



SECTION: *ACCESSIBILITY*

SUBJECT: CONSOLIDATED ACCESSIBILITY POLICY FOR LANARK COUNTY

1 PURPOSE

This policy is drafted in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and the Customer Service Standard addressing how Lanark County achieves or shall achieve accessibility through meeting the requirements of the regulation. The requirements shall be met within the timeframes set with in the Regulation.

This policy is supported by procedures/departmental policies which outline the detailed processes and accommodations pursuant to this policy. The supporting policies/procedures include the following:

- ✓ Customer Service
- ✓ Human Resource Policies
- ✓ Information and Communications Polices
- ✓ Procedures for procurement
- ✓ Emergency Processes and Procedures

2 LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

Under the Ontario's Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and the Customer Service Standard.

3 TERMS

Accessible formats – formats that are an alternative to standard print and are accessible to people with disabilities. Accessible formats may include large print, Braille, and audio electronic formats such as DVDs, CDs,

Communication supports – supports that individuals with disabilities may need to access information. Some examples include plain language formats, sign language, as well as reading out loud, captioning, or using written notes to communicate.

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Designated public sector organization – refers to organizations listed in Schedule 1 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (Broader Public Sector). These organizations include hospitals, universities, colleges of applied arts and technology, district school boards and organizations that provide public transportation such as municipalities. Hereafter, also referred to as —public sector|| in these guidelines. Designated public sector organization also means every municipality and every person or organization listed in Column 1 of Table 1 of Ontario Regulation 146/10.

Large designated public sector organization – refers to designated public sector organizations with 50 or more employees. Hereafter, also referred to as —large public sector|| in these guidelines.

4 STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

Lanark County is committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and equal opportunity. We are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner, and shall do so by preventing and removing barriers to accessibility and meeting accessibility requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

5 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Accessibility Plans

- The multi-year Lanark County Accessibility Plan (“the plan”) outlines the strategy to prevent and remove barriers, and to meet its requirements under the regulation;
- The plan is posted on the website, and shall be provided in alternate formats upon request;
- The plan shall be reviewed and updated at least once every five years;
- The plan has been created in consultation with the Accessibility Advisory Committee;
- An annual status report on the progress of measures taken to implement the strategy shall be posted on the website and in alternate formats upon request.

Procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities

- Accessibility criteria and features are incorporated when procuring or acquiring good, services or facilities, except where it is not practicable to do so;

- Where it is not practicable to incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, Lanark County shall provide, upon request, an explanation.

Self- Service Kiosks

- Accessibility features are incorporated when designing, procuring or acquiring self-service kiosks.

Training

- Lanark County ensures that training is provided on the requirements of accessibility standards referred to within the Integrated Accessibility Standards (Ontario Regulation 191/11) and on the *Human Rights Code* as it pertains to persons with disabilities to:
 - All employees and volunteers;
 - All persons who are responsible for developing Lanark County's policies; and
 - All other persons who provide goods, services or facilities on behalf of Lanark County.
- The training provided is appropriate to the duties of employees, volunteers and other persons.
- Training is provided as practicable to employees, volunteers and other persons.
- Where there are changes to the Integrated Standards Accessibility Policy, training shall be provided with regard to those changes
- Lanark County shall maintain a record of the dates of when training is provided and the number of individuals to whom it was provided.

6 CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

- Lanark County shall use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:
 - Goods or services shall be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
 - Persons with disabilities shall be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services;

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- The County shall communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability including accessible notifications and respond to questions;
- That Lanark County employees shall be trained to communicate, provide appropriate assistance and services in a manner that takes into account the person's disability;
- Where fees for goods and services are advertised or promoted by the County, it shall provide advance notice of the amount payable, if any, in respect of the support person.

Notice of Temporary Disruptions

- Lanark County shall provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities.
- Use of Assistive Devices, Support Persons and Service Animals
- Lanark County shall provide customers assistance in the use of assistive devices;
- Support persons and/or support animals may accompany a person with disabilities in the access of goods and services.

Documentation

- 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.

