

Rural Municipality of Stuartburn

“Accessible Customer Service Policy”



RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF STUARTBURN

Policy approved: Feb 19th, 2019 Res# 37-19

Updated: April 12th, 2022 Res # 113-22

Introduction:

We are committed to complying with the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service under The Accessibility for Manitobans Act. Our policies, practices and measures reflect the principles of dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity for people with disabilities.

Any policy or practice not respecting and promoting the principles of dignity, independence and equal opportunity for all people will be reviewed, modified or removed.

The following policy statements, organizational practices and measures are intended to meet the requirements of the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service.

This policy applies to all employees.

1: Meet communication needs.

Policy Statement:

The R.M. of Stuartburn will communicate with people disabled by barriers in ways that take into account the nature of the barrier.

Practices and Measures:

- To meet communication needs, when appropriate we offer to communicate in different ways, such as writing things down, reading things out loud, and taking extra time to explain things.
- We also:
 - keep paper and pens available to write things down
 - offer a chair when longer conversations are needed
 - offer a quieter space
 - sit down to engage with someone using a wheelchair
 - offer to enlarge printed materials when needed
- We use signs and documents that are easy to read, including using larger fonts and colour contrast, and ensuring messages are not printed on images.
- We write signs and documents in plain language.
- Post all public documents on the website.

2: Accommodate the use of assistive devices.

Policy Statement:

A person with disabilities may provide their own assistive device when accessing municipal goods, service, or facilities unless it presents a significant health or safety concern. In such case, the R.M. of Stuartubnr may offer other reasonable measures to assist the person.

Practices and Measures:

- We do not touch or move service recipients' assistive devices without permission.
- We are trained in how to use the assistive devices that we provide, including:
 - automatic doors
 - entrance ramp
- In cases where the assistive device presents significant and unavoidable health or safety concerns, we attempt to use other measures to ensure the person with disabilities can access our services or facility.

3: Welcome support persons.

Policy Statement:

The R.M. of Stuartbur is welcoming to customer with a support person.

Practices and Measures:

- We address the service recipient not the support person, unless requested by the service recipient to do otherwise.
- We make space for support persons on-site and ensure service recipients have access to their support persons at all times.

4: Allow service animals.

Policy Statement:

Service animals are permitted on municipal premises provided the service animal is trained to “provide assistance to a person with a disability that relates to that person’s ability” (Human Rights Code Manitoba). The customer must be in complete control of the service animal at all times.

Practices and Measures:

- Staff:
 - treat a service animal as a working animal
 - do not distract a service animal from its job by petting, feeding or playing with it, unless given permission by the person with the service animal to do so
 - know how to identify a service animal by its harness or vest and by the assistance the animal is providing
- If we have concerns, we may ask if the animal has been trained to help a person with a disability-related need.
- We do not inquire about the disability.
- We expect the person who is handling the service animal to maintain control of the animal physically or through voice, signal or other means.
- If the service animal is showing signs of not being controlled (i.e., by barking, whining or wandering), we may provide a warning to the handler to control the animal.
- If the service animal continues to misbehave, we may ask the handler to leave.

5: Maintain accessibility features.

Policy Statement:

To ensure barrier-free access to our goods, services or facilities, we maintain our accessibility features so they can be used as intended.

Practices and Measures:

- We organize our space so that there is room for people with wheelchairs, electric scooters and walkers.
- Our seating accommodates people of varying sizes and abilities.
- We keep hallways, entrance and reception areas and meeting rooms clear of clutter.
- We keep our entrance area clear of ice and snow.
- We use both audio and visual cues to inform customers it is their turn to be served.
- We maintain our website to meet accessibility standards.
- We provide service at alternate locations, when our structures are not accessible. Such as meeting the service recipient in front of the service counter.
- Our accessibility features affected by this policy include hallways, entrance and reception areas and meeting rooms, accessible washrooms, automatic doors, website and ramps.

6. Let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is unavailable.

Policy Statement:

We let the public know when and why an accessibility feature is temporarily unavailable, how long it will be unavailable, and other ways to access our goods and services.

Practices and Measures:

- If one of our accessibility features becomes temporarily unavailable, we prepare and post a notice and/or announcement about the disruption, the reason for the disruption, how long it will last, and whether there are other ways we can provide access to our services (e.g., by using an alternate entrance).
- If requested, we work with the service recipient to find other ways to provide services.
- We let the public know about disruptions in the following ways:
 - posted on website, on social media, and/or in newsletters
 - posted at our building entrance, service reception desk and/or in high traffic areas

7. Welcome and respond promptly to feedback.

Policy Statements:

We welcome and respond promptly to feedback we receive on the accessibility of our services.

We document the actions we take to respond to the feedback we receive, and that information is available on request in a format that meets the individual's communication needs.

Practices and Measures:

- We invite feedback in the following ways:
 - Visit our reception desk, or contact us by phone or email.
- All feedback is directed to the Chief Administrative Officer, who determines what action, if any, should occur.
- If the feedback requires us to follow-up, the service recipient is notified that the request is being reviewed and when they can expect a response.
- We let the service recipient know what action we will take to address their feedback, if any.
- We respond to feedback in a way that meets the communication needs of the individual.

8: Provide the required training to employees.

Policy Statements:

We provide the required training on accessible customer service to employees.

We are trained on:

- How to interact and communicate with people who face barriers to accessing our services, use assistive devices, are assisted by a support person and/or are assisted by a service animal.
- How to use assistive devices that are available on-site.
- An overview of The Accessibility for Manitobans Act, The Human Rights Code (Manitoba), and the Customer Service Standard.
- Our organizational policies, practices and measures, including updates or changes.

Practices and Measures:

- We train new employees within one month after hiring.
- We provide refresher training as policies, practices and measures are updated.
- The Accessibility Coordinator records who have taken training and when. Training records are kept in the accessibility's binder.

