



SCHEDULE "A" TO BY-LAW NO. 2009-0019

**Subject: Accessible Customer Service Policy Statement
Providing Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities**

Policy Number: _____ **Approval: Council**

Effective Date: January 1, 2010 **Revision Date:** _____

LEGISLATIVE BACKGROUND:

Ontario Regulation 429/07 made under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* came into force on January 1, 2008. This Regulation establishes accessibility standards for customer service and applies to every designated public sector organization and to every other person or organization that provides goods or services to members of the public or other third parties and that has at least one employee in Ontario.

The accessibility standards for customer service apply to the designated public sector organizations on and after January 1, 2010 and to other providers of goods and services on and after January 1, 2012.

"*Disability*", as defined under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005*, shall mean:

- (a) any degree of physical disability, infirmity, malformation or disfigurement that is caused by bodily injury, birth defect or illness and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, includes diabetes mellitus, epilepsy, a brain injury, any degree of paralysis, amputation, lack of physical co-ordination, blindness or visual impediment, deafness or hearing impediment, muteness or speech impediment, or physical reliance on a guide dog or other animal or on a wheelchair or other remedial appliance or device,
- (b) a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability,
- (c) a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language,
- (d) a mental disorder, or
- (e) an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or received under the insurance plan established under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*, ("handicap").



PURPOSE:

To provide accessible customer service to persons with disabilities which is consistent with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service (Ontario Regulation 429/07) and that considers the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity.

COUNTY OF FRONTENAC MISSION:

The mission of the County of Frontenac is to efficiently and measurably deliver excellent services, recognized as an employer of choice with dedicated and capable staff, adding value in all areas of service delivery, while simultaneously working to strengthen the capacity of the local municipalities we represent.

POLICY:

• Establishment of Policies, Practices and Procedures

The County of Frontenac shall establish policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of its goods and services to persons with disabilities. In fulfilling our mission, the County of Frontenac shall make reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

- (i) The goods or services shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
- (ii) The provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities and others must be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability the same opportunity to access, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- (iii) Persons with disabilities must be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to access, use and benefit from the goods and services.

• Providing Goods and Services to Persons with Disabilities

The County of Frontenac is committed to excellence in serving all customers including persons with disabilities and will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

Communication: The County of Frontenac will communicate with persons with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. The County of Frontenac is committed to providing accessible telephone service to our customers. The County will offer to communicate with



customers by email, fax, written communication or in person if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Assistive Devices: The County of Frontenac is committed to serving persons with disabilities who use assistive devices to access, use or benefit from our goods and services.

Format of Documentation: The County of Frontenac is committed to providing correspondence, invoices and other documentation or the information contained in the document to customers in alternate formats that take into account the person's disability, if available, upon request.

• **Use of Service Animals**

The County of Frontenac is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal in the areas of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. All staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public will be properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

"Guide Dog" shall mean a guide dog as defined in section 1 of the *Blind Persons Rights' Act*;

An animal is a *"Service Animal"* for a person with a disability, if:

- (i) it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- (ii) the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a guide dog or other service animal, the County of Frontenac shall ensure that the person is permitted to enter the premises with the animal and to keep the animal with him/her unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law from the premises.

If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, the County shall ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to access, use or benefit from the County's goods or services.

• **Use of Support Persons**

The County of Frontenac is committed to welcoming persons with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter County of Frontenac premises with his or her support person. All staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public will be properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person.



“*Support person*” shall mean in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him/her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

If a person with a disability is accompanied by a support person, the County of Frontenac shall ensure that both persons are permitted to enter the premises together and that the person with a disability is not prevented from having access to the support person while on the premises.

Admission will not be charged for support persons for admission to County of Frontenac premises. There will not be a user charge for a support person who is assisting a person with a disability who is not in a vehicle onto or off of the Frontenac Howe Islander ferry.

• **Notice of Service Disruptions**

County of Frontenac shall provide customers with notice in the event of a scheduled or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by persons with disabilities.

This notice of temporary disruption shall include information regarding:

- (i) the reason for the disruption;
- (ii) its anticipated duration; and
- (iii) a description of alternative facilities or services, if any, that are available.

The notice shall be given by posting the information as soon as the County becomes aware of the disruption: (i) at a conspicuous place on the County of Frontenac premises; (ii) on the County’s official web site - www.frontenaccounty.ca; or (iii) by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

• **Training for Staff**

County of Frontenac shall ensure that the following persons receive training regarding the provision of its goods and/or services to persons with disabilities:

- Every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the County of Frontenac, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer or otherwise.
- Every person who participates in developing the County of Frontenac’s policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties, for example County Council or Committees.

The method and amount of training shall be dependent on the trainee’s role in terms of accessibility.



Training records shall be kept, including the dates when the training is provided and the names of the individuals to whom the training was provided.

Training shall be provided to each person as soon as practical after he/she is assigned the applicable duties, but no later than 6 months after a person commences employment with the County of Frontenac.

Training will include the following:

- (i) The purposes of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* and the requirements of the customer service standard.
- (ii) How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.
- (iii) How to interact with persons with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog, service animal or a support person.
- (iv) How to use the equipment and devices available on County premises that may help with the provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities.
- (v) What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing County of Frontenac's goods and services.
- (vi) County of Frontenac's policies, practices and procedures relating to the accessible customer service standard.

Training shall also be provided on an ongoing basis in connection with changes to the policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of the goods or services to persons with disabilities.

• **Feedback Process**

The ultimate goal of County of Frontenac is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving customers with disabilities. Comments on our services regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

The County of Frontenac shall establish a process for receiving and responding to feedback regarding the manner in which goods and services are provided to persons with disabilities, and shall make information about the process readily available to the public.

The feedback process must permit persons to provide their feedback using the following methods:

- (i) in person;



- (ii) by telephone;
- (iii) in writing;
- (iv) by electronic mail at info@frontenacounty.ca; or
- (iv) on diskette or otherwise.

All feedback, including questions regarding this policy, shall be directed to the Clerk's Department. Customers can expect a response within ten (10) working days.

- **Notice of Availability of Documents Required Under the AODA – Accessibility Standards for Customer Service**

The County of Frontenac shall notify persons to whom it provides goods or services that the documents required by this Regulation are available upon request.

The notice shall be given by posting the information: (i) at a conspicuous place on the County of Frontenac premises; (ii) on the County's official web site – www.frontenacounty.ca; or by such other method as is reasonable in the circumstances.

- **Modifications to This or Other Policies**

The County of Frontenac is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on persons with disabilities. Any County of Frontenac policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities will be modified or removed.