

# COUNTY OF WELLINGTON POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL



<b>RESPONSIBILITY</b>	Corporate	<b>POLICY NUMBER</b>	<b>HR 16.25</b>
<b>SECTION</b>	Conduct	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	March 1, 2012
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Accessibility	<b>REVISION DATE</b>	September 15, 2023
<b>AUTHORITY</b>	Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005; Ontario Regulation 191/11 (Integrated Accessibility Standards)		

## Statement of Organizational Commitment

The County of Wellington is committed to being responsive to the needs of all its residents. To do this, we must recognize the diverse needs of all of our residents and respond by striving to provide goods, services and facilities that are accessible to all.

As an employer, and a provider of services, the County is committed to ensuring its services are provided in an accessible manner. The County will strive to meet the accessibility needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner.

## Policy

The County will promote accessibility by ensuring that compliance is met for all regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005. In order to ensure timelines are considered, the County will establish, implement and maintain a multi-year accessibility plan. The plan will outline our strategy to prevent and remove barriers to people with disabilities and will be reviewed at least once every five years. In addition, the County will prepare an annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the multi-year accessibility plan. The status report and multi-year accessibility plan will be posted on the County website and will be provided in alternate formats, upon request, as soon as is practical.

We will promote accessibility through the development of policies, procedures and practices and by ensuring they consider people with disabilities. To do this we must ensure the policies, procedures and practices address integration, independence, dignity and equal opportunity.

## **General**

Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure the following:

- That goods and services be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- The provision of goods and services to people with disabilities, and others, will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or permanently, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods and services.
- People with disabilities will be given an opportunity – equal to that given to others – to obtain, use and benefit from the goods and services.
- When not practical to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, employees shall provide an explanation upon request.
- Employees will receive resources on ensuring that accessibility is considered when purchasing goods, services or facilities. Employees will receive training on processes that are in accordance with the appropriate regulations.
- Employees will be trained on the requirements of the accessibility standards.

## **Information and Communications Standard**

### **Feedback**

The County welcomes feedback from members of the public relating to the provision of accessible services provided and the feedback process itself provided by the County. Should a member of the public wish to provide feedback, they may do so by:

- Visiting the County of Wellington website Accessibility Page.
- Visiting or writing a letter to: The County of Wellington Clerk's Department, 74 Woolwich Street, Guelph ON N1H 3T9.
- Contacting the Clerk's Department at 519.837.2600.x2524

The public is encouraged to submit feedback directly to the employee or Department involved in the service. Feedback can also be sent directly to the Clerk's Department.

If an employee receives feedback from a member of the public, they should:

- Notify their Manager and the Clerk's Department.
- The information to be provided by the member of the public should include their personal contact information, the date, a description of the complaint, and what the member of the public requests to resolve the complaint.
- The Manager will attempt to resolve the complaint in a timely manner, with the assistance of the Clerk's Department.
- The member of the public will be contacted once a resolution has been reached.
- The response from employees should include: an explanation of how we will implement the suggestion, a response indicating further investigation or an explanation as to why we are unable to implement the suggestion.

All feedback and any resolutions should be recorded and forwarded to the Manager responsible, Department Head and the Clerk's Department.

## **Accessible Formats and Communication Supports**

The County will provide alternate formats of information upon request in a timely manner and ensure the cost is no more than the regular cost provided to others if applicable. Alternate formats will take into account the individual needs of a person with a disability.

Alternate formats can be requested by:

- Visiting The County website Accessibility Page and submitting a request under Requests for Accessible Formats.
- Contacting the Clerk's Department at 519.837.2600 x 2524

The County will ensure that emergency procedures, plans and public safety information will be made available to the public and will provide accessible formats in a timely matter upon request.

The County will work toward making its website and web content conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), initially at Level A and increasing to WCAG 2.0 Level AA in accordance with the timeframes set out in section 14 (4) of the Integrated Accessibility Standards. Oversight of the County's website and web content falls under the Information Management Division in the Office of the CAO.

## **Employment Standard**

The County is committed to an inclusive workplace and this extends to all employment activities including recruitment, selection, orientation, working conditions, career development and performance management. For more information, please view the following policies:

- Modified Work HR 5.5
- Workplace Accommodations for Disabilities HR 5.75
- Performance Appraisals HR 14.5

The County will create individual emergency response plans for employees with disabilities if the disability requires accommodation during an emergency response. Emergency response plans will be created by the Human Resources Department and the employee with the disability.

## **Transportation Standard**

Licensed taxicabs are prohibited from charging a higher fare or additional fees for persons with disabilities. Any taxicabs licensed by the County will ensure that owners and operators of taxicabs will place vehicle registration and identification information on the rear bumper of the taxicab. Oversight of taxi licensing falls under the Treasury Department.

## **Design of Public Spaces Standard**

The County of Wellington is committed to ensuring that accessibility is considered in all aspects of the built environment. The County of Wellington will comply with the Design of Public Spaces Standards when constructing and redeveloping public spaces. For more information, please view the following document:

- Facility Accessibility Design Manual FADM

## **Customer Service Standard**

### **Use of Assistive Devices**

The County of Wellington will allow people with disabilities to use their own personal assistive devices to obtain services offered by the County of Wellington.

If a person with a disability is unable to access the County's services through the use of their own personal assistive device, the County will:

- Assess service delivery and potential service options to meet the needs of the individual.
- Notify the individual of alternate services or make appropriate changes to the service to ensure equal access for people with disabilities.

