



Statement of Organizational Commitment

The Municipality of Central Elgin is committed to ensuring equal access and participation for people with disabilities. We are committed to treating people with disabilities in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. We believe in integration and we are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities in a timely manner. We will do so by removing and preventing barriers to accessibility and meeting our accessibility requirements under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* and Ontario's accessibility laws.

The Municipality of Central Elgin is committed to meeting its current and ongoing obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code respecting non-discrimination.

The Municipality of Central Elgin understands that obligations under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA) and its accessibility standards do not substitute or limit its obligations under the Ontario Human Rights Code or obligations to people with disabilities under any other law.

The Municipality of Central Elgin is committed to excellence in serving and providing goods, services or facilities to all residents, visitors, contractors, employees, volunteers including people with disabilities.

Accessibility Planning

The Municipality will establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which will outline the municipalities strategies to prevent and remove barriers and meet the regulation requirements under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (O.Reg 191/11).

The Municipality will establish and implement a multi-year accessibilities plan in consultation with people with disabilities and the Joint Accessibilities Advisory Committee.

The plan will be posted on the Municipalities website and will be available in an accessible format upon request. The new plan will be updated at least once every five years period.

And annual status report will be prepared and outline progress taken to implement the strategy of the plan. Established report will be posted on the Municipality's website.

Training

We are committed to training all staff and volunteers in accessible customer service, other Ontario's Accessibility Standards and aspects of the Ontario Human Rights Code that relate to persons with disabilities.

In addition, we will train:

- a) all persons who participate in developing the organization'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
- our policies related to the 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
- what to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing our organization's goods, services or facilities.
- 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.

List Equipment/Devices at the Municipality of Central Elgin

- Beach wheelchair
- Accessible door button
- Accessible bathroom
- Computer dictate
- Close captioning
- Virtual or in person options
- Elevators
- QR codes

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.

Refresher training will be provided every 3 years in the form of a HR bulletin, knowledge quiz, training, email, etc.

Assistive Devices

People with disabilities may use their personal assistive devices when accessing our goods, services or facilities.

In cases where the assistive device presents a significant and unavoidable health or safety concern or may not be permitted for other reasons, other measures will be used to ensure the person with a disability can access our goods, services or facilities. Other measures may include physical signage, website notifications, virtual meeting flexibility, and any other reasonable accommodations.

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

Communication

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. This may include the following:

- Verbal communication
- Written materials
- Digital formats
- Google translator

We will work with the person with disabilities to determine what method of communication works for them.

Website and Web Content

In accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR), the Municipality will ensure that website and web content are created in a manner keeping with the expectations of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG). The Municipality is currently creating a website and web content in accordance with WCAG 2.0, level A and will ensure that website and web content are created in accordance with level AA. If an individual is having difficulty accessing any Municipal owned or operated website/intranet, or content found on said website, they can contact the Municipality.

Accessible web content is being produced in the following ways:

- In-house: Staff receive training that ensures PDF documents are created in accordance with WCAG 2.0.
- Purchased Documents or Videos: The Department purchasing a document or video that will be available on the Municipality's website shall ensure that the document or video is created in a manner that ensures compliance with WCAG 2.0.
- Third-Party Documents: The Municipality will put forward efforts to ensure that documents provided to the Municipality on behalf of a third party, that will be posted on the Municipality's website, and not in direct control of the Municipality through a contractual relationship, will be remediated in accordance with WCAG 2.0, unless it is not practicable to do so.

In the event that it is not practicable to remediate a third party document, for which the Municipality is not in direct control through a contractual relationship, a member of the public may contact the Municipality to arrange for the information to be provided in an accessible format, upon request. The Municipality will consult with the requesting individual to determine suitability of format.

Service Animals

We welcome 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.

When we cannot easily identify that an animal is a service animal, our staff may ask for documentation from a regulated health professional that confirms the person needs the service animal for reasons relating to their disability.

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.

A regulated health professional is defined as a member of one of the following colleges:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Chiropractors of Ontario
- College of Nurses of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Optometrists of Ontario
- College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Psychologists of Ontario
- College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario

If service animals are prohibited by another law, we will do the following to ensure people with disabilities can access our goods, services or facilities:

- explain why the animal is excluded
- discuss with the customer another way of providing goods, services or facilities

Service animals are prohibited from the following areas:

- **Food Preparation Areas:** Service animals are not allowed in any area where food is being prepared. This is in compliance with health regulations to maintain sanitation and prevent contamination, particularly under the *Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act* and the policies of *Southwestern Public Health*.
- **Construction Sites:** These sites often have hazards like heavy machinery, exposed wiring, or hazardous materials, making them dangerous for animals. For safety reasons, service animals may be prohibited in such environments.
- **Mechanic Shops:** Similar to construction sites, mechanic shops can have oil spills, sharp tools, and other potential dangers to both animals and people. Regulations may restrict service animals from entering these spaces.
- **Beach Towers:** Beach towers are restricted due to safety protocols.
- **Ice Rinks:** Ice rinks prohibit service animals due to safety concerns, such as the risk of slipping on ice or potential interference with the operation of the rink.
- **Disclaimer:** Other areas may be identified where service animals are prohibited based on specific safety, health, or operational concerns. These restrictions may vary depending on local policies, regulations, and circumstances.

Support Persons

A person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to have that person accompany them on our premises.

If a fee or fare is normally charged to a customer for accessing your goods, services or facilities, choose one of the following options:

Fee/fare will not be charged for support person.

