City of Cambridge Policy and Procedures

For more information on how the City of Cambridge is meeting the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005), please see the City of Cambridge Diversity, Accessibility and Inclusion Action Plan at www.cambridge.ca/accessibility or by visiting the City of Cambridge Intranet page - Accessibility and Diversity Resource Centre.

This brochure is available in alternate formats upon request. To make a request, please contact Accessibility and Diversity Services at accessibility@cambridge.ca

The content of this training brochure has been adapted from the training resources prepared by Curriculum Services Canada with support from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario.

Working Towards a Barrier-Free Community

A City of Cambridge Guide for Staff and Volunteers
Ontario Human Rights Code

The Ontario Human Rights Code (the Code) provides for equal rights and opportunities and freedom from discrimination. The Code protects people from discrimination because of past, present, and perceived disabilities. Under the Code, all people with disabilities, including employees with disabilities, are entitled to the same opportunities and benefits as people without disabilities. Employers and service providers have a legal “duty to accommodate” people with disabilities to the point of undue hardship.

The Human Rights Code is the highest provincial law in Ontario. With a few exceptions, all other provincial laws must follow the Code. For more information about the Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities, please visit www.ohrc.on.ca or contact accessibility@cambridge.ca.
Workplace Emergency Response Information Plan

The City provides individual workplace emergency response information for employees with disabilities, upon request. With the employee’s consent, the information is shared with anyone designated to help them in an emergency (e.g. fire, power outages, severe weather). Contact Human Resources for more information or to make a request to have a Workplace Emergency Response Information Plan developed.

The City of Cambridge’s core values are integrity, respect, inclusiveness and service. These values are shown in the way we treat all residents, visitors, and each other with dignity and respect. This includes people with disabilities.

The City of Cambridge’s Accessibility Policy is available at www.cambridge.ca/accessibility

In this brochure, you will learn about how the City meets the requirements of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA), and the related Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, O. Reg 191/11 (IASR) in each of the following areas:

- Customer Service
- Information and Communication
- Design of Public Spaces
- Employment

City of Cambridge employees, members of Council, volunteers, and other third party providers of City services must be trained on the accessibility standards in the IASR and meet these standards in our daily work.

The goal of these standards is to identify, remove, and prevent barriers for people with disabilities in accessing City services, facilities, and in the workplace.

If you are ever uncertain about what to do in a situation, or what services the City offers for people with disabilities, please contact Accessibility and Diversity Services at accessibility@cambridge.ca.

Did you know?
97% of workers with a disability have great safety records

Did you know?
Service dogs can be used to support people with PTSD, schizophrenia, depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder.
Customer Service Standards

The City is committed to providing excellent customer service to all residents and visitors, and to treating everyone with dignity and respect. To do this, we recognize the diverse needs of our residents, including people with disabilities.

AODA Customer Service Standards:

1. We must all respect the dignity and independence of people with disabilities when they are accessing our goods, services, or facilities.
2. People with disabilities must be given equal opportunity to obtain, use, and benefit from City goods, services, or facilities.
3. Whenever possible, providing goods, services, or facilities to people with disabilities must be integrated with serving others.
4. If services for people with disabilities cannot be integrated, we must provide alternative measures to ensure the person with disabilities can obtain, use, or benefit from our goods, services, or facilities.
5. When communicating with a person with a disability, we must take into account the person’s disability.
6. The City must provide notice of any temporary disruption to services and facilities used by person with disabilities.
7. We welcome all feedback on the accessibility of our services. If someone gives us feedback, it must be forwarded to a supervisor or manager as soon as possible for action.
8. We welcome all requests for accessible formats and communication supports for City documents. All requests must be considered in consultation with the requestor, responded to in a timely manner, and provided at no extra cost to the requestor.

Employment Standards

The City of Cambridge is committed to making employment practices accessible for applicants and employees with disabilities.

Recruitment

The City of Cambridge accommodates all applicants with disabilities during the recruitment and selection process. If an applicant requires support or accommodation due to a disability they are encouraged to contact Human Resources.

Accommodation Plans and Return to Work Process

The City has a process to record and review workplace accommodations provided to employees working with a disability. The City of Cambridge will work with employees who demonstrate a need for support due to a disability to find the appropriate accommodation to meet their accommodation needs.

Accommodation plans will be taken into account for performance management, career development, and redeployment.

The City also has a return to work process to support employees who have been absent due to a disability and who require disability related accommodations. For more information contact Human Resources.