### **Service Animals**

A service animal is defined as either:

- A "guide dog," as defined in section 1 of the **Blind Persons Rights' Act**; or
- A "service animal" for a person with a disability. For the purpose of this policy, an animal is a service animal for a person with a disability.

Service animals are identified in the following ways:

- It must be readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for the reasons relating to his or her disability; or
- A letter from a regulated health professional confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

The County will allow service animals into all County owned or operated facilities. Service animals will be allowed to accompany a person with a disability to allow them to access facilities and services. If a service animal is excluded by law from the premises, we will ensure that other measures are available to enable the person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the provider's goods or services.

### **Support Persons**

Support person means a person who accompanies a person with a disability in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

The County will allow people with disabilities to be accompanied by a support person in all County owned and operated public facilities. The County reserves the right to

request the person with a disability be accompanied by a support person, in the event that it is considered necessary to protect the health and safety of the person with a disability or others on the premises and there are no reasonable alternatives available.

The County of Wellington will waive admission fees for support persons who accompany a person with a disability into facilities where admission is charged.

- Member of public should notify an employee of the presence of the support person.
- Admission fees will be waived for the support person.
- If there is confidential information to be disclosed, consent must be received from the person with the disability.

## **Service Disruption**

If a temporary disruption of service is planned, the County will give notice of the disruption.

The notice must:

- Include the reason for the disruption.
- The anticipated duration.
- If alternate facilities or services are available, and their description.

Notice will be given by posting the information in a conspicuous place on premises as well as by posting it on the County of Wellington website.

If the County Website should expect a temporary service disruption, advance notice where possible, will be provided on the website. Departments aware of any service disruptions shall contact the Clerks office as soon as they become aware of the disruption, so that notification is planned appropriately.

## **Training**

Employees will be trained in accordance with the regulations under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

- Every person who is an employee or a volunteer with the County.
- Every person who participates in developing the County's policies, practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services to members of the public or other third parties.

The training will include:

- Overview of the Act, Regulations and the Ontario Human Rights Code as it pertains to people with disabilities.
- County policies related to accessibility.
- How to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities, as outlined in this policy and procedures.
- How to interact with people with disabilities who use an assistive device or require the assistance of a guide dog or other service animal or the assistance of a support person, as outlined in this policy and procedures.
- How to use equipment or devices available on the provider's premises or otherwise provided by the provider that may help with the provision of goods or services to a person with a disability.
- What to do if a person with a particular type of disability is having difficulty

accessing the provider's goods or services.

The training shall be appropriate to the duties of the employees, volunteers and other persons, and shall be provided as soon as practicable and on an on-going as necessary whenever there are policy changes. The County of Wellington will log and retain records, which will record the details of the training provided, as well as the name of the person, location, and date the training was completed. Oversight of Training falls under the Human Resources Department.

## **Feedback Process**

The County will accept and respond to feedback regarding the manner in which it provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities. The County will ensure the feedback process is accessible by providing, or arranging for the provision of, accessible formats and communication supports upon request.

A member of the public may submit feedback by:

- Visiting the County of Wellington website Accessibility Page and submitting the Feedback Form.
- Request the Feedback Form in an alternate format by contacting the Clerk's Department at 519.837.2600.x2524
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- Visiting or writing a letter to: The County of Wellington Clerk's Department, 74 Woolwich Street, Guelph ON N1H 3T9.

The Clerk's Department will review the feedback, work with the appropriate parties to resolve or work towards resolving the complaint, and respond to the person who has submitted the feedback in a timely manner with a solution or an update to the process.

## **Format of Documents**

### **Alternate Formats**

The County will provide alternate formats of information to members of the public upon request.

All employees will adhere to the County's Accessible Communications Guideline. Oversight of the Accessible Communications Guidelines falls under the Communications Division in the Office of the CAO.

If a member of the public requests an alternate format:

- Employees will access the electronic form located on The Well.
- Fill out the appropriate information, which will be forwarded to the Clerk's Department.
- The Clerk's Department along with the applicable department will provide the document or contact the individual if it is not technically feasible to provide the specified document or format.
- The Clerk's Department will work with the individual to determine an appropriate format. If no solution is found, an explanation outlining the reasons will be provided.

Conversion shall be processed in-house wherever possible by the applicable department. If requested for documentation in an alternate format, the department of origin shall be responsible for the cost of the conversion, materials and distribution, not

the public requestor.

The County will only provide alternate formats for documents that we produce.

## **Communication Supports**

The County will provide communication supports to members of the public, upon request.

If a member of the public requests a communication support:

- Employees will access the electronic form located on The Well.
- Fill out the appropriate information, which will be forwarded to the Clerk's Department.
- The Clerk's Department in communication with the applicable department will arrange for the communication support or contact the individual if it is not technically feasible.
- The Clerk's Department in communication with the applicable department will work with the individual to determine an appropriate alternate solution and if no solution is found, they will provide an explanation outlining the reasons.

## **Legislation**

Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005  
Integrated Accessibility Standard – Ontario Regulation 191/11  
Ontario Human Rights Code

## **Additional Documents**

Workplace Accommodations Policy – HR 5.75  
Workplace Accommodations Guideline for Human Resources  
Modified Work Policy – HR 5.5  
Facility Accessibility Design Manual  
Purchasing Policy  
Accessible Communications Guideline  
Taxi By-Law 5266-11