We notify customers of this by posting a notice in the following location(s):

- Port Stanley Arena
- Belmont Arena

In certain cases, this organization might require a person with a disability to be accompanied by a support person for the health or safety reasons of:

- the person with a disability
- others on the premises

Before making a decision, the Municipality will:

- consult with the person with a disability to understand their needs
- consider health or safety reasons based on available evidence
- determine if there is no other reasonable way to protect the health or safety of the person or others on the premises

Notice of Temporary Disruption

In the event of a planned or unexpected disruption to services or facilities for customers with disabilities, this organization 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.

Services/Facilities include:

- Office – 450 Sunset (owed by Elgin County)
- Port Stanley Arena
- Belmont Arena
- Fire Stations – Port Stanley, Belmont, Yarmouth, Union
- Medical Centre
- Visitor Centre
- Harbour & Pier
- Beaches
- Parks & Trails
- Non-Profit Housing

The notice will be made publicly available in the following ways:

- physical sign at the location of temporary disruption
- website notification, or
- social media

Feedback Process

The Municipality of Central Elgin welcomes feedback on how we provide accessible customer service. Customer feedback will help us identify barriers and respond to concerns.

Feedback may be provided in the following ways: In person, phone, email or filling out the accessibility feedback form on our website

All feedback, including complaints, will be handled as outlined in the Stakeholder Service Policy.

Feedback will be directed to the Clerk and then also forwarded to the head of the appropriate department. Customers can expect to hear back within 48 hours.

The Municipality of Central Elgin ensures our feedback process is accessible to people with disabilities by providing or arranging for accessible formats and communication supports, on request.

Notice of Availability of Documents

The Municipality of Central Elgin notifies the public that documents related to accessible customer service, are available upon request by posting a notice on our website.

The Municipality of Central Elgin will provide these documents in an accessible format or with communication support, on request. We will consult with the person making the request to determine the suitability of the format or communication support. We will provide the accessible format in a timely manner and, at no additional cost.

Procurement

Under the AODA, only designated public sector organizations, Government of Ontario and Legislative Assembly have this requirement.

We incorporate accessibility criteria and features when procuring or acquiring goods, services or facilities, including self-service kiosks. If it is not possible and practical to do so, we will provide an explanation upon request.

Design of Public Spaces

We will meet accessibility laws when building or making major changes to public spaces. Our public spaces include:

- Buildings or facilities
- Recreational trails/beach access routes
- Outdoor public eating areas like rest stops or picnic areas
- Outdoor play spaces, like playgrounds in parks and local communities
- Accessible off-street parking
- Accessible on-street parking
- Service-related elements like service counters, fixed queueing lines and waiting areas

We put procedures in place to prevent service disruptions to the accessible parts of our public spaces.

Transportation

The Municipality of Central Elgin does not provide transportation services.

Self-service Kiosks

The Municipality of Central Elgin will incorporate accessibility features and consider accessibility for people with disabilities when designing, procuring or acquiring new self-service kiosks.

Information and Communications

We have a process for receiving and responding to feedback and the process is accessible to persons with disabilities upon request.

We communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. When asked, we will provide information about our organization and its services, including public safety information, in accessible formats or with communication supports:

- a) in a timely manner, taking into account the person's accessibility needs due to disability; and
- b) at a cost that is no more than the regular cost charged to other persons.

We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication support. If the organization determines that information or communications are unconvertible, the organization shall provide the requestor with:

- a) an explanation as to why the information or communications are unconvertible; and
- b) a summary of the unconvertible information or communications.

We notify the public about the availability of accessible formats and communication supports on our website.

We will also meet internationally-recognized Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA website requirements in accordance with Ontario's accessibility laws.

Employment – Recruitment and Hiring

We notify employees, job applicants and the public that accommodations can be made during recruitment and hiring. We notify job applicants when they are individually selected to participate in an assessment or selection process that accommodations are available upon request. We consult with the applicants and provide or arrange for suitable accommodation.

We notify successful applicants of policies for accommodating employees with disabilities when making offers of employment.

Employment – Employee Accommodation

We notify staff that supports are available for those with disabilities as soon as practicable after they begin their employment. We provide updated information to employees whenever there is a change to existing policies on the provision of job accommodation that take into account an employee's accessibility needs due to a disability.

We will consult with employees when arranging for the provision of suitable accommodation in a manner that takes into account the accessibility needs due to disability. We will consult with the person making the request in determining the suitability of an accessible format or communication supports specifically for:

- a) information that is needed in order to perform the employee's job; and
- b) information that is generally available to employees in the workplace

Employment – Emergency Plans

Where needed, we will also provide customized emergency information to help an employee with a disability during an emergency. With the employee's consent, we will provide workplace emergency information to a designated person who is providing assistance to that employee during an emergency.

We will provide the information as soon as practicable after we become aware of the need for accommodation due to the employee's disability.

We will review the individualized workplace emergency response information:

- a) when the employee moves to a different location in the organization;
- b) when the employee's overall accommodations needs or plans are reviewed; and
- c) when the employer reviews its general emergency response policies.

We have a written process to develop individual accommodation plans for employees.

We have a written process for employees who have been absent from work due to a disability and require disability-related accommodations in order to return to work.

Employment – Performance and Career Development

Our performance management, career development, and redeployment processes take into account the accessibility needs of all employees.

Changes to Existing Policies

Any policies that do not respect and promote the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

This document is publicly available. Accessible formats are available upon request.