

# Long Point Region Conservation Authority

## Accessible Customer Service Policy

The government of Ontario enacted the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* in 2005. The AODA allows the government to develop specific standards of accessibility with the purpose to make organizations in Ontario more accessible to all customers. This policy addresses the customer service standard.

The Long Point Region Conservation Authority (LPRCA) is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities. LPRCA staff understands that people with disabilities may have different needs and as such, will communicate with a person with a disability in a manner that takes into account his or her disability. Where accessible service is not currently available, staff will work with the individual or their representative to identify the best means with available resources with which to supply the goods and services. LPRCA will use reasonable efforts to ensure that its policies, practices and procedures are consistent with the following principles:

1. That goods or services will be provided in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.
2. The provision of goods or services to persons with disabilities and others will be integrated unless an alternate measure is necessary, whether temporarily or on a permanent basis, to enable a person with a disability to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services.
3. Persons with disabilities will be given an opportunity equal to that given to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services.

### Definitions

**Assistive Device**- an item a person may bring with them or that is already on the premises that is used to assist a person with a disability to do everyday activities. Examples include wheelchairs, walkers, white canes used for visually impaired people and personal oxygen tanks.

**Barrier**- something that prevents a person with a disability from participating fully in society due to their disability.

**Long Point Region Conservation Authority** – staff, Board of Directors, and office delivering the business of the incorporated not-for-profit.

**Customers**- refers to people who are not staff of conservation authorities who receive goods or services.

**Dignity**- service that is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to maintain self-respect and the respect of other people.

**Disability(ies)** - taken from the Act, means:

(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.

**Independence**-when a person with a disability is allowed to do things on their own without unnecessary help or interference from others.

**Integration**- service is provided in a way that allows the person with a disability to benefit from the same services, in the same place, and in the same or similar way as other customers, unless an alternate measure is necessary to enable a person with a disability to access goods or services.

**Service Animal**- means, in relation to a person with a disability, an animal which is being used by a person with a disability,

(a) If it is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or

(b) If the person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

**Support Person**- is a personal support worker, a volunteer, family member or friend who helps a person with a disability with a variety of things such as communicating, personal care, medical needs or helping with mobility.

**Temporary Disruption**- a short-term planned or unplanned disruption to facilities or services that people with disabilities usually use to get goods and services.

**Third Party Service**- a person or organization that makes goods or services available to other businesses, the government or other organizations. Providers of goods or services to third parties must comply with the same requirements as the providers who serve the public directly. This ensures that goods or services are accessible to all customers.

## **Assistive Devices**

LPRCA has no restrictions with regard to a person with a disability using and keeping with them their own personal *assistive devices* to obtain, use or benefit from the goods or services offered by LPRCA. Where LPRCA-owned *assistive devices* are available, appropriate staff will be knowledgeable of their presence and trained in the use of the *assistive devices*. Staff will be available to assist with LPRCA-owned *assistive devices* if requested for use by an individual.

## **Communications**

LPRCA employees will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take their

disability into account. Employees will receive direction from the person on how best to communicate with them and will work with the customer to find ways around any barriers to communication. Accommodations may include making the original communication more accessible, changing the usual method of communication or using assistive devices or services if available.

### **Service Animals**

LPRCA allows service animals on any parts of its premises that are open to the public. Where an animal is not allowed by law, or may affect the health of other customers, other mechanisms will be explored in order to provide service to a person with a disability.

### **Support persons**

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on LPRCA premises. LPRCA staff will obtain consent from the person with a disability if confidential information is going to be shared while a support person is present. If a support person is necessary for the protection of the person with a disability or of LPRCA staff, a support person will be required to accompany the person with a disability. In general, no participant fee for services provided by LPRCA will be charged to support persons. If support persons are charged a participant fee, advance notice will be given about the amount that the support person must pay.

### **Notice of temporary disruption**

In the event of a planned disruption to services or facilities that are relied upon by people with disabilities to access goods or services provided by LPRCA, notice of the disruption will be provided in advance, whenever possible. In the event of an unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities LPRCA will provide notice as soon as possible. Notice may be given by posting information in a conspicuous place in the premises, on LPRCA's website or another method which is appropriate in the circumstance. This 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. An example of the Notice is provided in Appendix A.

### **Training for staff**

LPRCA will provide training to its volunteers, employees and board members who work with members of the public or other contractors and third parties on behalf of LPRCA or who participate in developing LPRCA's practices and procedures governing the provision of goods or services. This training will start in 2011 and will be on-going for new members, staff and volunteers when practical. All staff will also be trained when changes are made to LPRCA's Accessibility Plan. Training will include:

- An overview of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- LPRCA's policy related to the customer service standard. Consultants and other third parties who provide customer service and/or develop policies and procedures on behalf of LPRCA must be in compliance with Ontario Regulation 429/07, Accessibility Standards for Customer Service.

## **Feedback process**

Customers who wish to provide feedback on the way LPRCA provides goods and services to people with disabilities can contact the Office Administrator by e-mail, phone call, facsimile, letter or they can book an appointment to discuss their feedback in person. Customers with a specific query can expect a response within ten business days.

## **Modifications to this or other policies**

LPRCA will endeavour to update any policies which are not in conformity with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).

## **Responsibilities**

All employees who deal with the public, third parties or create policies on LPRCA's behalf will be responsible to provide service in a manner that respects the dignity and independence of persons with disabilities.

## Appendix A

### Notice of Temporary Disruption

[date]

The (facility or service) will be unavailable from (date) to (date) due to\_\_\_\_\_. In the interim, (insert reason - provide alternate service/facilities if available)

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Sincerely,

Long Point Region Conservation Authority