



**Policy No.:** Policy LS-2026-09 – Accessible Customer Service Policy  
**Department:** **Legislative Services**  
**Date Enacted:** June 23, 2026  
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**Approved By:** #C-152-26  
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## Subject

The Accessible Customer Service Policy outlines how the Municipality provides goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities.

## Purpose

This document outlines how the Municipality of Leamington will meet the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (“AODA”) and all related provisions relative to the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service, Ontario Regulation 165/16 under the AODA in order to ensure that persons with disabilities are provided the equal opportunity to access goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

## Scope

This policy applies to all full-time employees including those who are members of a bargaining unit, part-time, casual and seasonal, contract and student positions, volunteers, members of Council and members of local boards and committees.

## Definitions

“**Accessible formats**” may include, but are not limited to large print, recorded audio, electronic formats, and other formats useable by persons with disabilities.

**“Barrier”** includes anything that stops, impedes, prevents or causes difficulty for a person to obtain, use or benefit from the provider’s goods or services. Examples of barriers can be physical, architectural, attitudinal, technological, and/or related to information and communications.

**“Employee”** means any paid employee, including, but not limited to, full-time, part-time, and seasonal employees.

**“Mobility Assistive Device”** means a cane, walker, wheelchair, or similar aid.

**“Municipality”** means The Corporation of the Municipality of Leamington.

**“Temporary Disruption of Service”** means any disruption to a service or facility that may create a barrier for a person with a disability that they would be otherwise able to fully use or access such a service or facility.

**“Regulated Health Professional”** is a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychotherapists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

**“Service Animal”** means an animal for a person with a disability if:

- a) the animal can be readily identified as one that is being used by the person for reasons relating to the person’s disability, as a result of visual indicators such as the vest or harness worn by the animal; or
- b) the person provides documentation from one of the following regulated health professionals as listed in Section 80.45 (4)(b) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards, Ontario Regulation 191/11, confirming that the person required the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**“Support Person”** means another person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to provide assistance to them in the form of communication, mobility, personal care, medical needs, or with access to the receipt of goods or services. Support

persons may be a paid professional, a volunteer, a family member, or a friend of the person with a disability.

## **Policy**

The Municipality is committed to:

- understand that obligations under the AODA and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or under any other law.
- meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.
- complying with both the Ontario Human Rights Code and the AODA.
- eliminating barriers and providing excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities.

## **Communications with Persons with Disabilities**

When communicating with a person with a disability, the Municipality will do so in a timely manner that takes into account the person's disability. Consideration will be given to the way in which individuals express, receive and process information without making assumptions about a particular disability. The Municipality will continue to review the nature, manner and methods with which it communicates to people with disabilities, in an attempt to improve accessibility of information and services.

## **Assistive Devices**

The Municipality will make reasonable efforts to ensure that any person with a disability may utilize their own assistive device for the purpose of obtaining, using and/or benefiting from the Municipality's goods, services and facilities unless otherwise prohibited by law. The Municipality may offer reasonable alternatives in order to accommodate and assist a person with a disability in obtaining, using and/or benefiting from the Municipality's 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 the disability can access the Municipality's goods, services or facilities.

The Municipality will ensure that staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices which are available on the Municipality's premises, including electronic door

openers and elevators that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing the Municipality's goods, services or facilities.

### **Service Animals**

The Municipality welcomes people with disabilities and their Service Animals. Service Animals shall be permitted to accompany any person with a disability in a facility owned and operated by the Municipality, except where excluded by applicable law (e.g. food preparation areas).

In those cases where a Service Animal poses a health and safety risk to another person, it shall be the policy of the Municipality to make alternate arrangements to accommodate both parties (alternate rooms, exits, etc.)

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. When a Service Animal cannot be easily identified, staff may ask a person to provide a letter from a Regulated Health Professional that confirms the person needs the Service Animal for reasons relating to their disability.

If Service Animals are prohibited by another law, the Municipality will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access the Municipality's goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded; or
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities.

### **Support Persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a Support Person will be allowed to have that Support Person accompany them on all the Municipality's premises. In situations where confidential information will be discussed, the Municipality will obtain consent from the person with the disability before any potentially confidential information is mentioned.

