

# Township Of Bonnehere Valley

Municipal Accessibility Policy

## **Statement of Commitment**

The Township of Bonnechere Valley is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Township is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination. The Township understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

The Township is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities. Our accessible customer service policies are consistent with the principles of independence, dignity, integration and equality of opportunity for people with disabilities.

## **Training**

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

In addition, we will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization's policies; and
  - b) all other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of the organization
- Training of our employees and volunteers on accessibility relates to their specific roles.

Training includes:

- purpose of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the Customer Service Standards
- our policies related to the Customer Service Standards
- how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities
- how to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a service animal or a support person
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services or facilities.

We train every person as soon as practicable after being hired and provide training in respect of any changes to the policies. We maintain records of the training provided including the dates on which the training was provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

### **Assistive Devices**

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities.

### **Communication**

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability.

Any member of the public may request that any document produced by or on behalf of the Township be made available in an alternative format that considers the person's disability except where the publication or divulgence of that document is prohibited under the Freedom of Information or Municipal Freedom of Information Act(s)

Material printed in-house and publications produced on behalf of the Township will contain a note indicating, "Alternate formats are available upon request" and include relevant contact information.

We provide video recordings of Council and Committee of the Whole meetings via YouTube.

We will work with people with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

### **Support Persons**

The Township has adopted a policy that allows for people with disabilities, who require, to be accompanied by a support person be admitted in all municipally owned and operated public facilities.

The Township will waive admission fees for a support person who accompanies a person with a disability, into any event sponsored by or controlled by the Township. This waiver shall cover the cost of admission to the event only. Any ancillary costs such as but not restricted to food, beverages or other costs associated with the event are the responsibility of the support person or person being supported.

The Township will recommend that this policy be adopted by any person or group hosting any event on municipal property; however, the person or group hosting any event is under no legal obligation to follow this guideline.

## **Service Animals**

We welcome people with disabilities and their service animals. Service animals are allowed on the parts of our premises that are open to the public and third parties.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

A service animal can be easily identified through visual indicators, such as when it wears a harness or a vest, or when it helps the person perform certain tasks.

The Township reserves the right to exclude any service animal from any premises where the owner of the service animal cannot or refuses to produce such documentation.

The Township will allow the person and the animal onto all municipally 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 excluded by law where: Food is prepared: and Where medical procedures are performed

Where a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the Township will take all reasonable steps to ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the municipal services.

## **Feedback Process**

The Township welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

### **Feedback may be provided in the following ways:**

**Suggestions:** Any member of the public wishing to provide the Township with a suggestion on how to improve our service can submit the comment or suggestion in writing to the Township Clerk. The Clerk and in cooperation with the accessibility advisory committee will review the comment(s) or suggestion(s) and respond within 15 days to the person bringing forth the suggestion or comment with 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.

**Complaints:** Should a member of the public wish to make a complaint in regard to the service they have received they shall submit the complaint in writing to the Township Clerk. The Clerk will follow the procedure outlined in the Township Complaint Policy.

The Township ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication support, on request.

### **Notice of Availability of Documents**

The Township notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service are available upon request by posting a notice on the Township Website.

The Township will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and at no additional cost.

### **Notice of Service Disruption**

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, this organization will notify customers promptly. This clearly posted notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated length of time, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

If, to obtain, use or benefit from a provider's goods or services, people with disabilities usually use facilities or services and if there is a temporary disruption in those facilities or services in whole or in part, the Township shall give notice of the disruption to the public. Notice of the disruption will 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 the information at a conspicuous place on the premises as well as by posting it on the municipal website.

### **Self-service Kiosks**

We will incorporate accessibility features/consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

### **Procurement**

We incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-service kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

## **Information and Communications**

We have a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request. We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking 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.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We will also meet internationally recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

## **Employment**

We notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation. We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability. We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees. We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Our performance management, career development and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

### **Design of Public Spaces**

We will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Our public spaces include:

- 1) The Municipal Offices in Eganville
- 2) Municipal Water Plant / Municipal Waste Water Treatment Plant
- 3) Municipal Works Department on Foymount Road
- 4) Spring Creek Municipal Works Yard
- 5) Sebastopol Works Garage / Fire Hall
- 6) 2 Municipal Garages on John street in Eganville

- 7) Eganville arena and community Centre located on Jane Street in Eganville
- 8) Municipal Waste transfer sites located at Sand Road, Lake Clear, Highway 41, Ruby Road and Sno-drifters Road.
- 9) Bonnechere Union Library located on Bruce Street
- 10) Tourist Information booth located on Bonnechere Street
- 11) Outdoor Recreation facilities located at Centennial Park, Legion Field, Foymount Park, Opeongo Park, Cormac Park, and Rotary Beach areas
- 12) Splash Pad and children's play space at Legion Field
- 13) Tennis Courts
- 14) Curling Club

We put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

### **Changes to Existing Policies**

Any policies of this organization that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.