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Customer Service Policy Statement: Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

Our mission

The mission of the **Township of KERNS** is to identify, remove and prevent accessibility barriers, and to treat everyone equally with respect, without discrimination because of a disability.

Our commitment

In fulfilling our mission, the **Township of KERNS** strives at all times to provide goods and services in a way that respects the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. We are also committed to giving people with disabilities the same opportunity to access our goods and services and allowing them to benefit from the same services, in the same place and in a similar way as other customers.

Providing Goods and Services to People with Disabilities

The **Township of KERNS** is committed to excellence in serving all customers including people with disabilities and we will carry out our functions and responsibilities in the following areas:

Communication

We will communicate with people with disabilities in ways that take into account their disability. Staff who communicate with customers will be trained on how to interact and communicate with people with various types of disabilities.

Telephone Services

The **Township of KERNS** is committed to providing fully accessible telephone service to our customers. We will train our staff to communicate with customers over the telephone in clear and plain language, to speak clearly and slowly and to tailor their responses as much as possible in support of the individual. We will offer to communicate with customers by email or written text if telephone communication is not suitable to their communication needs or is not available.

Assistive Devices

We are committed to serving people with disabilities who use assistive devices to obtain, use or benefit from our goods and services. We will ensure that our staff is trained and familiar with various assistive devices that may be used by customers with disabilities while accessing our goods or services.

Correspondence, Invoices and other Documentation

The **Township of KERNS** is committed to providing accessible information to all of our customers.

For this reason correspondence, invoices, reports and all other documentation will be provided in the following formats upon request: large print, email, or hard copy.

The **Township of KERNS** will provide a document or information contained in a document, in a

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format that takes into account the customer's disability. The **Township of KERNS** and the customer with the disability will agree upon the format to be used for the document or information provided.

The **Township of KERNS** will answer any questions customers may have about the content of the invoice in person, by telephone or email.

Use of Service Animals and Support Persons

Service Animals

The **Township of KERNS** is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal in the areas of our premises that are open to the public and other third parties. We will also ensure that all staff, volunteers and others dealing with the public are properly trained in how to interact with people with disabilities who are accompanied by a service animal.

An animal is considered to be a service animal for a person with a disability if: It is readily apparent that the animal is used by the person for reasons relating to his or her disability; or
The person provides a letter from a physician or nurse confirming that the person requires the animal for reasons relating to the disability.

Support Persons

The **Township of KERNS** is committed to welcoming people with disabilities who are accompanied by a support person. Any person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person will be allowed to enter the **Township of KERNS** premises with his or her support person. At no time will a person with a disability who is accompanied by a support person be prevented from having access to his or her support person while on our premises.

A "support person" means, in relation to a person with a disability, another person who accompanies him or her in order to help with communication, mobility, personal care or medical needs or with access to goods or services.

Fees will not be charged for support persons for admission to the **Township of KERNS** premises. Customers will be informed of this by a notice that will be posted in the **Township of KERNS** premises.

Notice of Temporary Disruption

The **Township of KERNS** will provide customers with notice in the event of a planned or unexpected disruption in the facilities or services usually used by people with disabilities. This notice will include information about the reason for the disruption, its anticipated duration, and a description of alternative facilities or services, if available.

Notice may be given by posting the information at all public entrances and service counters on our premises.

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Staff Training

The **Township of KERNS** will provide training to all employees, volunteers and others who deal with the public or other third parties on their behalf, and to all those who are involved in the development and approvals of customer service policies, practices and procedures. Individuals in the following positions will be trained:

The list of positions that require training include:

- ▶ Administrative Staff
 - ▶ Reeve and Council
 - ▶ Public Works (Roads) Staff
 - ▶ Fire Department Volunteers
 - ▶ Cemetery Staff
 - ▶ Recreation Volunteers
 - ▶ Summer Students
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- Every person who participates in developing the policy, practices and procedures under the Ontario Regulation 429/07 - Accessibility Standards for Customer Service
 - Every person who deals with the public on behalf of the **Township of KERNS** including 3rd parties including employees, agents, volunteers and co-op students
 - All current employees will receive training by (provide date)
 - New employees will receive the training within **30 days** of their date of hire

Training will include the following:

- The purposes of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 and the requirements of the customer service standard
- 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
- How to use the any equipment or devices available on the **Township of KERNS'** premises that may help with the provision of goods and services to people with disabilities.
- What to do if a person with a disability is having difficulty in accessing the **Township of KERNS'** goods and services
- The **Township of KERNS'** policies, practices and procedures relating to the customer service standard.

Staff will be trained on policies, practices and procedures that affect the way goods and services are provided to people with disabilities. Staff will also be trained on an ongoing basis when changes are made to these policies, practices and procedures.

Training Records

Training records shall be kept, including the dates when the training is provided, the number of individuals to whom training was provided and the signature of all those individuals trained on a particular date.

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Feedback Process

The ultimate goal of the **Township of KERNS** is to meet and surpass customer expectations while serving all people, including those with disabilities. Comments regarding how well those expectations are being met are welcome and appreciated.

Feedback regarding the way the **Township of KERNS** provides goods and services to people with disabilities can be made by mail, e-mail, suggestion box, or verbally. All feedback should be directed to:

Township of KERNS
903303 Hanbury Road
R. R. # 2
New Liskeard, ON P0J 1P0

Telephone: 705-647-5439
Fax: 705-647-6373
Email: harlytwp@parolink.net

Customers can expect a response within **10 business days**.

Modifications to this or Other Policies

The **Township of KERNS** is committed to developing customer service policies that respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities. Therefore, no changes will be made to this policy before considering the impact on people with disabilities.

Any policy of the **Township of KERNS** that does not respect and promote the dignity and independence of people with disabilities will be modified or removed.

Questions About this Policy

This policy exists to achieve service excellence to customers with disabilities.

If anyone has a question about the policy, or if the purpose of a policy is not understood, an explanation should be provided by, or referred to Michel Lachapelle of the **Township of KERNS**.