

Accessible Customer Service



The Corporation of the City of North Bay is committed to providing quality goods and services that are accessible to all persons served by the Municipality.

The goal

The goal of the **Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**, 2005, is to make Ontario fully accessible for people with disabilities by **January 1, 2025**. The first of 5 standards under the AODA is the **Customer Service Standard**.

Accessible Customer Service makes good business sense.

- ✓ The City of North Bay endeavours to provide goods and services that respect the dignity and independence of people with disabilities.
- ✓ Accessible Customer Service allows for integration of services and equal opportunity for all.



Please note: Contact your immediate supervisor if you require assistance with this information.

What are barriers?

Barriers prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in activities that they need to do or want to do. The following are examples of barriers:



- Attitude
- Architecture or structures
- Information or communication
- Technology (or lack of technology)
- Policies and practices.

What can we do?

Identify, prevent and remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Here are some general tips to help you welcome people with disabilities:

- Treat each person with the same **respect** as you would want to be treated.
- Words count: Always put the person first. It is more respectful to say “person with a disability” rather than “handicapped person”.
- Most disabilities are not visible. Do not make assumptions about the type of disability a person has.
Take the time to understand what the individual needs. Ask “**May I help you?**” and “**How may I help you?**”
- No one likes to be ignored. If an individual has a support person, remember to speak **TO** the person who has the disability rather than **ABOUT** him or her.
- Provide information in a way that takes into account the customer’s disability. For example, consider using plain language and speak in short sentences for clear understanding.
- Communication methods may vary. Consider reading out instructions, writing out your message or drawing a diagram for directions.
- Verbally identify yourself and clearly describe information.
- Make sure you face your customer when speaking because some people speech read.



More customer service suggestions...

- Service animals may be cute and cuddly but remember they are not pets. Do **not** address these animals.
- Service animals are able to access areas anywhere the public can access unless otherwise excluded by another law (e.g. where food is prepared).
- **Ask** permission before touching or moving an assistive device such as a wheelchair or walker.
- Let your customer know **where** the accessible features are (such as accessible parking, ramps or accessible washrooms).

Service Disruptions

People who have disabilities may do a lot of planning to access services that the City provides. For this reason the City will make every reasonable effort to provide notice of service disruption to the public. This will include the reason and anticipated duration of the disruption as well as a description of alternative services or facilities.



ASSISTANCE

For more information or to provide feedback please contact:

City Clerk
P.O. Box 360
City of North Bay, ON P1B 8H8
(705) 474-0400
Cathy.conrad@cityofnorthbay.ca

Your feedback will assist with continuous improvement on the delivery of goods and services to persons with disabilities.

Please refer to:

Corporation of the City of North Bay Accessibility Policy –

[Customer Service, Council Resolution 2009-132](#)

[Making Ontario Accessible Website](#)



*Look beyond the disability to see the **ability** within.*