT STANDARD

Recruitment

- The Municipality shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment processes.
- During the recruitment process, applicants who are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process shall be notified that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes used.
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, the Municipality shall consult with the applicant and provide or arrange for the provision of a suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the applicant's accessibility needs due to a disability.
- When making an offer of employment, the Municipality shall notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Informing Employees of Supports

- The Municipality shall inform its employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.
- New employees shall be informed as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.
- Where there are changes to existing policies on the provision of job accommodations, all employees shall be provided updated information.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for Employees

- Where an employee with a disability requests it, the Municipality shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of Accessible Formats and Communication Supports for:

- information that is needed in order for the employee to perform the employee's job; and
- information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.
- The Municipality shall consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an Accessible Format or Communication Support.

Workplace Emergency Response Information

- The Municipality shall provide individualized workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability:
 - if the disability is such that the individualized information is necessary; and
 - the Municipality is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.
- If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee's consent, the Municipality shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by the Municipality to provide assistance to the employee.
- Individualized information shall be provided as soon as practicable after the Municipality becomes aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.
- The Municipality shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information:
 - when the employee moves to a different location;
 - when the employee's overall accommodation needs or plans are reviewed; and
 - when the Municipality reviews its general emergency response policies.

Documented Individual Accommodation Plans

- The Municipality shall have a written process for the development of documented Individual Accommodation Plans for employees with disabilities.

Return to Work Process

- The Municipality shall have a documented return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Performance Management

- The Municipality shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when using its performance management process.

Career Development and Advancement

- The Municipality shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when providing career development and advancement to its employees with disabilities.

Redeployment

- The Municipality shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when redeploying employees with disabilities.

9.0 TRANSPORTATION STANDARD

Not applicable. The Municipality does not provide transportation services.

10.0 POLICY REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed at least once per term of Council.

11.0 AMENDMENTS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

- The Municipality is committed to developing policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. All changes to this policy will consider the impact on people with disabilities.
- Any municipal policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities shall be modified or rescinded.