DID YOU KNOW? Invisible disabilities include heart condition, chronic fatigue and seizure disorder
Design of Public Spaces Standards

If you are responsible for the design, construction, or maintenance of City facilities and public spaces, there are a number of specifications that must be met, in the areas of:

• Recreational trails and Beach Access Routes
• Outdoor Public Use Eating Areas
• Outdoor Play Areas
• Exterior Paths of Travel
• Accessible Parking
• Service Counters, Queuing Areas, and Waiting Areas
• Maintenance Planning

The specifications for these public spaces and amenities can be found in the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O.Reg. 191/11).

How to Provide Accessible Customer Service for Everyone

Providing accessible customer service is about providing great service for everyone.

• Start with “May I help you?”
• Listen attentively and speak directly to the customer.
• Know what services and accessibility equipment is available to your customer.

If someone is having difficulty accessing your goods, services, or facilities:

• Be patient.
• Remember to ask your customer about what they need.
• Get help. Speak with your customer, supervisor, and consult City policies or procedures.
• Be willing to get creative while ensuring your customer’s safety, dignity, equal opportunity, and independence.

How to Interact and Communicate with People with Various Types of Disabilities

Being able to interact and communicate with people with disabilities is a big part of providing accessible customer service. Sometimes the best approach is to ask a person with a disability how you can best communicate with them.

DID YOU KNOW? Approximately 15% of adults aged 60 and over are living with a mental health disability.
People who have physical disabilities

There are many types and degrees of physical disabilities. Only some people with physical disabilities use a wheelchair. Someone with a spinal cord injury may use crutches while someone with severe arthritis or a heart condition may have difficulty walking longer distances.

Helpful tips

• If you need to have a lengthy conversation with someone who uses a wheelchair or scooter, consider sitting so you can make eye contact at the same level.
• Don’t touch items or equipment, such as canes or wheelchairs without permission.
• If you have permission to move a person’s wheelchair, don’t leave them in an awkward, dangerous or undignified position, such as facing a wall or in the path of opening doors.

People who are deaf/blind

A person who is deaf/blind may have some degree of both hearing and vision loss. Many people who are deaf/blind will be accompanied by a support person who helps with communication.

Helpful tips

• Speak directly to your customer, not to the intervenor.
• A customer who is deaf/blind is likely to explain to you how to communicate with them, perhaps with an assistance card or note.

Emergency Procedures, Plans, or Public Safety Information

Emergency procedures, plans, or public safety information (e.g. maps, warning signs, evacuation routes) must be made accessible upon request, by providing these in accessible formats or with communication supports as soon as practicable.

Accessible Websites and Web Content

All City websites and content on those sites must meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA accessibility standards. City staff or others who post to a City-owned website are responsible for ensuring their content meets these standards.
Information and Communication Standards

The AODA Information and Communication Standards cover the requirements for providing and receiving information and communications in ways that are accessible to people with disabilities.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

When requested, you must provide information and communications in an accessible and timely manner to people with disabilities at no additional cost, unless the information is not under your control or unconvertible (e.g. architectural blue prints). When it is not possible to convert the requested material, you need to provide the requestor with an explanation of why and a summary of the information in a way they can use.

Examples of alternate formats and communication supports include: Large print, Braille, Audio, American Sign Language Interpretation, Accessible PDF, and more.

Employees may request communications in accessible formats and communication supports. The City will consult with employees to determine their accessibility needs and how best to accommodate them. If you feel you may require information in an accessible or alternative format please speak to your supervisor to make a formal request or contact Human Resources.

Feedback Process

All feedback processes for City programs, services, and facilities must be made accessible upon request, by providing these processes in accessible formats or with communication supports.

People who have hearing loss

People who have hearing loss may be Deaf, oral deaf, deafened, or hard of hearing. These are terms used to describe different levels of hearing and/or the way a person's hearing was diminished or lost.

Helpful tips

- Attract the customer's attention before speaking. Try a gentle touch on the shoulder or wave of your hand.
- Make sure you are in a well-lit area where your customer can see your face and read your lips.
- If your customer uses a hearing aid, reduce background noise or move to a quieter area.
- If necessary, ask if another method of communicating would be easier (for example, using a pen and paper).

People who have vision loss

Vision loss can restrict someone’s ability to read, locate landmarks or see hazards. Some customers may use a guide dog or a white cane, while others may not.

