The Corporation of
THE TOWNSHIP OF LANARK HIGHLANDS

SECTION:	NUMBER:
A	1

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBILITY – CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS POLICY

1.0 PURPOSE

The Township of Lanark Highlands is committed to providing goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving persons with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allow them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

2.0 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Through the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA) Ontario is working to make the province fully accessible to people with disabilities by 2025. Under the Act, the Province is developing five accessibility standards that organizations will be required to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility.

The Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) came into force on January 1, 2008. The Township of Lanark Highlands, as a designated public service organization, is required to be in compliance with the standard by January 1, 2010. The standard sets requirements in a number of key areas and will be reviewed provincially at least every five years.

3.0 SCOPE

The Township of Lanark Highlands is committed to excellence in serving all customers, including people with disabilities.

This policy applies to all Township employees and persons acting on behalf of the Township.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

"Alternative Service" – means a service generally intended to be temporary that approaches the desired result until such time as the barrier is removed or an equivalent service is put in place;

"Assistive Device" –means an auxiliary aid such as communication aids, cognition aids, personal mobility aids and medical aids (ex. canes, crutches, wheelchairs or hearing aids);

"Contractor" - means a company or person with a formal or informal contract to do a specific job on behalf of the Township of Lanark Highlands;

"Customer" - means any person who receives or seeks to receive goods or services directly or indirectly from the Township of Lanark Highlands;

"Disability" – means the same as the definition of disability found in the Ontario Human Rights Code;

"Equivalent" - means having similar effects;

"Service Animal" – means a service animal as defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07, as amended;

"Support Person" – means a support person as defined in Ontario Regulation 429/07, as amended.

5.0 ESTBLISHMENT OF POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES

5.1 Principles

The Township of Lanark Highlands shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles**:**

5.1.1 Goods or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

5.1.2 Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

5.1.3 The Township will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability, including accessible notifications and responses to questions;

5.1.4 Township employees will be trained to communicate and provide appropriate assistance and services in a manner that takes into account a person's disability;

5.1.5 Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the Township, it will provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of a support person.

5.2 Notice of Temporary Disruptions

5.2.1 The Township of Lanark Highlands will provide notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services normally used by persons with disabilities.

5.3 Use of Assistive Devices, Support Persons and Service Animals.

5.3.1 The Township of Lanark Highlands will provide customers with assistance in the use of assistive devices.

5.3.2 A support person may accompany a person with disabilities in the access of goods and services.

5.3.3 A support animal may accompany a person with disabilities in the access of goods and services, unless otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

5.4 **Documentation**

5.4.1 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.

5.5 **Training**

5.5.1 Township staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities.

5.5.2 Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

5.5.3 The Township will ensure that those contractors, agents and other third parties who deal with the public on their behalf are compliant with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Regulations, as amended.

5.5.4 Township training will include the following:

a) The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard;

b) How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;

c) How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;

d) 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;

e) How to use equipment or assistive devices available on Township premises or provided by the Township that may help with the provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities;

f) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the Township's goods and services;

g) Information on other Township policies, practices and procedures dealing with the AODA;

h) The process for persons to provide feedback to the Township about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the Township responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint.

5.6 **Feedback Process**

5.6.1 Feedback from our customers gives the Township of Lanark Highlands Staff and Council opportunities to learn and improve.

5.6.2 The Township 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.

6.0 AMENDMENTS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

6.1 The Township of Lanark Highlands is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

6.2 Changes to this or other Township policies may be made after considering the potential impact the proposed changes may have on persons with disabilities.