The Municipality reserves the right to request that a person with a disability be accompanied by a Support Person. The Municipality will consider the following when determining whether a Support Person will be requested to accompany a person with a disability:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs;
- considered necessary to protect the health or safety of the person with a disability, and/or others on the premises, based on available evidence and/or

determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises.

Should the Municipality determine that a Support Person is required, the Municipality will waive the admission fee for the Support Person.

### **Notice of Temporary Disruptions in Services and Facilities**

The Municipality is aware that the operation of its services and facilities is important to the public. However, temporary disruptions in these services and facilities may occur due to reasons that may or may not be within the Municipality's control or knowledge.

When a disruption in service occurs that may affect people with disabilities; the Municipality will follow the "Notice of Disruption Procedure" which outlines that the Municipality will make reasonable efforts to provide notice of the disruption to the public, including information about the reason for the disruption its anticipated duration of disruption and a description of alternative services or facilities that may be available. The notice will include additional information such as a contact person or time with which the notice will be updated.

The Municipality will make reasonable efforts to provide prior notice of a planned disruption. In the event of an unplanned disruption, where advance notice is not possible, the Municipality will provide notice as soon as possible. The notice will be posted in visible locations on the premises where the disruption is occurring, on the Municipality's website at [www.learmington.ca](http://www.learmington.ca), on the Municipality's social media platforms, and any other method that may be reasonable under the circumstances.

Additional information regarding the Notice of Disruption Procedure is available upon request.

### **Training**

Accessible Customer Service training will be provided to every employee who interacts with the public on behalf of the Municipality. The depth and format of the training given will be based on the requirement for interaction with the public and involvement in the development of policies, procedures and practices pertaining to the provision of goods and services and facilities.

The Municipality will ensure that all persons to whom this Policy applies receive training as required by the Ontario Regulation 165/16 Integrated Accessibility Standards. The training will include:

- an overview of the purposes of the AODA and the requirements of the Accessibility Standards for Customer Services (Ontario Regulation 165/16);
- instruction on the Municipality's policies, practices and procedures pertaining to the provision of customer service to persons with disabilities;
- instruction on how to communicate with persons with various types of disabilities;
- instruction on how to accommodate a person with a particular type of disability who is having difficulty accessing the Municipality's goods, services and facilities;
- instruction on how to interact with persons with disabilities who use assistive devices or who require the assistance of a support person or service animal;
- how to provide instruction for the use of equipment or devices available on the Municipality's premises that may assist with the provision of customer service to persons with disabilities, if applicable; and
- instruction on what to do if a person with a disability is have difficulty accessing the Municipality's goods, services and facilities.

Initial training will be provided as soon as practical for all persons to whom this Policy applies upon hiring. Training will be provided on an ongoing basis as changes occur to the Municipality's Accessible Customer Service Policy and other policies, practices and procedures related to the provision of goods, services and facilities to persons with disabilities.

The Municipality will keep records outlining training, including the date on which training is provided and the number of those trained. The record of the names and persons trained will be kept for administrative purposes and will be subject to Municipal Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("MFIPPA").

### **Customer Feedback**

The ultimate goal of the Municipality is to meet and surpass customer service expectations while serving people with disabilities. Comments on municipal services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcomed and appreciated. The "Customer Feedback Procedure" will be followed whenever the Municipality receives feedback regarding accessible customer service. Information regarding the Customer Feedback Process is available upon request, subject to MFIPPA.

An individual has the opportunity to submit feedback regarding the provision of accessible customer service through regular mail, email, telephone, in person or by

using the Municipality's website at [www.learmington.ca](http://www.learmington.ca). Alternative formats and communication supports will be provided or arranged upon request.

### **Format of Documents**

The Municipality of Leamington is committed to providing people with disabilities the opportunity to access all documents required by the AODA, upon request, subject to MFIPPA. These documents include the Municipality's Accessible Customer Service Policy, procedures and policies, notes of temporary disruptions, training records and written Customer Feedback Procedure.

Upon request, the Municipality will make reasonable efforts to provide, or arrange, for the provision of accessible formats or communication supports for persons with disabilities in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessible needs due to disability and at a cost no more than the regular cost charged to other persons. The Municipality will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

### **References and Related Policies**

- Notice of Disruption Procedure
- Customer Feedback Procedure

(Report LS-14-26)