



TOWNSHIP OF
ASHFIELD-COLBORNE-WAWANOSH

Policy: Accessibility

UPDATED: August 21, 2023

1. Policy Statement

The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all customers including people with disabilities. The Township is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities, as well as treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The Township believes in integration and is committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner through the removal of and preventing barriers to accessibility. The Township also focuses on meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and Ontario's accessibility laws.

This Policy is intended to establish guidelines for the Township's practices and procedures relating to accessibility and should be read in conjunction with other Township policies, guidelines, or standards.

2. Scope

This policy shall apply to every person who deals with members of the public or other third parties on behalf of the Corporation of the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh, whether the person does so as an employee, agent, volunteer, or otherwise.

This policy applies to all services offered at facilities owned, leased, or operated by the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh as well as public events hosted by the Township.

3. Definitions

1. **'Assistive Device'** shall mean a tool that helps a person with a disability complete a certain task or assessing the services of a persons or organization.
2. **'Barrier'** shall mean any obstacle that prevents a person with a disability from fully participating in all aspects of society because of their disability. A barrier can include a physical barrier, an architectural barrier, an information or communication barrier, an attitudinal barrier, a technological barrier, or policy or a practice.
3. **'Disability'** shall be defined in the Ontario Human Rights Commission as 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, a condition of mental impairment or a developmental disability, a learning disability, or a dysfunction in one or more of the processes involved in understanding or using symbols or spoken language, a mental disorder, or an injury or disability for which benefits were claimed or

received under the insurance plan established under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997.

4. **'Discrimination'** shall mean unequal treatment based upon any of the prohibited grounds as outlined in the Human Rights Code: Race, Ancestry, Creed, Place of Origin, Colour, Sex (including pregnancy), Ethnic Origin, Citizenship, Sexual Orientation, Age, Record of Offences, Marital Status, Same-sex Partnership Status, Family Status or Disability.
5. **'Nurse'** shall mean a Registered Nurse, Practical Nurse, or Nurse Practitioner who is a registered member in good standing with the College of Nurses in Ontario.
6. **'Physician'** shall mean a physician who is a registered member in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.
7. **'Service Animal'** shall include:
 - A 'guide dog', as defined in Section 1 of the Blind Persons Rights' Act; or
 - An animal used by a person with a disability if it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or the person provides a letter from one of the following regulated health professionals confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability:
 - A member of the College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Chiropractors of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Nurses of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Optometrists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Psychologists of Ontario
 - A member of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario.
8. **'Support Person'** shall mean a person who accompanies a person with a disability to assist them with communication, mobility, personal care, or medical needs or with access to goods or services.
9. **'Township'** shall refer to the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

4. Training

The Township is committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service and other Ontario's accessibility standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relates to persons with disabilities.

In addition, The Township will train:

- a) All persons who participate in developing the Township'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

- Policies related to 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
- How to use the equipment or devices available on-site or otherwise that may help with providing goods, services, or facilities, to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our Township'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.

5. Alternative Formats - Communication Supports

The Township will provide alternative formats of information and communication that is produced or in direct control of the Township. Alternative formats will be provided upon request, in a timely manner and at a cost that is no more than the cost charged for the original format. When it is not practicable to provide an alternate format, the Township will provide an explanation and a summary of the document in an accessible format.

6. Notice of Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities. The Township 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.

The notice will be placed on the Township website, social media accounts and by any other method that is reasonable and applicable under the circumstances.

7. Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their assistive devices when accessing our goods, services, or facilities. Exceptions may occur in situations where the Township has determined the assistive device may pose a risk to the health and safety of a person with a disability or the health and safety of others on the premises. In these situations, the Township may offer a person with a disability other reasonable measure to assist them in obtaining services provided by the Township.

It should be noted that it is the responsibility of the person with a disability to ensure that his or her assistive device is operated in a safe and controlled manner at all times.

The Township will ensure staff are trained and familiar with various assistive devices on site or that are provide that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods, services, or facilities.

8. Service Animals

The Township is committed to welcoming 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, provided the animal is not otherwise excluded by law. If a service animal is excluded by law, the Township will

ensure that alternate means are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods and services.

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. If it is not readily apparent that the animal is a service animal, the Township may ask the person with the disability for a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

It is the responsibility of the person with the disability to ensure that their service animal is always kept in control. This includes controlling the behaviour of the animal, cleaning up after the animal, and being responsible for any damage the animal may cause to Township property.

9. Support Persons

The Township 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 the Township's premises with their support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to their support person while on Township premises.

In certain situations, the Township, at its discretion, may require a support person to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to an exchange of information with the person with a disability.

A support person, when assisting a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the Township's goods or services, shall not be charged for admission to any facility owned and operated by the Township.

10. Employment

The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh is an equal opportunity employer. The Township is committed to ensuring the employment process is accessible to all applicants. The Township's commitment to a holistically inclusive work environment and universal accommodation extends to all employment activities: recruitment and selection, orientation, working conditions, promotion, training, performance management, career development and workforce transition. The Township does not tolerate any form of discrimination regarding an applicant, employee, or third party that has disclosed they have a disability.

11. Design of Public Spaces

The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh is committed to making every public space owned, leased or operated by the Township accessible to all. The Township want to focus on removing barriers and following the Accessibility Standards for the Design of Public Spaces.

When constructing or redeveloping, the town will meet the requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, specifically the Design of Public Spaces Standards ([link](#)) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation- Ontario Regulation 191/11.

The standard for the design of public spaces only applies to new construction and major changes to existing features. The standard covers:

1. Recreational trails/beach access routes
2. Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
3. Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in provincial parks and local communities
4. Outdoor paths of travel, like sidewalks, ramps, stairs, curb ramps, and rest areas
5. Accessible off-street/on-street parking
6. Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queuing lines and waiting areas.

12. Feedback Process

The Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh welcomes feedback on how to provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback to the Township may be provided in the following ways:

- By email
- Report it form (available on website)
- By telephone
- By mail (letter)

13. Responsibilities

Township Council, third parties, and staff are responsible for adhering to the policy outlined above.

14. Questions about this Policy

This policy exists to ensure staff, Council, volunteers, or any third party that works in accordance with the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh understands how to provide service to persons with disability. If the purpose of this policy is not understood or there are other questions regarding this policy, and explanation will be provided by the Clerk of the Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh.