

Accessible Feedback and Resident Inquiry Procedure

Approved by: City Council

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Purpose

The City of Ottawa is committed to providing equal treatment to people with disabilities with respect to the use and benefit of City services, programs, goods, public spaces and facilities. Pursuant to the [City's Accessibility Policy](#), this commitment extends to residents, visitors, and employees with visible or non-visible, permanent, or temporary disabilities.

In accordance with [Section 80.50 of the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation \(IASR\)](#), enacted under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), residents and visitors are invited to provide accessibility-related feedback, which, in turn, will be forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked.

This procedure is intended to supplement and provide an overarching framework for other Corporate and departmental feedback and complaint mechanisms. Processes may vary depending on the department and service area; however, the objective and goals of this procedure apply to all City employees.

Application

This procedure applies to all City employees who provide services, programs, goods, public spaces and/or facilities to residents and visitors on behalf of the City, in accordance with the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) enacted under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* (AODA), and in support of the City of Ottawa's Accessibility Policy.

Procedure description

City services, programs, communications, goods, public spaces and facilities are to be provided to people with disabilities in a manner that:

- Accommodates (**see Definitions**) a person's disability
- Takes into consideration a person's disability
- Reflects the AODA's core principles of dignity and independence
- Seeks to provide integrated services
- Is free from discrimination
- Is available in accessible formats and with communication supports upon request
- Provides an opportunity equitable to others to obtain, use and benefit from the goods or services

Finally, all complaints are to be dealt with in a confidential manner according to the [Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#) (MFIPPA). Information must be collected, used, and disclosed in accordance with the Act. When liaising with staff during the preparation of a response, employees should avoid providing the complainant's name or contact information to staff who are assisting with the response, unless they will need to communicate directly with the complainant. This information should only be accessible by those staff who have access to the appropriate system (i.e., Marval), and staff who will be issuing the response to the complainant. If sharing personal information with other stakeholders is required, it is strongly recommended to seek the complainant's permission before doing so.

Feedback, inquiry and service request process

The feedback and the outcomes of accessibility-related inquiries, complaints, requests for service and accessibility-related accommodations, including the manner in which the City provides goods, services or facilities to persons with disabilities, and the feedback process itself shall be:

1. Readily available to the public (advertised on websites, through events and at all service counters)
 - In addition to the feedback process provided on ottawa.ca, bilingual [Accessible Customer Service signage](#) shall be posted at a conspicuous place at all public City of Ottawa facilities. The signage will also outline the feedback process.
2. Received through a variety of channels, including, but not limited to:

- Phone at 3-1-1 (Toll-free 1-866-261-9799)
 - TTY (Teletypewriter) 613-580-2401
 - Video Relay Service 613-580-2400
 - Email 311@ottawa.ca
 - The Accessibility Office accessibilityoffice@ottawa.ca
 - The My ServiceOttawa feedback form
[Feedback and disability-related service inquiries](#)
 - In-person at any City of Ottawa facility
 - The Mayor's and Councillor's Offices
 - Other department-specific avenues and processes, such as social media channels and websites
3. Provided in accessible formats and with communication supports upon request. Alternate formats and communication supports are available to all residents who wish to make a Corporate Complaint, regardless of if the complaint is related to accessibility, as per the [Accessible Formats and Communication Supports Procedure](#).
4. Acknowledged by the Accessibility Office (by phone or email), to the complainant and service department, if applicable, within three business days.
5. Directed to the appropriate City staff by the Accessibility Office through the Marval platform or to the appropriate departmental shared inbox providing information, as outlined in **Appendix A**.
- a. For responses that take longer than 20 business days to resolve and close, the complainant shall again be contacted and assured that the complaint is being investigated and that a response will be provided when possible. This shall be done either by a departmental representative or the Accessibility Office and include the intended resolution and/or the actions that will be taken, as well as an approximate timeline when a resolution can be provided, if possible.
6. Documented and tracked in the appropriate system (i.e., Marval) and/or through the department specific process (i.e., Transit Services for

feedback received through OC Transpo Customer Service).

7. Closed by creating a record of the status and outcome through the appropriate system (i.e., Marval) by the Accessibility Office or a departmental representative, as appropriate.

Should feedback, questions, complaints or concerns affect more than one department or service area, the Accessibility Office shall facilitate and lead the coordinated response by:

- Contacting the appropriate departments, as required
- Gather the departmental responses, as provided
- Draft and send the coordinated response to the resident, and
- Update the appropriate system (i.e., Marval) with closing notes.

Finally, staff can review their requirements under the [Corporate Complaints Handling Policy](#) and [Procedures](#) and/or other departmental procedures, as appropriate, to support in responding to the matter.

Monitoring/Contraventions

Failure to comply with the AODA and its regulations may result in administrative penalties.

Supervisors and managers shall monitor current practices to ensure compliance with the City's Accessibility Policy and all AODA related procedures and guidelines.

References

[Accessibility Policy](#)

[Accessible Formats and Communications Support Procedure](#)

[Corporate Complaints Handling Policy](#)

[Corporate Complaints Handling Procedures](#)

[Feedback and disability-related service inquiries](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Records Management Policy](#)

Legislative and administrative authorities

[Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#)

[Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation, O.Reg. 191/11](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Code, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.19](#)

[Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, RSO. 1990, c. M.56](#)

Recordkeeping requirements

In accordance with the [Records Management Policy](#), Official Business Records generated as a result of the execution of this procedure must be declared as such in the appropriate SharePoint site, RMS (Records Management System) or approved business system (i.e., Marval).

Definitions

Accommodation

As per the [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#), **accommodation** is a means of preventing and removing barriers that impede people with disabilities from integration and full participation.

The principle of accommodation involves three factors: dignity, individualization and integration.

1. **Integration** – First, start with a society that is designed inclusively. When setting up requirements, policies and procedures, buying new equipment or designing work, service or housing spaces, make choices and decisions that do not create barriers for persons protected under the Human Rights Code.
2. **Individualization** - Each person's needs are unique and must be considered individually when an accommodation request is made. Some accommodations can benefit many people, but what works for one person may not work for others.
3. **Dignity** – Lastly, accommodate any remaining individual needs in a way that most respects dignity. Make sure both the accommodation process and solutions respect the dignity of the person asking for accommodation. Dignity includes maintaining privacy, confidentiality, comfort, autonomy, individuality and self-esteem.

Complaint

As described in the [Corporate Complaints Handling Policy](#) and [Procedures](#), a complaint is “any expression of dissatisfaction about the action or lack of action taken regarding operations, facilities or services provided by the City of Ottawa or by a person or body acting on behalf of the City of Ottawa.” All complaints filed necessitate a response.

Complaints imply that the complainant is unhappy with the service received and that they require a follow-up response regarding the issue.

Feedback of a positive or general nature, comments on a service or facility that do not require a response, or requests for service, are not complaints. These forms of communications are handled through other processes and the procedures outlined in the Corporate Complaints Handling Procedures do not strictly apply.

If staff receive a complaint that makes the staff member feel uncomfortable or unsafe, or believes that a complaint is unreasonable, frivolous or vexatious, or the matter has previously been considered closed, there is a separate mechanism for handling these.

Inquiries

For further information regarding this procedure, contact:

Corporate Accessibility Office

Office of the City Clerk

accessibilityoffice@ottawa.ca

Appendices

Appendix A

Dear Colleague(s),

Through the [Feedback and disability-related service inquiries](#), the following:

- Inquiry
- Feedback
- Service request
- Accessibility accommodation request
- Complaint

has been received about accessibility or disability barriers in the following service, program, venue, event, location or City staff interaction.

Service Request #

(Insert information from Service Request)

A service request has been received about the manner in which goods, services or facilities have been provided to persons with disabilities.

- Please review the feedback / request to assess if any accommodation can be made in your service area to resolve this accessibility-related inquiry, complaint or general feedback.
- A departmental response to the requester / complainant is required and must specify the actions that will be taken in resolution. Copy the [Accessibility Office](#) on this and all subsequent communications regarding this request.
- An acknowledgement of service request to the requester / complainant is to be completed within three business days. The department will aim to resolve and close the request within 20 business days of receipt. Updates should be provided every two weeks until resolution.

More details regarding how to process this feedback / request / inquiry, including recordkeeping requirements, can be found at Accessible Feedback and Resident - Inquiries Procedure.

You can review your requirements under the [Corporate Complaints Handling Policy](#) and [Procedures](#) and/or other departmental procedures, as appropriate, to support in responding to the matter.

Thank you for your important work in reviewing and resolving accessibility-related service inquiries from City residents including persons with disabilities.