Helpful tips

- Don’t assume the individual can’t see you. Many people who have low vision still have some sight.
- Identify yourself when you approach your customer and speak directly to them.
- Ask your customer if they would like you to read any printed material out loud to them (for example, a menu or schedule of fees).
- When providing directions or instructions, be precise and descriptive.
- Offer your elbow to guide them if needed.
People who have learning disabilities

The term “learning disabilities” refers to a variety of disorders, such as dyslexia, that affect how a person takes in or retains information. This disability may become apparent when a person has difficulty reading material or understanding the information you are providing.

Helpful tips

• Be patient – people with some learning disabilities may take a little longer to process information, to understand and to respond.
• Try to provide information in a way that takes into account the customer’s disability. For example, some people with learning disabilities find written words difficult to understand, while others may have problems with numbers and math.

People with speech or language barriers

Cerebral palsy, hearing loss or other conditions may make it difficult for a person to pronounce words or may cause slurring. Some people who have severe difficulties may use a communication board or other assistive devices.

Helpful tips

• Don’t assume that a person with a speech limitation has another disability.
• Whenever possible, ask questions that can be answered with “yes” or “no”.
• Be patient. Don’t interrupt or finish your customer’s sentences.

Accessible Procurement

The City of Cambridge must incorporate accessibility criteria and features when designing, procuring or acquiring goods, services, facilities and self-service kiosks. The City must consider the barriers of citizens and employees with various disabilities and look for options to better fit everyone’s needs.

If it is not possible to incorporate accessibility criteria and features, we must be prepared to provide an explanation as to why accessibility features were not included.

Staff can find resources to assist them to make accessible procurement a standard practice by visiting the City of Cambridge Intranet and selecting the Accessibility and Diversity Resource Centre.
How to interact with people with disabilities who require the assistance of a support person

Some people with disabilities may be accompanied by a support person. A support person can be a personal support worker, a family member or a friend. Support persons help people with a variety of tasks, from communicating, to helping with mobility, personal care or medical needs. Support persons are allowed to accompany customers with disabilities when they access City services or facilities. The City will waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability into facilities and/or programs where admissions are charged.

As an employee, you might require a support person to accompany a person with a disability. You must first consult with the person with the disability to understand their needs. There must be evidence of a risk to health or safety of the customer, employees, or others, and no other way to reduce that risk.

Helpful tips
• If you’re not sure which person is the customer, take your lead from the person using or requesting the service, or facility, or simply ask.
• Speak directly to your customer, not to their support person.

People who have mental health disabilities

Mental health issues can affect a person’s ability to think clearly, concentrate or remember things. Mental health disability is a broad term for many disorders that can range in severity. For example, some customers may experience anxiety due to hallucinations, mood swings, phobias or panic disorder.

Helpful tips
• Treat a person with a mental health disability with the same respect and consideration you have for everyone else.
• Be confident, calm and reassuring.
• If a customer appears to be in crisis, ask them to tell you the best way to help.

People who have intellectual/developmental disabilities

Intellectual or developmental disabilities, such as Down Syndrome, can limit a person’s ability to learn, communicate, do physical activities and live independently. You may not know that someone has this disability unless you are told.

Helpful tips
• Don’t make assumptions about what a person can or cannot do.
• Use plain language.
• Provide one piece of information at a time.

DID YOU KNOW? 14% of Canadians have a disability
How to interact with people who use assistive devices

An assistive device is a tool, technology or other mechanism that enables a person with a disability to do everyday tasks and activities, such as moving, communicating or lifting. Personal assistive devices can include things like wheelchairs, hearing aids, white canes or speech amplification devices.

Helpful tips
- Don’t touch or handle any assistive device without permission.
- Don’t move assistive devices or equipment, such as canes and walkers, out of your customer’s reach.
- Let your customer know about accessible features in the immediate environment that are appropriate to their needs (e.g., public phones with TTY service, accessible washrooms, etc.).

How to interact with people with disabilities who require the assistance of a service animal

People with vision loss may use a guide dog, but there are other types of service animals as well. Hearing-alert animals help people who are Deaf, deafened, oral deaf, or hard of hearing. Other service animals are trained to alert someone of an oncoming seizure.

Under the Customer Service Standard, service animals are allowed anywhere the public is allowed, unless the animal is otherwise excluded by law. If you cannot easily tell that the animal is a service animal, you can ask the person to provide documentation (e.g., template, letter or form) from a regulated health professional. The document must confirm that the person needs the service animal for reasons related to their disability.

Helpful tips
- Remember that a service animal is not a pet. It is a working animal.
- Avoid touching or addressing service animals. They are working and have to pay attention at all times.
- Avoid making assumptions about the animal. If you’re not sure if the animal is a pet or a service animal, respectfully ask your customer.