Customer Service Training

- The County shall provide training to all employees and volunteers or other third parties who deal with the public on their behalf, and all those who are involved in the development and approval of policies, practices and procedures;
- The County shall ensure that contractors, agents and other third parties who deal with the public on their behalf have been trained and are aware of the County's policies, practices and procedures;
- Applicable staff shall be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff shall also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures;

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- County training shall include the following:
 - The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard;
 - How to provide goods and services in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities;
 - How to interact and communicate with persons in a manner that takes into account their disabilities;
 - The process for people to provide feedback to the County about its provision of goods and services to persons with disabilities, and how the County responds to the feedback and takes action on any complaint;
 - 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 to access goods and services;
 - Information on other county policies, practices and procedures dealing with the AODA;
 - How to use equipment or devices available on County premises or provided by the County that may help with the provision of goods and services;
 - What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty accessing the County's goods and services.

Customer Service Feedback Process:

- Feedback from our customers give Lanark County staff and Council opportunities to learn and improve;
- The County shall establish a process 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 process readily available to the public.

7 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STANDARDS

General Feedback

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- Lanark County's Customer Feedback process is accessible to persons with disabilities and does provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports upon request.
- The public is notified regarding the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Accessible Formats and Communication Supports

- Lanark County shall, upon request, provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for persons with disabilities,
- Provision of accessible formats and communication supports shall be provided:
 - in a timely manner that takes into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability
 - at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons, and;
 - in consultation with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an alternative format or communication support.
- Lanark County shall notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports.

Emergency procedure, plans or public safety information

- Where Lanark County prepares emergency procedures, plans or public safety information and makes that information available to the public, the information shall be in an accessible format or with appropriate communication supports, as soon as practicable, upon request.

Accessible websites and web content

- Lanark County's internet websites and web content shall be accessible to people with disabilities. Specifically, the website shall conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content and Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0, initially at Level A and increasing to Level AA in accordance with the schedule set out by the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation.

8 EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

Recruitment

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- Lanark County shall notify its employees and the public about the availability of accommodation for applicants with disabilities in its recruitment process;
- During the recruitment process, applicants who are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process, shall be notified that accommodations are available upon request in relation to the materials or processes used;
- If a selected applicant requests an accommodation, Lanark County shall consult with the applicant, having regard for the applicant's accessibility needs, on the provision of a suitable accommodation;
- When making an offer of employment, Lanark County shall notify the successful applicant of its policies for accommodating employees with disabilities.

Informing employees of supports

- Lanark County shall inform its employees of its policies used to support its employees with disabilities, including, but not limited to, policies on job accommodation that take into account the employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.
- New employees shall be informed as soon as practicable after they begin their employment.
- Where there are changes to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation, all employees shall be provided updated information.

Accessible formats and communication supports for employees

- Where an employee requests it, Lanark County shall consult with the employee to provide or arrange for the provision of accessible formats and communication supports for:
 - Information that is needed in order for the employee to perform the employee's job
 - Information that is generally available to employees in the workplace.
- Lanark County shall consult with the employee making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support.

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Workplace emergency response information

- Lanark County shall provide individual workplace emergency response information to employees who have a disability:
 - Where the disability is such that individual information is necessary, and
 - Where Lanark County is aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.
- If an employee who receives individualized workplace emergency response information requires assistance and with the employee's consent, Lanark County shall provide the workplace emergency response information to the person designated by Lanark County to provide assistance to the employee.
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- Individualized information shall be provided as soon as practicable after Lanark County becomes aware of the need for accommodation due to an employee's disability.
- Lanark County shall review the individualized workplace emergency response information:
 - When the employee moves to a different location;
 - When the employee's overall accommodation needs or plan are reviewed;
 - When Lanark County reviews its general emergency response policies

Documented individual accommodation plans

- Lanark County shall have a written process for the development of Individual Accommodation Plans for employees with disabilities.

Return to work

- Lanark County shall have a documented return to work process for its employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Performance Management

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- Lanark County shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when using its performance management process.

Career Development and Advancement

- Lanark County shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when using its career development and advancement process.

Redeployment

- Lanark County shall take into account the accessibility needs of employees with disabilities, as well as individual accommodation plans, when using its redeployment process.

9 AMENDMENTS TO THIS OR OTHER POLICIES

We are committed to developing policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes shall be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities;

Any Lanark County policy that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities shall be modified or rescinded.

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